

Research Article

Developing a school-based program to support students to plan and organize their schoolwork: A qualitative study involving professionals and adolescents

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Many students in secondary education struggle with planning their schoolwork. These challenges can lead to both short- and long-term consequences such as lower grades, limited educational opportunities, and reduced socioeconomic outcomes. Despite these risks, the Netherlands lacks evidence-based school-based programs to improve planning skills. To develop such a program, we conducted two focus groups with school professionals and semi-structured interviews with adolescents with planning problems. The data were coded and analyzed following a thematic analysis, combining a deductive and inductive approach. School professionals emphasized the need for both preventive in-class support for all students in secondary education and an individual program to support students with planning difficulties, with a feasible maximum of six sessions for each. Both school professionals and adolescents emphasized the importance for tailoring support to students' preferences and needs. Adolescents' diverse preferences, such as the timing, ideal setting and provider of the program, highlighted the need for flexible, tailored interventions to meet their needs effectively. Based on our results, a two-phase program aligned with Dutch secondary education and tailored to the needs of its end users will be developed.

Keywords: Focus groups; Intervention development; Interviews; Planning skills; Qualitative research; Secondary education

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1. Introduction

Many adolescents in secondary education struggle with planning their schoolwork (Evans et al., 2009). Although the exact prevalence of planning problems in adolescents is unknown, those diagnosed with conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [ADHD], autism spectrum disorder or depression are at higher risk of facing these problems (Gioia et al., 2002). Moreover,

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adolescents without these diagnoses struggle with planning their schoolwork (de Vries et al., 2023). Planning difficulties in adolescence are closely tied to the ongoing development of executive functions, which continue to mature throughout secondary school years (Crone, 2009; de Vries et al., 2023; Tervo-Clemmens et al., 2023). Moreover, as adolescents progress through secondary education, they are expected to take on increasing responsibility for organizing their own learning (Langberg et al., 2011; Meltzer, 2018; Rice et al., 2011). This transition toward greater independence can be particularly challenging for students who have not yet developed sufficient planning skills, making them more vulnerable to falling behind academically (Kitil et al., 2025; Younger et al., 2024). Without adequate support, these planning problems can result in immediate consequences like lower school grades, conflicts with teachers or parents, and failing classes, but also various unfavorable outcomes later in life, such as lower chances of following higher education, lower socio-economic status and job loss (Barkley & Fischer, 2011; Galéra et al., 2012; Kuriyan et al., 2013). There is thus a need for effective programs to support adolescents with planning problems early in their academic career.

Planning-related challenges are commonly encountered within the school environment, and research suggests that interventions targeting academic skills like planning are most effective when implemented in school settings (Evans et al., 2014). This allows immediate application of learned skills and avoid barriers often associated with mental health care settings, such as accessibility, affordability, and stigma (Green et al., 2013; Jaycox et al., 2006). However, in the Netherlands, the only intervention available is focused on improving planning skills specifically in adolescents with ADHD and application in mental health care facilities ("Plan my Life"; Kuin et al., 2013). Therefore, school-based interventions to support adolescents (with and without diagnoses) with planning problems is warranted.

Within the Dutch secondary education system, students enter different educational tracks (i.e., preparatory middle-level vocational education/vmbo, higher general continued education/havo, and pre-university education/vwo) based on ability, and schools are required to provide "appropriate education" across both mainstream and special needs settings. This responsibility is supported by regional school collaboration networks, which coordinate resources, expertise, and placement in specialized education (Rijksoverheid, 2026a). Within this system, support is organized in a tiered structure in which schools are expected to provide increasing levels of support based on students' needs (Rijksoverheid, 2026b). The current support system consists of four hierarchical levels: basic support, basic support plus, extra support, and accommodations (i.e., comparable to Individualized Education Programs [IEPs]), with students moving between levels depending on their needs. Basic support is typically provided within the classroom by mentor teachers and may include study skills such as planning, although its content varies across schools and teachers. More intensive and individualized support is available through additional tiers and may involve school mental health professionals or external specialists coordinated through regional networks. Although the Dutch government aims to include support for planning skills as part of the basic support system, there is currently no evidence-based school-based program available in the Netherlands (Rijksoverheid, 2018). As a result, schools often rely on interventions they developed themselves, which vary greatly in intensity, content and quality, potentially leaving many adolescents without adequate support (Steenweg et al., 2025).

In contrast to the Netherlands, two school-based training programs to tackle planning problems in adolescents have been developed in the United States: the Homework Organization and Planning Skills program [HOPS] (Langberg et al., 2011) and the more extensive Challenging Horizons Program [CHP] (Evans et al., 2011). Both programs have shown (long-term) improvements in planning skills, homework problem behavior and academic performance (Evans et al., 2011; Langberg et al., 2012). However, as both were specifically designed for adolescents with ADHD in the American educational system and culture, their suitability for use in the Dutch context is unclear.

When developing a school-based program, it is crucial to ensure an adequate intervention-

setting fit. Evidence-based practices validated in research settings often face challenges when applied in real-world educational contexts, where practical limitations such as resources and finances can hinder effective implementation (Gee et al., 2021; Lyon et al., 2013; Maggin et al., 2019; Proctor et al., 2008). This underscores the importance of designing interventions that are not only grounded in evidence but also adaptable to the practical challenges schools face (Maggin et al., 2019; Proctor et al., 2008; Weisz, 2015). The Deployment-Focused Model of Intervention Development and Testing (Weisz, 2015) addresses this by promoting an iterative, feedback-driven process where interventions are tested, refined, and adapted to real-world conditions. Actively involving end users, such as teachers, school mental health workers, and students, ensures that programs are feasible, engaging, and effective (Bussing et al., 2014; Gee et al., 2021; Lyon & Koerner, 2016).

This current study bridges the gap between existing knowledge on planning interventions and their applicability within the Dutch secondary education context. By systematically examining the perspectives of key stakeholders, this research aims to generate context-specific insights that can inform the development of a feasible and acceptable school-based intervention. Accordingly the aim of our study was to explore the needs, wishes and preferences of school professionals and adolescents with planning problems regarding school-based support for planning problems. This study represents the second step of a four-step iterative process that resembles the Deployment-Focused Model of Intervention Development and Testing (Weisz, 2015). To do so, we conducted focus groups with school professionals and interviews with adolescents with planning problems to thoroughly assess the needs, wishes and preferences of these end users. As a basis for intervention possibilities within regular educational settings, we first explored how Dutch secondary schools organize their support for planning problems in the four above mentioned support systems. Next, we identified the needs, wishes and preferences of school professionals and adolescents with planning problems with regard to a new school-based program that supports the planning skills of adolescents. Finally, we explored the opinions of school professionals on the fit of existing programs, i.e., Plan my Life (Kuin et al., 2013), HOPS (Langberg et al., 2011), CHP (Evans et al., 2011) within the Dutch educational system. Eventually, we aimed to use the results of this study in the development of an intervention targeting planning problems that fits within the Dutch secondary educational context.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using focus groups with school professionals and interviews with adolescents with planning problems, to explore the needs, wishes, and preferences of these end users regarding school-based planning skills support. First, we conducted two focus groups with school professionals to reinforce, stimulate, and generate ideas, and to obtain a thorough insight into their opinions and beliefs (Vaughn et al., 1996). Second, we performed semi-structured interviews with adolescents with planning problems. We chose interviews (instead of focus groups) to provide a more confidential environment in which the adolescents could feel comfortable sharing their own personal experiences and opinions (Fylan, 2005).

