INFORMATION TO USERS

AN EVALUATION OF SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JUNIOR CLASS OF

THE ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOL

by

Patrick W. Cullen

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Interdepartmental Area of Administration,
Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor Ward Sybouts

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 1998

UMI Number: 9917826

UMI

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

DISSERTATION TITLE

AN EVALUATION OF SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE

JUNIOR CLASS OF THE ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOL

BY

Patrick W. Cullen

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

APPROVED	DATE
(signature)	11/25/98
Signature	
Ward Sybouts	
Typed Name	
(signature)	11/25/98
Signature	
Larry L. Dlugosh	
Typed Name	
(signature)	11/25/98
Signature	
Donald F. Uerling	
Typed Name	
(signature)	11/25/98
Signature	
L. James Walter	
Typed Name	
Signature	
Typed Name	
Signature	
Typed Name	

GRADUATE COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

AN EVALUATION OF SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JUNIOR CLASS OF THE ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOL

Patrick W. Cullen, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 1998

Advisor: Ward Sybouts

The purpose for conducting this study was to examine student success at Alliance High School, Alliance, Nebraska. Student success, which was based on weighted GPA and CTBS scores, was compared with nine selected characteristics to determine which characteristics were related to student success.

The dependent variable was "success" in school as measured by the weighted GPA scale and CTBS scores. Independent variables included the following characteristics: (1) family, (2) socio-economic background, (3) ethnicity, (4) school attendance, (5), involvement in school activities, (6) gender, (7) job, (8) homework, and (9) sense of belonging. A survey instrument was developed that included the common characteristics that served as the independent variables. In addition, the Florida Key Self Evaluation instrument was used to determine a student's sense of belonging. The data were collected during the student's junior English class. The analyses used included a multiple regression analysis, correlations, and a comparison of means.

The significant findings from the study were:

1. The relationships between the father's educational level and the CTBS scores and GPA of the students were statistically significant.

2. The relationships between CTBS scores and GPA and students involved in school activities were statistically significant.

3. Students who reported that (a) academic success was important, (b) sponsors or coaches took more time to visit, and (c) they felt more comfortable participating in class had significantly higher GPAs and CTBS scores.

4. Students who reported that their job was more important than school and worked more than 20 hours a week had significantly lower GPAs and CTBS scores.

5. Students who used the computer to do homework had significantly higher GPAs.

6. The students who were most actively involved in homework earned higher grades.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A look at education shows countless success stories in secondary
schools. Many students are excelling; yet others experience very little
success. "A decade of debate on school reform has made one thing clear:
the public expects more than our schools are delivering. Society now
expects all graduates to have the knowledge and skills that a generation ago
were expected only in students headed for elite colleges" (Bruer, 1994,
p. 32). School personnel, parents, and society as a whole are concerned
with the improvement in education. A tremendous amount of time and
money has been spent on school improvement with some very positive
results.

Not everybody agrees that school improvement has made a
difference. Smith (1995) in his article, "Let's Declare Education A
Disaster and Get On With Our Lives," stated:

> They waste their own and other people's time and energy
> trying to find and implement these solutions. Typically,
> they try harder to do more of something that is already
> being done although what is being done is probably one of
> the problems. (p. 585)

Many times school improvement plans do not work. In some plans,
the student needs are not addressed. Smith (1995), like many parents, does
not realize that significant change may not happen overnight. A school
improvement plan to address the needs of all students is very difficult to

develop. Why some students are successful and other fail is still a major
challenge for school officials.

Researchers have shown that socio-economic status, parents' level of
education, and students' early childhood learning experiences are factors
that affect success or lack of success in school. Fad and Ryser (1993)
found no significant differences between successful and unsuccessful
students when their sex, grade level, or ethnicity were studied; however,
there were significant differences when socioeconomic status of students
was studied. Significant differences were found between successful and
unsuccessful students on work habits, coping skills and peer relationships
Similar results were found in the Dornbussch (cited in Lujan, 1990) study
in which he found that students in low-achieving classes put out less
objective effort in terms of homework and attendance and paid less
attention in class.