2.2. Participants

2.2.1. School professionals

The school professionals were recruited from an educational research-practice consortium funded by the Dutch Education Research Fund (Nationaal Regieorgaan Onderwijsonderzoek, [NRO], case number 40.5.20630.036/10820). The school professionals were approached and asked if they were interested in collaborating. Next, they were informed about the study through presentations at

regional school collaboration networks² given by the authors of this paper.

Seven school professionals were recruited for two focus groups; one participated only in the second focus group, resulting in six participants. They worked across six secondary schools or regional networks representing all educational tracks in Dutch regular and special education. Two participants were also teachers, and three had mentor-teacher experience (see Table 1 for an overview of the participants demographics).

Each school professional received a monetary compensation for their participation in the focus groups. All gave informed consent, including permission for video recordings of the focus groups. The ethical committee of the University of Amsterdam approved the study (2020-DP-12269).

2.2.2. Adolescents

Only adolescents from the lower grades (first to third grade) were included, as school professionals emphasized during the focus groups the importance of addressing planning problems within these grades. Participating adolescents were recruited in two ways: referral by a school mental health worker ($n = 2$) that was part of the research-practice consortium or through an advertisement on different social media platforms (e.g., a Facebook page for parents of children with ADHD, $n = 6$). Referrals were made by the school mental health worker based on their professional assessment of whether the adolescent experienced difficulties with planning and organizing schoolwork. The advertisement on social media platforms sought adolescents in the lower grades of secondary education who struggled with planning and organizing their schoolwork. Adolescents were recruited until saturation of data was reached, resulting in a total of eight adolescents. The adolescents received a gift card for their participation. All adolescents and their parents gave written informed consent, including permission to audio record the interview. The ethical committee of the University of Amsterdam approved the study (2020-DP-12529). Table 2 shows the demographics of adolescent participants.

2.3. Data collection

2.3.1. Focus groups

Both focus groups were held remotely via Zoom (Zoom Video Communications, 2012) in June and July 2020, and video recorded. The questions and topics discussed in the focus groups were designed to identify the needs, wishes and preferences of school professionals concerning a planning skills program and were developed with all authors involved. (see Table 3 for addressed subjects and Appendices B and C for the specific focus group questions). The subjects addressed how students with planning problems are recognized, how these students are currently supported, and what the experiences of the school professionals are with this support. Lastly, existing school-based programs from the United States (Evans et al., 2011; Langberg et al., 2011;) and an existing clinic-based program from the Netherlands (Kuin et al., 2013) were presented and the school professionals were asked about their opinions on the fit of these programs within Dutch secondary education. One of the researchers moderated the focus groups (B.B.), assisted by two assistant researchers who made field notes (A.S. and K.W.). During the focus groups, school professionals were encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences with the group. Additionally, they were specifically asked if they had any experiences different from those previously mentioned, to ensure that a wide range of perspectives was gathered, and everyone had the opportunity to share their personal experiences. Both focus groups had a duration of approximately 2.5 hours including a short break.

²Collaborative partnerships that form agreements and guidelines about the student support in Dutch mainstream secondary education, the distribution of support resources and which students are placed in special needs education.

Table 1
Demographics of educational professionals

School professional	Age	Gender	Position of employment	Working experience in secondary education	Mentor teacher experience	Educational level ^a
P1	40	Female	Director of School Mental Health & Behavioral Services, and biology teacher	17	Yes	vwo
P2	44	Female	Director of School Mental Health & Behavioral Services	21		vmbo-TL, havo, vwo
P3	49	Female	Regional special education consultant	9		VSO, Pro, vmbo-TL, havo, vwo
P4	49	Female	Intervention specialist	6		VSO, Pro, vmbo-TL, havo, vwo
P5	58	Female	Directors of School Mental Health & Behavioral Services, and German language teacher	32	Yes	vmbo-TL, havo, vwo
P6	32	Female	Advice worker ^c	10	Yes	vmbo-BBL - GL, Pro,
P7 ^b	59	Female	Behavior specialist	5		VSO, Pro, vmbo-TL, havo, vwo

Note. ^a See Appendix A for a detailed explanation of the Dutch secondary educational system. ^b Only participated in the second focus group. ^c Supports teachers, coordinates care for students with special needs, and ensure effective collaboration between all involved parties in providing inclusive education)

Table 2
Demographics of adolescent participants

Participant	Gender	Age	School year	Educational level ^a	Diagnosis ^{b,c}
P1	Male	12	1	Vmbo	
P2	Male	14	3	Vmbo-KBL	
P3	Male	12	1	Havo/vwo	ADHD
P4	Male	12	1	Vmbo-TL	ADHD
P5	Male	13	1	Vmbo-KBL	
P6	Female	13	1	Vmbo -TL/Havo	ADHD
P7	Male	13	2	Havo	
P8	Male	13	1	Vmbo-TL	ADHD

^a See Appendix A for a detailed explanation of the Dutch secondary educational system. ^b Based on parent-report. ^c Fifty percent of the adolescents had ADHD, in line with previous research indicating that many adolescents with ADHD have planning difficulties (Boyer et al., 2018; de Vries et al., 2023).

2.3.2. Interviews

We conducted the semi-structured interviews with the adolescents between December 2020 and March 2021. All interviews were held via Zoom (Zoom Video Communications, 2012) video recorded. The interview questions and topics were designed to foster an open conversation with the adolescents, encouraging them to feel comfortable sharing their needs and preferences for support with planning problems. We included four open questions that addressed the adolescent's perception on planning skills and their personal needs, experiences with the current support they received at school, as well as their ideas for an ideal program to support adolescents their age with planning problems (see Table 3 for the subjects addressed in the interviews and see Appendix D for the complete interview guide). The interviews were conducted by one of the researchers (K.W.). The interviewer had to paraphrase the answers of the adolescent using the adolescent's own words, to make sure she had understood the adolescent correctly. At the end of each interview, the interviewer checked with the adolescent if all questions were addressed satisfactorily and whether there were additional issues that needed to be discussed. The interviews had a duration of approximately one hour each.

2.4. Data Analysis

2.4.1. Focus groups and interviews

Two researchers coded the data of the focus groups, one experienced with qualitative research (A.S.) and one novice in the field of qualitative research but knowledgeable in educational research (K.W.). The data of the interviews were coded by one of the researchers (K.W.) and a research assistant (Master's degree student). In order to minimize the influence of the researchers' biases, both coded the data independently per question and their preconceptions were monitored in a logbook (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The focus group and interview data were fully transcribed verbatim using f4transkript (Audiotranskription, 2016). Atlas.ti (GmbH, 2015) was used for coding and analyzing the data.

We conducted a thematic analysis following the six stages of Braun and Clarke (2006): 1) The two researchers and the research assistant became familiar with the data by transcribing the recordings and intensive and repeated reading of the transcripts; 2) The two researchers independently generated codes from the data; 3) The coded data was sorted into themes. A combination of a deductive (i.e., predetermined themes on the subjects that were discussed) and an inductive approach (i.e., information that came up but fell outside of the scope of the predetermined themes) was used, allowing for a comprehensive, flexible, and validated understanding of the data, ultimately leading to richer insights and more robust conclusions; 4) The themes were reviewed and refined to make sure data within themes were coherent and distinct from data from each other; 5) The two researchers discussed similarities and differences between their codes and defined theme labels and definitions until agreement was reached. The process of coding and identifying themes was nonlinear, involving a repeated process of going back and forth among the five steps; 6) In order to minimize interpretation bias and to ensure that coding was structured and consistent, all authors were involved in the final reviewing and refinement of the codes, the theme structuring and the theme labelling. Additionally, codes were analyzed in the total data sets to identify how many participants made a certain statement. The focus groups and interviews were conducted and transcribed in Dutch but for the current paper, quotes were translated from Dutch to English after the coding process was completed. Accuracy of the translation of the quotes was checked with all the authors.

Table 3
Subjects and questions for the focus groups with school professionals and interviews with adolescents with planning problems

Subject	Questions
Focus groups with school professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is a student recognized as having planning problems? - What is the current offer of support of students with planning problems within your school and how is it organized? - What are your experiences with the current organization of support? - What elements from this program are feasible in your school and which are definitely not? - What factors would make it more feasible for your school to implement a planning skills training? - What factors would make it less feasible for your school to implement a planning skills training?
Interviews with adolescents with planning problems	<p>When you think about planning your school- and homework...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you need or what do you have to master to sufficiently plan your school- and homework (e.g., materials like an agenda or a certain skill). - Are there certain moments in school in which it is especially important to be able to plan? - Are there certain moments at home in which it is especially important to be able to plan? - Are there certain courses or assignments that especially need you to be able to plan? - What are the consequences for a student if he/she is not able to plan? - Are there also consequences for the teachers, mentor-teachers or other students on the school? - Which of the listed skills are you able to properly do? - What are aspects about planning that are a bit more difficult? - Could you describe the ways of support you are receiving at this moment on school? - How would a program ideally look like to support students with planning problems? <p>Experiences with the current support they received in school</p> <p>Idea about an ideal program to support adolescents of their age with planning problems</p>

3. Results

3.1. School Professionals' Perspectives on Planning Support

This section presents the perspectives of school professionals on supporting students with planning difficulties. The findings are organized into seven main themes, highlighting the professionals' views on identification strategies of students with planning problems, preventive and individualized programs, timing and structure of interventions, program providers, and considerations for adapting existing programs to the Dutch school context. See Table 4 for an overview of the themes and subthemes.

Table 4

Main Themes and Subthemes from Focus Groups with School Professionals and Interviews with Adolescents

<i>Participant group</i>	<i>Themes and subthemes</i>
School professionals	Theme 1. The need for a clear and quick strategy to identify students with planning problems Theme 2. The need for a preventive program for all students and an additional individual program for students with more persistent planning problems Theme 3. A strong need for a program in the first grade of secondary education, but also in the higher grades Theme 4. A program at the beginning of the schoolyear is preferred Theme 5. Personalization of the program is needed Theme 6. School mental health workers are the preferred providers of extra support for students with planning problems Theme 7. Existing programs generally do not fit within Dutch secondary education for several reasons 7.1 More than six sessions is unfeasible within the Dutch school system 7.2 Involving parents in the training is not feasible 7.3 A reward-system for adolescents could lead to resistance from parents and adolescents 7.4 A clearly structured protocol aids in program feasibility
Adolescents	Theme 1. The current support from school is not adequate Theme 2. Tailored support is important Theme 3. Diversity in preferences for the organization of planning support 3.1 Setting 3.2 Preferred time of the year 3.3 Preferred time of the day 3.4 Provider of support 3.5 Involvement of parents Theme 4. Preferred grade for support with planning problems

Theme 1. The need for a clear and quick strategy to identify students with planning problems

All statements comprising Theme 1 received full agreement from the participating school professionals. All school professionals noted that the mentor-teacher together with the subject-specific teachers have the primary responsibility for identifying whether a student requires additional support and for determining whether a student should transition to other support tracks (see Appendix A for an explanation of the support tracks).

SP#5: "Not only the mentor-teacher is important for identifying students with planning difficulties [...]. The mentor-teacher only sees his/her class one to two hours a week, so the other teachers [i.e. subject specific teachers] also play a role in detecting problems and informing the mentor-teacher, allowing the mentor-teacher to discuss it with the student and eventually point out the issue".

However, the school professionals indicated that the mentor-teachers might not have the skills or necessary information to identify these students. Also, they reported that it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a student has planning problems, and that it can take a significant

amount of time to identify these. Moreover, they considered lengthy questionnaires that can detect planning difficulties in students not feasible for mentor-teachers because they must complete them for all the students in their class, which would be too time-consuming. All school professionals therefore agreed that a clear and quick strategy to identify students with planning problems would be beneficial.

Theme 2. The need for a preventive program for all students and an additional individual program for students with more persistent planning problems

All statements comprising Theme 2 received full agreement from the participating school professionals. All school professionals agreed that, to align with the Dutch government's aim for inclusion of students and given the lack of an existing standardized program, there is a need for a standardized program within basic support. This program should aim to teach basic planning skills to all secondary education students and prevent them from developing planning difficulties. They emphasized that early support in planning skills is needed to help students establish effective habits before academic challenges intensify.

SP#1: "At first you should provide support for students in the mentor-teacher lessons, you should start with some basic and structural things in the mentor-teacher lessons [i.e., basic-support, in-class]"

Further, school professionals mentioned that an additional program within individual extra support is needed to support students who experience more persistent planning difficulties.

SP#6: "I think it would be great when the program can be implemented within basic support and when a student indicates that a specific part is difficult or when a student fails to succeed, that you have some additional assignments in the program that you can complete within extra support [i.e., individual support]"

Theme 3. A strong need for a program in the first grade of secondary education, but also in the higher grades

All school professionals agreed that there is a strong need for a planning skills program for the first grade of secondary education, as students may perceive planning difficulties during the transition from primary education. Implementing a program in the first grade can help students establish a solid foundation and effective habits before academic challenges intensify, and thus potentially prevent the need for additional support later on.

SP#5: "It's not just about homework, it's also about knowing what materials are needed each day for different courses and activities. [...] For instance, how should I pack my bag? These basic things to navigate secondary education successfully are important in the first year. I really believe it is a good idea to start offering planning support from the start of secondary education".

Furthermore, some school professionals considered offering support in higher grades also important, given the increased cognitive demands placed on students at that stage ($n = 6$).

SP#2: "It also involves a different approach of teaching and higher expectations for students [in higher grades]. They are expected to be more independent, manage their own schedules, deal with different types of lessons, and initiate communication with the teachers. So, different and more advanced skills are required".

Theme 4. A program at the beginning of the schoolyear is preferred

All school professionals agreed that support to all students should start at the beginning of the schoolyear to prevent students from dropping out due to a lack of planning skills. This support could also be beneficial to help students develop effective habits before academic demands increase. Starting early may help establish foundational habits, increase engagement, and prevent students from falling behind academically.

SP#2: "[...] then around the autumn break, things get really off track by then. So, it is important to address it right away in the first year, at the start".