When comparing the traits of high achieving high school students,
GED students, and young prison inmates, Motsinger (1993) discovered
some interesting facts. Motsinger found that 85 percent of the students
who were high achievers lived with both parents; in contrast, only 46
percent of the GED students and young prison inmates were from homes
where both parents were present. Motsinger found that inherent
behavioral traits did not determine success or failure in school. High
achievers considered school to be a positive working environment. The
students for whom the system held no invitation for success did not
consider the school environment to be positive.

Researchers have found dramatic differences in performance between students from high and low socio-economic status (Bruer, 1994). Other researchers have addressed the educational level of the parents and the family setting as well as socio-economic status.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this research involved the factors that related to academic success in a secondary school. The time and effort that has been spent on many of the remedial programs have not produced the expected results to help low-achieving students be successful and live productive lives. With an automated and technological society, it has become more difficult to find work for students who have not developed the appropriate skills.

Educators, parents, and the entire community must work together to find ways in which all students can reach a requisite level to enter society as productive and self-supporting citizens. This study is designed to address the vision of America 2000 (1991) in which it is stated:

> For today's student, we must radically improve today's schools by making all 110,000 of them better and more accountable for results.
>
> For tomorrow's students, we must invent new schools to meet the demands of a new century with a new generation of American schools, bringing at least 535 of them into existence by 1996 and thousands by decade's end.
>
> For those of us already out of school and in the work force, we must keep learning if we are to live and work successfully in

today's world. A "Nation at Risk" must become a "Nation of Students."

For schools to succeed, we must look beyond our classrooms to our communities and families. Schools will never be much better than the commitment of their communities. Each of our communities must become a place where learning can happen. (pp. 6-7)

Purpose

The success of students in the junior class at Alliance High School, Alliance, Nebraska, was compared using nine selected characteristics. Success in school was based on students' grade point average (GPA) and their score on the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). These data were used to determine whether there was a pattern of dominant characteristics that related to levels of success in school. The findings from this study will be used to develop programs and to address the needs of all the students.

Null Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated for this study: Student success in the junior class at Alliance High School and the nine selected characteristics used as independent variables in this study are not related.

Independent and Dependent Variables

The dependent variable was "success" in school as measured by the weighted GPA scale and CTBS scores in the high school in Alliance. Independent variables included the following characteristics: (1) family,

(2) socio-economic background, (3) minority status, (4) school attendance, (5) involvement in school activities, (6) gender, (7) job, (8) homework, and (9) sense of belonging.

The data from this research were used to identify any of the nine independent variables that were statistically more prevalent in the junior class relating to success in school. The statistical procedures of multiple regression analysis and comparison of means were utilized to analyze the data.

Limitations

1. The researcher assumed the responses of students involved in the data collection were honest and open.

2. One school was involved in the study; therefore, generalizations from the findings have inherent limitations.

Delimitations

1. This study was limited to Alliance High School, Alliance, Nebraska.

2. This study was limited to the junior class of Alliance High School.

3. This study was limited to the nine characteristics that were identified as independent variables.

Definition of Terms

Family. A group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption and residing together (Good, 1973).

Educational level. The knowledge and development relating from an educational process (Webster, 1977).

Ethnicity. The condition of belonging to a particular ethnic group (Moore, 1982).

Homework. Class assignments that are completed outside the regular class period.

Job. A unit of a trade or task done by a worker in return for pay; an employment classification (Good, 1973).

Socio-economic status. The level indicative of both the social and the economic position of an individual or group (Good, 1973).

School activities. The area of the total curriculum which includes experiences not usually provided in typical classes, such as work experiences, out-of-school experiences, camp experiences, clubs, interscholastics, and intramural athletics (Good, 1973).

Students at-risk. Children whose education is likely to be at risk due to physical or social handicaps (Page & Thomas, 1977).

Procedures

The data collected for this study were obtained by the following procedures:

1. Pertinent literature was reviewed.

2. An appropriate survey instrument was developed by reviewing instruments from similar studies and instruments used in commercial studies.