SP#1: "Yes, then they will benefit the most right away, since they will start homework fairly quickly anyway. So, in my opinion, it should begin immediately as well"

Theme 5. Personalization of the program is needed

Five school professionals noted that it is important to tailor the program to meet the individual needs of the students. These five professionals agreed that it is essential for students to develop their own planning strategy, tailored to their unique needs, preferences, and goals, instead of teaching all students the same planning skills strategies. This may contribute to greater student motivation for the program and promote behavioral change. Specifically, personalized support allows students to develop strategies aligned with their strengths and challenges, potentially increasing motivation and adherence to the program. Furthermore, all professionals indicated that the timing for individualized planning support should be agreed upon with each adolescent, as it depends on their personal school schedule.

SP#5: "Personalization is important, so if a student finds a certain part very difficult or still struggles with it, there should be deeper, additional tasks that they can complete individually, and possibly also with individual guidance"

SP#3: "Students should be able to focus on the parts they find most challenging, with extra exercises and support tailored to their individual need"

Theme 6. School mental health workers are the preferred providers of extra support for students with planning problems

School professionals generally preferred the school mental health workers as providers of a planning program after basic support. Although one school professional indicated their potential lack of subject-specific knowledge, all participants agreed that school mental health workers have more time to support individual students, maintain confidentiality, do not participate in the decision-making process whether a student fails a class or not, are specifically educated to provide school mental health support, and can offer tailored support to meet individual needs.

All school professionals mentioned disadvantages of mentor-teachers as potential providers of support for students with planning problems. These included mentor-teachers potentially lacking adequate planning skills themselves, which may prevent them from teaching planning skills effectively ($n = 8$), having personal interests in the students' academic success ($n = 8$), being overburdened and facing significant time constraints ($n = 8$), and lacking the time to address the root causes of the students' problems ($n = 3$).

SP#3: "A mentor-teacher will eventually participate in the decision-making process whether you fail a class or not, while a school mental health worker is more independent and not involved in this decision-making process, making it easier for the student to discuss things confidentially with the school mental health worker".

Theme 7. Existing programs generally do not fit within Dutch secondary education for several reasons

Subtheme 7.1. More than six sessions is unfeasible within the Dutch school system. All school professionals agreed that both the American school-based programs (CHP and HOPS) were too intensive for implementation within the Dutch school system. While three school professionals initially considered the eight-session format of Plan my Life feasible within the mentor-teacher lessons, eventually all agreed that a maximum of six sessions would be feasible, given the time constraints of school staff and the fact that they are already overburdened. The limit of six sessions was established to account for scheduling factors, such as including school holidays, competing school activities, and other unforeseen classroom events requiring discussion.

Subtheme 7.2. Involving parents in the training is not feasible. Although some participants liked the cooperation with parents ($n = 1$) and the psycho-education sessions ($n = 2$) of HOPS and CHP, it was deemed unfeasible to include separate parent sessions due to time constraints and high workload of the school professionals ($n = 8$).

SP#5: "I do not think these separate parent sessions are feasible, that is way too intensive".

Subtheme 7.3. A reward-system for adolescents could lead to resistance from parents and adolescents. According to three school professionals, a reward-system such as provided in the HOPS program, might work for some students, but four other school professionals indicated that it could also lead to resistance from parents or students.

SP#4: "Well, I have noticed that for some students it really helps if they have something to look forward to, so I don't think it's a strange idea. But to impose it like that, yeah, there are students who won't really care about it. So, it's a nice option, but I wouldn't make it mandatory".

Subtheme 7.4. A clearly structured protocol aids in program feasibility. All school professionals agreed that a clearly structured protocol with set times for sessions would aid in the feasibility of a program.

SP#7: "I really like how this [the structure of Plan my Life] looks, it seems like it [Plan my life] has a clear structure [...]. That [a clearly structured protocol] is something that is preferred by a lot of school professionals".

3.2. Adolescents' Perspectives on Planning Support

This section presents the perspectives of adolescents with planning difficulties on the support they receive at school. The findings are organized into four main themes, reflecting the adolescents' views on current support, the need for tailored interventions, preferences regarding timing, setting and provider, and the preferred grade for receiving planning support. See Table 4 for an overview of the themes and subthemes.

Theme 1. The current support from school is not adequate

Students were generally not positive about the support they received in planning their school work and their experiences indicate that existing planning support does not always meet their needs, particularly in terms of confidentiality, accessibility, and consistency. They indicated that support from school does not feel confidential ($n = 8$), they considered it a burden ($n = 1$), they did not find it easily accessible ($n = 1$), they felt uncomfortable or inadequate when needing to ask for help ($n = 2$), and mentioned that school staff does not adhere to agreements ($n = 1$).

A#2: "Yes, you can have talks with the school mental health worker, about how things are going and what isn't going well. Usually, when you say it's not going well, it gets passed on to the mentor, but not with the details. [...] Then I got all kinds of false accusations, and she called my parents"

A#4: "Sometimes I ask for help, and then I talk to someone from school about my difficulties [...] and then they write it all down but do not do anything about it [...] just nothing happens."

Theme 2. Tailored support is important

There was large variability in specific needs the adolescents expressed with regard to support of their planning skills, but they all indicated a preference for tailored support. According to the adolescents, this could ensure that they would stay motivated and help with identifying the strategies that best suit their individual challenges and preferences. For example, some participants ($n = 3$) had more difficulties with organizing their materials or prioritizing tasks, while others experienced difficulties with motivation ($n = 5$) or keeping an overview of all their schoolwork ($n = 4$). Moreover, all had different preferences on how to execute various tasks. Taken together, the variability in students' planning difficulties underscores the need for individualized support that aligns with each student's strengths, preferences, and challenges.

A#6: "I usually start with the homework that is quicker and easier [...] because I prefer going for the easy task because I will at least have a good grade for that course",

A#7: "Well, for me it works best to start by studying for tests, because if I do other stuff first, I will be too tired to focus on studying"

A#8: "It's important that the teacher takes into account what I struggle with"

A#1: "It really depends on the kid. For me, my mom reads in Dutch and I have to say it in English, but some kids just like to read it all by themselves. So the program should be able to change for each student."

Theme 3. Diversity in preferences for the organization of planning support

Subtheme 3.1. Setting. The adolescents had various opinions regarding the ideal setting for a new program to support students with planning problems. Advantages of in-class basic support included receiving advices from classmates ($n = 4$) and not being excluded from the rest of the class ($n = 1$). Advantages on individual extra support included greater confidentiality ($n = 3$) and fewer distractions during the sessions ($n = 3$).

A#2: "Well, sometimes it is nice to receive it [support] in class, because then other people ask questions that might be useful for you [...] but sometimes it is also good if it [support] is one-on-one, because then you have less distractions".

Subtheme 3.2. Preferred time of the year. Four adolescents preferred receiving support at the start of the schoolyear. They felt that this would help prevent difficulties ($n = 4$) and ensure immediate support if needed ($n = 4$).

A#1: "... because that [support at the beginning of the schoolyear] allows you to learn it [planning and organizing your schoolwork] immediately and making sure it [schoolwork] goes well, and preventing you to become insecure about it [schoolwork]".

Two adolescents indicated the importance of receiving support throughout the entire schoolyear, as difficulties can arise at any time, and to be able to ask for support at any specific moment. One adolescent suggested it would be better to allow students to adjust to secondary education first and to start the support after a while.

Subtheme 3.3 Preferred time of the day. Most adolescents preferred the support to be provided during school hours, specifically during what they consider 'unimportant classes' ($n = 5$).

A#4: "Because if it [support for planning problems] is after school, students are not motivated because that is their free time [...] and you do not learn a lot during these mentor-teacher classes".

One adolescent preferred after-school sessions, while two other adolescents indicated that both during and after school would be feasible options.

Subtheme 3.4 Provider of support. Adolescents expressed varied perspectives on the role of the mentor-teacher in supporting planning skills. Some adolescents mentioned neutral aspects: the mentor-teacher is available for smaller issues ($n = 2$) and only for school-related issues ($n = 2$), while one adolescent described the mentor-teacher as a coach that helps you with all kinds of issues ($n = 1$). One adolescent appreciated the approachability of the mentor-teacher ($n = 1$). Conversely, some adolescents expressed negative views about the mentor-teacher. They mentioned concerns about favoritism towards certain students ($n = 3$) and lack of availability if a good relationship with the mentor-teacher was absent ($n = 2$). Other criticisms included a perceived lack of confidentiality, such as immediately informing parents ($n = 1$), and the mentor-teacher's limited expertise, suggesting they might need to refer students to additional support services ($n = 1$).

A#3: "I do not like it when my mentor-teacher knows about my problems. Because before you know it, they call my parents and ask them to come to school for a talk".

Adolescents were generally positive about the possibility that school mental health workers would provide support. For instance, adolescents indicated that school mental health workers are confidential ($n = 2$) and easily approachable ($n = 2$), provide good support ($n = 3$), are attentive and ask relevant questions ($n = 1$).

A#5: "First, I would go to [name; school mental health worker] and after that I would go to my mentor-teacher. [...] because I can find [name; school mental health worker] more easily around the school".

Conversely, according to other adolescents, school mental health workers are perceived as not confidential because they disclose everything to the mentor-teacher ($n = 5$) and they do not adhere to agreements ($n = 1$). One adolescent mentioned that school mental health workers do the job *for* you but do not teach you how to independently manage those tasks ($n = 1$).

Subtheme 3.5. Involvement of parents. Three of the adolescents did not want their parents to be involved in the support they receive from school, citing reasons such as a preference for keeping school and home separate and the need for autonomy. The other five adolescents did not have a preference.

A#2: "I prefer these things [support from school and my parents] to be separated from each other, so they [parents] do not interfere with everything".

Theme 4. Preferred grade for support with planning problems

One adolescent expressed that the first grade of secondary education would be an ideal time for a program to teach planning skills, noting that secondary education is quite different from primary education and that support is needed to manage the transition. The other adolescents did not express a preference for a specific grade ($n = 7$).

A#5: "I think it's best to start in the first year, because secondary school is really different from primary school, and you need help to get used to it"

A#7: "It doesn't really matter to me. I'd get help whenever I need it"

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to explore the needs, wishes and preferences of school professionals and adolescents with planning problems regarding school-based support for planning problems. Eventually, we aimed to use its results in the development of an intervention targeting planning problems that fits within the Dutch secondary educational context. Overall, the school professionals were quite concordant in their opinions. They expressed the need for a standardized program with basic in-class support to teach basic planning skills to all students in secondary education. Moreover, they expressed the need for an additional individual program to support students who experience persistent difficulties with planning their schoolwork. The adolescents were less unanimous regarding their needs and preferences, but shared the opinions that support should be adapted to their personal needs and that confidentiality of the provider of this support is important.

Both school professionals and adolescents highlighted the need for tailored support, to meet individual requirements and preferences, promote students' motivation for the program, and achieve behavioral change. This aligns with research showing that allowing adolescents' to work according to their own preferences and promoting their autonomy is crucial for maintaining their motivation and achieving lasting behavioral change (Guay, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 1985). It may well be that motivational interviewing (Prochaska & DiClemente, 2005) might be a way to achieve this, as studies have shown that motivational interviewing may provide a sense of autonomy and can help to increase intrinsic motivation and engagement (Boyer et al., 2015; Sibley et al., 2014; Snape & Atkinson, 2016). Furthermore, a modular structure by allowing adolescents to choose the skills they want to train may be a way to personalize a program. This approach may also help overcome common challenges in implementing school-based interventions, as the flexibility of modular sessions potentially makes it easier to adapt the program to the logistical constraints of a school setting (e.g., Becker et al., 2012; Lyon et al., 2011)

School professionals indicated that school staff are often overburdened and face significant time constraints, making it difficult to implement programs with extensive durations, such as the CHP and HOPS program (Evans et al., 2011; Langberg et al., 2012). According to them, no more than six sessions would be feasible for both basic and extra support programs. Research has been contradictory on the number of sessions needed for a program to be effective in the school setting. For example, a systematic review indicated that in child and adolescent ADHD samples shorter

school-based interventions were more effective than longer ones (Richardson et al., 2015). Conversely, other studies suggest that more intensive, longer interventions may have better long-term outcomes for improving academic functioning, including Grade Point Average ([GPA]; Margherio et al., 2021), and that full benefits of these programs may take longer to appear (DuPaul et al., 2021; Evans et al., 2014; Girard-Lapointe et al., 2023). Nevertheless, while six sessions seem feasible within the Dutch school context, it remains uncertain whether this level of intensity is sufficient to achieve behavioral change.

School professionals expressed the need for a clear strategy to identify students with planning problems. In the current organization of Dutch schools, mentor-teachers together with regular subject-specific teachers have the primary responsibility for this task. However, concerns were raised about whether mentor-teachers and subject-specific teachers possess the necessary skills or information to accurately identify students with planning problems. Moreover, other methods such as lengthy questionnaires designed to detect planning difficulties in students were also deemed impractical due to the time required for mentor-teachers to complete them for all their students, a challenge that is supported by prior research (Soneson et al., 2020). This raises concerns about the feasibility of using validated teacher-rated measures, such as the Homework Problems Checklist [HPC] (Anesko et al., 1987) or the Children's Organizational Skills Scales [COSS] (Abikoff & Gallagher, 2009; Kaya et al., 2012) within Dutch secondary education. While some studies suggest that ongoing training for school staff could improve their ability to identify students with planning difficulties (Gee et al., 2021), others have indicated that the costs and time-investment associated with this training makes it rather unfeasible (Soneson et al., 2020). The current overburdening of school staff, as found in our study, suggests that additional training of teachers to identify students with planning problems would also likely be impractical. Therefore, to accurately and efficiently identify students with planning problems, we propose a combination of identification by school staff and a concise universal screening method, ultimately aiming to create an objective method that assists mentor-teachers in identifying students in need of support (Anderson et al., 2018).

School professionals and adolescents had different views on the timing of the program. Whereas both groups agreed that the time of day for sessions should largely reflect adolescents' preferences, they had different views on the timing of the program during the school year. The professionals expressed a clear need for implementing the program in the first grade of secondary education, ideally at the start of the school year, to facilitate a preventive role in supporting students. They emphasized that early support in planning skills is needed to help students establish effective habits before academic challenges intensify. In contrast, adolescents did not specify a preferred grade to receive support for planning problems. Their opinions also varied regarding the best time of year for such support, reflecting diverse perspectives on when they would find it most useful or manageable. These findings suggest that the beginning of secondary education may be a suitable point for introducing planning support, particularly from a preventive perspective. Early implementation could help students develop effective habits before academic demands increase. However, adolescents' varied responses indicate that program timing should remain flexible and should take students' perceived readiness and workload into account. Thus, while the start of the first grade may serve as a practical default option, schools should also consider student preferences when scheduling such support (Levy & Peleg, 2022; Sarzhanova et al., 2026; Žižanović, 2025).