3. The survey instrument was validated through the use of a focus group for initial refinement and a pilot survey.

4. The survey instrument was revised and re-validated.

5. IRB approval for study was obtained.

6. Sample populations were identified and selected.

7. Previous authorization as required was obtained.

8. The survey was administered.

9. The results were tabulated.

10. The data were analyzed through appropriate statistical procedures:

    (a) Measures of central tendency

    (b) Comparison of clarified data

    (c) Multiple regression analysis

11. The results of the data analysis were summarized.

12. Warranted conclusions were drawn.

A thorough description of the above procedures is presented in Chapter III.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study will be useful in the school improvement process. Data from this study will aid in developing programs and interventions to help students become more successful in

school. "What we need, then, is a better understanding of our public schools and the specific problems that beset them. Only with this understanding can we begin to address the problems with some assurance of creating better schools" (Goodlad, 1984, p. 2).

School personnel can use this study to identify characteristics that accompany at-risk behaviors. Students who are at risk of failing or dropping out of school can be identified more quickly if some characteristics of success or failure can be clearly defined. The data from this research can be used as a tool to assist school administrators write handbooks and curriculum guides and develop individual educational programs. This study can help school personnel improve instructional strategies for all students.

Educators must be able to identify students who are successful and students who are not meeting standards of the school or the community. Identifying and measuring achievement is only part of the process to help students excel and benefit from the many educational opportunities offered in schools today (Goodlad, 1984). The central theme of this study was to analyze the factors that related to the success and non-success of students. With this information, school personnel can develop educational strategies to help all students be successful.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter includes current research on each of the nine variables utilized in this study: (1) family, (2) socio-economic background, (3) ethnicity, (4) school attendance, (5) involvement in school activities (6) gender, (7) job, (8) homework, and (9) sense of belonging

Family

Family Background

Educational professionals have long known that family background is a stronger predictor of academic success than school or teacher characteristics. Although his position was debated, Coleman (1966) told educators in the 1960s that the importance of the family background related to education. Coleman's position has been reinforced by several American and international researchers. Educators and educational reformers, however, have tended to be preoccupied with what the schools are or are not doing; thus, they have overlooked the importance of family background (Zill, 1992).

A series of drastic alterations in the patterns of family living in the United States has taken place in the latter part of the twentieth century. According to the 1991 National Center for Health Statistics, one of every

two marriages in the United States ends in divorce. Each year, approximately 2.5 percent the children in the United States undergo the painful experience of a separation or divorce by their parents. At the time of this study, the number of children who were born outside of marriage in the United States totaled 1.1 million, or 27 percent of all births. Two-thirds of all births to black mothers occurred outside of marriage (Zill, 1992).

Changes in family patterns have had an effect on academic achievement. One in every four babies born each year in the United States is born to a mother who has not completed high school. Twenty-four percent of the children under six are living in poverty; 28 percent of all preschool children are living with a single parent or stepparents; and one-half million children are living apart from both of their parents. Each of these conditions--low parent education, poverty, not living with both birth parents--has been shown to increase a child's chances of experiencing problems in school (Zill, 1992).

The U.S. Bureau of Census (Ballen & Moles, 1994) report revealed that the percentage of traditional two-parent families is declining. In 1990, only 26 percent of the families in the United States consisted of a married couple with children under age 18, compared with 31 percent in the 1980 and 40 percent in 1970. The U.S. Bureau of Census report showed that from 1970 to 1990 single-parent families increased some 2.8 million to a total of 9.7 million, and nearly all were headed by women.

> Only 7 percent of all families today are headed by two parents
> with one parent staying at home. Most children today either
> live in single-parent homes or have two wage-earning parents.

As a result, parents are more difficult to reach and often
cannot attend school events and functions. (pp. 3-4)

Education Level

The 1988 National Health Interview Survey on Child Health revealed
that 18 percent of all children in the United States, aged 7 to 17, repeated a
grade. The likelihood of being held back varied markedly with parents'
educational level. Among children whose parents had not completed high
school, 33 percent repeated a grade. When the parents' level of education
ended with high school completion, 21 percent of the children in the United
States repeated a grade. Zill (1992) reported that the children of college
graduates had a repetition rate of nine percent, and the second generation
of children of college graduates has a seven percent chance of grade
repetition.