The fact that adolescents in our study expressed varying preferences for example regarding the timing of the program and the provider of the program highlights the challenge of representing adolescents as a group. Their opinions often underscored personal preferences, making it difficult to determine what would work best in general. Interestingly, many adolescents expressed a preference for combining elements from both in-class basic and individual extra support systems. For instance, they valued the confidentiality and individualized attention associated with extra support, but also appreciated the practical tips and peer input available in basic support settings.

This blend of preferences illustrates the nuanced needs of adolescents and suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach may not effectively address their diverse needs.

School professionals emphasized the importance of involving parents, but they acknowledged that separate parental sessions, like those in the HOPS intervention, would be unfeasible due to logistical concerns (Langberg et al., 2012). Most of the adolescents were indifferent about parental involvement, whereas three of them were against it, citing reasons such as a preference for keeping school and home separate. These findings agree with previous research suggesting that while parental involvement is generally seen as beneficial by school staff, it is often challenging to implement within a school setting due to resource constraints and logistical concerns (Gee et al., 2021). For instance, schools frequently face resource limitations or concerns about the feasibility of organizing parent sessions, and in addition studies that have attempted to involve parents in sessions commonly reported limited attendance (Gee et al., 2021). Regarding the adolescents, even though this effect has yet to be determined for adolescents with planning difficulties, reduced parental involvement can have indirect effects on their academic achievement by promoting greater autonomy (Aguirre-Dávila et al., 2023). An alternative could be to inform parents about the training and their child's progress, without actively involving them within (separate) sessions.

The current study has a few limitations that are worth mentioning. First, no standardized methods were used to confirm whether the adolescent participants had planning problems. Nevertheless, all included participants had experiences within various support tracks within their school, making their responses valuable. Second, the current study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic during which some adolescents participated in remote education, at least for some part of the school year. This could have impacted the students' current views on their planning problems and the support they received from their schools. While the schools of the participants functioned normally for at least some parts of the students' school career, we cannot ensure the potential impact on the students' experiences. Third, as this study focusses on the Dutch educational system, the results might not be generalizable to other countries. However, they can still provide valuable guidance for other researchers in the iterative development process of school-based interventions and knowledge on what end users of planning interventions deem important. Fourth, all participating school professionals were female, which may have led to an unrepresentative sample. However, this aligns with the reality that women constitute the majority of the teaching workforce in secondary education in the Netherlands (Cörvers et al., 2017).

To conclude, this study is a second step in the iterative intervention development process of a school-based program to support students with planning problems in the Netherlands. Involving end users early in the development may enhance contextual appropriateness, usability and eventual effectiveness of the program (Gee et al., 2021; Lyon et al., 2013). Based on the responses of the school professionals and the adolescents with planning problems, we will develop a two-phase program. The first phase will be a universal preventive program, offering in-class planning skills training to all secondary students, provided by mentor-teachers. The second phase will be a selective, individual program for students who still needed support after the preventive program, provided by school mental health workers. The program will be implemented in the first year of secondary education, at the start of the year. Both phases of the program will consist of six lessons/sessions. Moreover, we will develop a screening method to support mentor-teachers in the identification process of students with planning problems. As a next step in the intervention development process, a pilot study will be conducted in order to determine the feasibility and preliminary effectiveness of the new program.

Author Contribution: K.W. conceptualized the study, conducted data collection and analysis, interpretation of findings, and drafted the manuscript. A.S. assisted with data collection and analysis, contributed to interpretation of findings, and contributed to reviewing the manuscript. S.v.d.O contributed to interpretation of findings, and provided critical revisions to the final manuscript. B.v.d.H contributed to the interpretation of findings, and provided critical revisions to the final manuscript. B.B. supervised the project, conducted data collection, contributed to

interpretation of the findings, and provided critical revisions to the final manuscript. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for its content.

Conflict of Interest: Saskia Van der Oord declares an honorarium and reimbursement for travel expenses from MEDICE for a lecture on non-pharmacological treatment of ADHD. Further, she is co-developer and author of the intervention manuals 'Plan My Life' and 'Solution Focused Treatment' but does not receive royalties for the sales of the interventions. Barbara van den Hoofdakker receives royalties as one of the editors of "Sociaal Onhandig" (published by Van Gorcum, The Netherlands), a book for parents that can be used in parent training. She is and has been involved in the development and evaluation of several behavioral interventions, without financial interests. Further, she is and has been a member of ADHD guideline and practice groups and an advisor of the Dutch Knowledge Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Bianca Boyer is co-developer and author of the intervention manuals 'Plan My Life', 'Solution Focused Treatment' and 'My Sleep Plan' and receives royalties for the sales of the interventions.

Data Availability: The focus group and interview data are not publicly available due to ethical and privacy restrictions. Because of the rich qualitative nature of the data, complete anonymization cannot be ensured without compromising the integrity of the data, potentially risking participant identification.

Ethics Declaration: Ethics approval, consent to participate and consent for publication: All school professionals gave informed consent, including permission for video recordings of the focus groups. The ethical committee of the University of Amsterdam approved the study (2020-DP-12269). All adolescents and their parents gave written informed consent, including permission to audio record the interview. The ethical committee of the University of Amsterdam approved the study (2020-DP-12529).

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Appendix A. The Dutch Secondary Education system

Figure 1 gives an overview of the Dutch educational system. In the Netherlands, students typically end primary education when they are 12 years old (from 4 to 12 years old). Dutch secondary education exists out of two major branches: mainstream secondary education and special needs secondary education (VSO; Figure 1). Mainstream secondary education provides education for typically developing children and VSO provides special needs education for children with a physical or intellectual disability, prolonged illness or severe behavioral problems. In Dutch mainstream secondary education, four tracks exist, representing a hierarchy of student's cognitive ability required to meet the educational learning outcomes (Rijksoverheid, 2026b).

Before entering secondary education (final year of primary education; 11-12 years old), all students complete an aptitude test which is designed to recommend the type of secondary education best suited for the student (Rijksoverheid, 2026c, 2026d). The recommendation of the teacher along with the opinion of the students and his/her parents have the final say in what level of secondary education the student will enter: lower (i.e., vmbo), middle (i.e., havo) and higher education (i.e., vwo; see figure 1, Rijksoverheid, 2026b). Students have the opportunity to access higher levels of education by attending the last years of the higher level, after obtaining a diploma in the current level. Furthermore, students can also be demoted to a lower level of education. For example, when a pupil has entered secondary education at a level they cannot cope with, or when they lack the interest to spend effort on their education resulting in poor grades.