There was about a 25 percent chance of children who lived in a
home without both parents repeating a grade. Children who lived with
both parents had about a 13 percent chance of repeating a grade (Zill,
1992).

Family characteristics associated with school difficulties were more
common in some racial and ethnic groups than in others. In the 1988
Health Interview Survey, 28 percent of black children and 21 percent of
Hispanic children had repeated a grade, as contrasted with 16 percent of
white and 4 percent of Asian children. When grade repetition rates were
adjusted for differences in parent education, income, and family
composition, the ethnic disparities in grade repetition were substantially
reduced. Zill (1992) wrote, ". . . the achievement deficits of ethnic

children are at least partly attributable to differences in the parental education level, income, and structure of the families in which they are growing up." (p. 7)

Black and Hispanic students showed gains in academic achievement levels between 1970 and 1990 as indicated by the data from the National Center for Educational Statistics. While the proportion of children in single-parent families was increasing during this time, and poverty rates remained high, the analysts suggested that family trends of disruption may be less important regarding achievement than the rise in parent education levels that occurred at the same time. When several family factors were jointly used to predict student achievement, parent education, not income or family structure, was the strongest predictor of grade failure. Parents' educational level was seen as a stronger predictor of grade repetition than family income, welfare and poverty status, family structure, ethnic group, or family size. "Clearly, the family matters for pupil achievement. But we have a way to go before the paths of influence are fully mapped" (Zill, 1992, p. 11).

The mothers of students in a lower level English course at Sacramento City Junior College had a significantly lower level of education than did the mothers of students in a higher level course. The educational level of the lower level students' fathers was one level lower than the fathers of students in the higher level course (Boese & Briggs, 1991).

> Families must also play a key role. Research shows that the
> educational attainment of parents--mothers, particularly--is the
> best single predictor of a child's academic performance. And
> the educational atmosphere in the home, the extent to which
> the home environment supports and encourages learning, plays

a critical role in determining the educational success of each and every child.

Parents are every child's first teacher. Yet many parents, particularly disadvantaged parents, are unable to foster in the home an atmosphere to promote academic learning. Millions come from homes that never valued book learning and never developed the requisite literacy skills to help children with their schoolwork. Many also lack the know-how and the confidence to enter the school and become effective advocates for their child's education. And increasingly, single parents and even parents in two-parent families find themselves too busy earning a living to devote significant time to their children's schooling. (Mendel & Lincoln, 1991, p. 29)

A salient finding from traditional research on both adult education and early childhood intervention programs is that the mother's level of education is one of the most important factors influencing children's reading levels and other school achievement.

Generally, traditional research has revealed that more highly educated mothers have greater success in providing their children with the cognitive and language skills that contribute to early success in school. Also children of mothers with high levels of education stay in school longer than children of mothers with low levels of education. (Benjamin, 1993, p. 2)

Peer Comparisons

Students in school felt their parents are pressuring them to compete with other children athletically and academically according to Goto (1995). Similarly, the students looked to the accomplishments of their friends in order to determine the best opportunities for advancement in the educational system. It appears the influence of family and personal aspirations for success were relatively distant motivations, compared with

the students' more immediate concerns about where they stood in relation to their peers.

Social interaction for some people appeared to be the primary emphasis of the school purpose. Goodlad (1984) noted that 15.9 percent of the students, 9.9 percent of the teachers, and 8.7 percent of the parents rated social interaction at school to be more important than intellectual development, vocational training, or personal involvement. Goodlad concluded that junior and senior high school youths can be excessively preoccupied with physical appearance, popularity in the peer group, and games and athletics.

A quarter of a century ago, Gordon (cited in Goodlad, 1984) documented the dominance of high school social life. Other researchers have confirmed and extended his findings. In his study, Goodlad (1984) noted an apparent intensity of these nonacademic interests in school.

Community members and school personnel in the past decade have experienced a tremendous amount of negative social interactions among school-aged students. Some of these social interactions can be very dangerous and interrupt the educational setting in the schools. A positive solution to these social problems has not been found, but parent involvement seems to be one option that has been attempted by many school personnel and community members in order to prevent highly inappropriate behaviors.