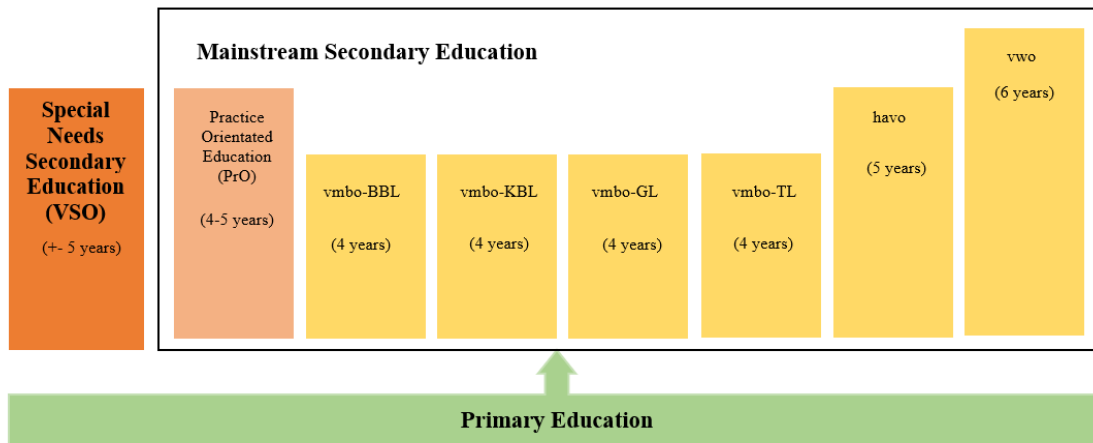
As of 1st August 2014, the Dutch government declared a new policy stating that Dutch schools have a 'duty to care'. Specifically, this policy has mandated that all schools in the Netherlands provide suitable educational opportunities tailored to accommodate the diverse learning needs of every student referred to as 'appropriate education'. Accordingly, schools provide additional support to students facing learning challenges, behavioral problems or difficulties with planning and organization (Rijksoverheid, 2018). To aid in this 'appropriate education' regional school collaboration networks exist in Dutch education. These collaborative partnerships form agreements and guidelines about the student support in mainstream secondary education, the distribution of support resources and which students are placed in special needs education (Rijksoverheid 2026a). In total, 75 collaborative partnerships in Dutch secondary education exist and each partnership is obligated to ensure education that is tailored to the needs of each student in that area. The partnerships receive their own budgets for educational support which makes them responsible for offering tailored education. Within these partnerships, school mental health workers support students who need extra counseling and training on top of the support that is provided by the schools. In addition, counselors for tailored education are active within the partnerships, to advise schools on how to provide tailored education for their students. This line of support is financed by the collaborative regional partnerships and is therefore considered as external support.

The mandated support system within Dutch secondary education exists of four tracks: Basic support, basic support plus, extra support and an accommodation (i.e., support that is requested through a regional school collaboration network and involves support that is not available in the school; see Figure 2). Students progress between the tracks when they need additional support but can also regress backwards when support has been sufficient and have gained enough improvements. Every school provides inclusive 'basic support' for all students within the regular classroom setting. This support is provided for the entire class by their mentor-teacher, a teacher who provides support and coaches the adolescents in a certain class during the school year. In general, during these so-called mentor-teacher classes, time is spent on concerns of the day, social and emotional development, and study skills development such as planning skills. The specific content of these classes, such as a specific program or book used to teach these skills, varies among schools and often even among mentor-teachers within schools. Some schools offer 'basic support plus', that is provided whenever basic support is not sufficient. Basic support plus consists of small groups of students that are provided with some sort of additional academic support such as schoolwork planning or tutoring on a specific course. The provider of basic support plus differed between schools and the type of support provided. Importantly, not all schools provide this track of support.

In case the support within basic support plus is not sufficient for a student, if a school does not provide this track, or if a student enters the school with special needs, the student can receive 'extra support'. Extra support is provided by school mental health workers: school staff that support students with various mental health issues that interfere with their schoolwork. Extra support consists of a short-term individual trajectory of approximately 4-5 weeks and if deemed necessary a long-term trajectory ranging from approximately 10 weeks to one year. Extra support is always individual and tailored to the specific needs of the individual. In case a student still requires additional support after the extra support trajectory, an 'accommodation' can be requested through the regional school collaboration network and involves support from external organizations such as psychologists that are not available in the school.

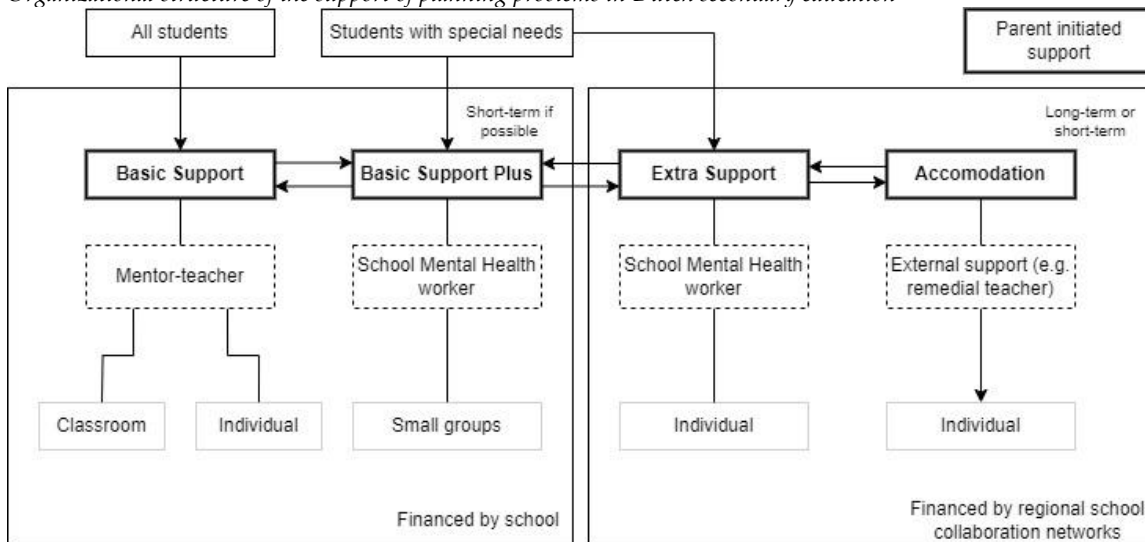
Considering fundings of each of the tracks, basic support is financed by the school itself, whereas extra support and accommodations are directly funded by the government through the regional school collaboration networks. Consequently, and together with the notion that extra support considers individual support, extra support trajectories are more expensive than basic support (Rijksoverheid, 2026d).

Figure 1
Overview of Dutch Secondary Education



Note. Primary education (age 4 – 12), PrO (age 12-18), preparatory middle-level vocational education (vmbo; 4 years; age 12-16), higher general continued education (havo; 5 years; age 12-17) and pre-university education (vwo; 6 years; age 12-18).

Figure 2
Organizational structure of the support of planning problems in Dutch secondary education



Appendix B. Manual of focus group 1 with educational professionals of Dutch Secondary Education

Focus group 1: the current situation

Introduction:

- Word of welcome
- Introduction of the subject and the focus of today
- Rules:
 - Everyone's opinion and vision matters: especially these differences in opinions and visions are interesting and allows us to develop a broadly implementable program.
 - The assistant will give a short summary of your answers after each question, to make sure thorough understanding is reached.
 - Do not use names from third parties: we need to stick to the privacy rules.

Opening question: Tell us your name, what kind of school you work at, with what levels, how many students and your position at this school.

Introduction question: Mention one word that comes to mind when you think of the support for adolescents with planning problems in secondary education?

Key questions (3 questions, 25 min per question, a summary of the assistant after each question):

Question 1: How is a student recognized as having planning problems?

- How do planning problems in a student pose an issue for the school?
- How do planning problems in a student affect the student themselves or others?

Question 2: What is the current offer of support of students with planning problems at your school?

- Who is providing this support?
- In what kind of settings: in classes/individual, only for students with problems or also preventive?
- What is the intensity: how often and how long?
- What role do parents have?
- Did the provider have specialized education or training to do this?? If so, what kind of education or training did they have? On what foundations is the current organization of support based?
- Are any kind of external organizations involved in the support of these students? If so, in what way? And does the school notice any effects of this external support?

Question 3: What are your experiences with the current organization of support?

- What are the advantages of the current situation? What does it yield?
- What are the disadvantages of the current situation? What are issues that you encounter or what do you miss?

Closing question: Give one sentence that describes what you think is the most important/essential factor when considering the support for students with planning problems in secondary education?

Thank you for your input!

Appendix C. Manual of focus group 2 with educational professionals of Dutch Secondary Education

Focus group 2: what are the needs?

Introduction:

- Word of welcome
- Introduction of the subject and the focus of today
- Rules:
 - Everyone's opinion and vision matters: especially these differences in opinions and visions are interesting and allows us to develop a broadly implementable program.
 - The assistant will give a short summary of your answers after each question, to make sure thorough understanding is reached.
 - Do not use names from third parties: we need to stick to the privacy rules.

Opening question: Tell us your name, what kind of school you work at, with what levels, how many students and your position at this school.

Summary of focus group 1.

Introduction question: Explain in one minute what you would wish for or give to a student with planning problems considering the support in school.

Short presentation on several existing programs:

- 1) The Challenging Horizons Program: a school-based psychosocial treatment program designed to address the impairment and symptoms associated with ADHD in young adolescents. This program contains 2-3 sessions a week of 2,5 hours each for the entire academic year and addresses several skills such as interpersonal skills, academic skills and planning skills. This program also contains monthly psycho-educational parent-sessions.
- 2) The Homework, Organization and Planning skills program, a school-based organizational skills program focusing on improving participants' physical organization (i.e., bookbag, binder, and locker) and homework management (i.e., accurate homework and test recording and planning). This program consists out of 16 sessions, with each session designed to last no longer than 20 minutes and three main skills areas are covered: school materials organization, homework recording and management, and planning/ time- management.
- 3) Two skills training programs extracted from HOPS and CHP: note-taking and self-management, which are two elements of the Challenging Horizons Program separately implemented. Both consisted out of short but frequent sessions for two weeks.
- 4) Plan My Life, a clinic-based program consisting out of 10 chapters. This program is based on motivational interviewing and focusses on several subjects such as goal-setting, the use of an agenda and a to-do-list, learning strategies and how can I reach my goals.

Key questions (3 questions, 25 min per question, a summary of the assistant after each question):

Question 1: what elements from these programs? are feasible in your school and which are definitely not?

- What are the obstacles if we would like to implement such a program?
- What elements would be feasible with the current organization of your school?

Question 2: What factors would make it more feasible for your school to implement a planning skills training in?

- For what kind of students should it be provided? To all students? Only those with difficulties? Only students with a clinical diagnosis? How should these students be selected?
- Practical factors: time, money and support?
- Who is available to provide a planning skills training?
- In what kind of setting: group, individual, intensity
- Certain perceptions and knowledge on planning problems?
- Certain perceptions on the training itself: type of intervention, relevance, employability, connection to needs and setting
- Cooperation with mental health organizations/ regional school collaboration networks

Question 3: What factors would make it less feasible for your school to implement a planning skills training in?

- For what kind of students should it be provided? To all students? Only those with difficulties? Only students with a diagnosis? How should these students be selected?
- Practical factors: time, money and support?
- Who is available to provide a planning skills training?
- In what kind of setting: group, individual, intensity
- Certain perceptions and knowledge on planning problems?
- Certain perceptions on the training itself: type of intervention, relevance, employability, connection to needs and setting
- Cooperation with mental health organizations/ regional school collaboration networks

Closing question: Give one sentence that describes what you think is the most important/essential factor when considering the support for students with planning problems in secondary education?

Thank you for your input!

Appendix D. Manual of semi-structured interviews with adolescents

Introduction:

- Word of welcome and introduction of the interviewer
- Who are you? How old are you? What grade are you in? At what school level?
- Introduction of the subject and the focus of today
- Rules:
 - Your opinion and vision matter a lot: especially your opinions and visions are interesting and allows us to develop a broadly feasible program.
 - Everything will be processed anonymously.
 - Do not use names from third parties: we need to stick to the privacy rules.

Opening question: Name three words that comes to mind when thinking about planning your school- and homework?

Key questions (3 questions, 25 min per question, a summary of the interviewer after each question):

Question 1: When you think about planning your school- and homework.....

- What do you need or what do you have to master to sufficiently plan your school- and homework (e.g., materials like an agenda or a certain skill).
- Are there certain moments in school in which it is especially important to be able to plan?
- Are there certain moments at home in which it is especially important to be able to plan?
- Are there certain courses or assignments that especially need you to be able to plan?
- What are the consequences for a student if he/she is not able to plan? Are there also consequences for the teachers, mentor-teachers or other students on the school?

Interim 1: We also thought about what planning actually means. We are talking about planning your schoolwork but also task at home, like sports. We talk about:

- *Writing down your homework in your agenda correctly*
- *Looking up your homework in for example Magister (i.e., software platform used for managing various aspects of school administration).*
- *Estimate the duration of an assignment or studying for a test*
- *Prioritize and decide which tasks should be done first*
- *Keeping an overview of all the tasks you should do*
- *Making a schedule of the week*
- *Using a to-do-list*
- *Deciding when and how you should do your homework or study for a test*
- *Starting on time with your homework or studying for a test*
- *Concentrate during homework or studying for a test*
- *Handing in assignments on time*
- *Having enough time for your homework*
- *Having enough time for other tasks*
- *Having your material organized / packing your bag on time / taking the right materials to class*
- *Taking more time in the mornings to make sure you do not forget anything*
- *Making sure you are in class on time*

Question 2: If you look at all these things, which are the ones that you are able to properly do?

- What is the reason that you are able to do these things?

Question 3: What are aspects about planning that are a bit more difficult?

- What is the reason that it is more difficult?
- What are the consequences for yourself?
- How do you deal with these consequences?
- Who do you ask for help?
- Can you tell me about a moment in which you had difficulties planning your school- and/or homework and you needed support.
- Were you happy with the support you got?

Question 4: Could you describe the ways of support you are receiving at this moment at school?

- What do you like about it?
- What do you like less?
- What is the most important thing you have learnt during this support?
- Are there any other things you would like to have help with?
- Do you know about any other possibility to get help with planning on your school?

Interim 2: We would like to develop a program in order to support students with planning their school- and homework. To make sure it is a good program, we would like to know how you think that program should look like in the most ideal situation. You do not have to think about the possibilities at this moment at your school, but about something in an ideal situation.

Question 5: What would a program ideally look like to support students with planning problems?

- Individual, small groups, classes?
- Which subjects should be in there?
- Would your mentor-teacher be the right person to provide this program? Or rather someone else?
- During school hours or after school?
- At the beginning of the school year or later on?
- Should your parents be involved?
- What do you think about online support? Such as Microsoft Teams?
- Would you be motivated to participate in a program you just described?

Closing question: Give one sentence that describes what you think is the most important/essential factor when considering the support for students with planning problems in secondary education?

Thank you