Gang involvement is one of the most significant problems facing communities and the students in schools. In the Jefferson County School District, a suburb of Denver, Colorado, 500 middle school youths were

given a survey to determine why people join gangs. Some of the reasons students gave for joining gangs included, "it's cool," "it's family," "drugs," "for security," "racial issues," "enhanced images," "home problems," "peer pressure," "authority over others," "family members belong to gangs," and "boredom." An eight-year-old juvenile arrested for shoplifting said the reason he joined a gang was, "I had a need for acceptance. My peers thought I was cool. You do whatever it takes to have someone like you" (Hieb, 1992, p. 1).

Hieb (1992) described the reasons certain youths join gangs.

There is a certain type of youth attracted to gangs--typically a young person with major unmet needs in his or her life. These young people are referred to as being "high risk." For example, lack of a positive male role model in the family is one trait many gang members have in common. Older gang members become "father figures" and gang families become support groups reinforcing one another's false ideas of what "masculine and strong" means. Masculine comes to mean violent and controlling. Other areas of need are: the need for acceptance and approval; the need for attention and identity; the need to have power and respect. (p. 1)

Gang members have several similar characteristics. Gangs offer youth status, acceptance, and self-esteem they cannot find elsewhere. In poorer communities, a breakdown of family and community structures may leave youth particularly susceptible to gang recruitment. Gangs, however, also form in affluent areas among youth who feel alienated from friends and families (Gaustad, 1991).

Parent Involvement

An extensive amount of research has shown that parent involvement is a significant factor in the success of a child's education. New federally funded programs. such as the Even Start, home-school partnership, parent volunteer programs, and other traditional strategies, have been used to gain parental support and improve the quality of education for all students.

The authors of <u>The Nation At Risk</u> reported that the parents are the children's most important teacher. While the research in many areas is still inconclusive, one finding has been confirmed--parent involvement in education works. Parents are the only ones who oversee the child's entire education. Parents are responsible because they have that child every day (Carlson, 1991).

> All parents value education. Partnerships among parents, children, and schools help to ensure that the rights of all students to an appropriate education are honored. Parents should be involved at all levels of decision making regarding their child's education. Empowered families are more receptive to new ideas and educational innovations. Schools should be family friendly, responsive, and inviting for all parents and other caretakers. (National Association of School Psychologists, 1990, p. 5)

In 1964, the nationally funded Head Start program was implemented. The program was successful; however, the students involved in this program were not as successful as their early Head Start progress indicated they would be. Carlson (1991) reported that researchers began to recognize the Head Start program's success was due, in part, to its parent involvement component. Without the parent involvement, regular school programs could not support the students' early gains.

Epstein has been involved in research involving the family and schools since 1970. The results of her research and those from other studies are overwhelmingly supportive of parent involvement. Epstein wrote, "Research conducted for nearly a quarter century has shown convincingly that parent involvement is important for children's learning, attitudes about school and aspirations" (cited in Carlson, 1991, p. 10).

Wlodkowski and Jaynes, authors of the book, Eager to Learn, stated, "The greater the positive relationship between teachers and parents in what they say and do about children learning, the more powerful their mutual influence can be upon children" (cited in Carlson, 1991, p. 10). The authors also reported that parents appeared to be the primary influence on a child's motivation to learn. According to Wlodkowski and Jaynes, the four major influences on a child's motivation to learn include the culture, the family, the school, and the child herself or himself.

A longitudinal study of the effect of parents' behavior on the intellectual development of children was conducted by Hart and Risley. The findings in this study were good and bad. Even poor, uneducated parents were capable of providing the kinds of experiences required for healthy intellectual development. However, if parents did not provide these experiences, making up for the deficiency with remedial programs was nearly impossible (cited in Chance, 1997).

In an additional study by Hart and Risley on vocabulary development, the researchers found the biggest difference in developing a child's vocabulary was the amount the parents talked to infants. The better educated a mother was the more she spoke to her child. Welfare

parents addressed an average of about 600 words per hour to their children; working parents directed about 1,000 words per hour to their children; and professional parents addressed more than 2,000 words per hour to their children. The cumulative differences in exposure to language were staggering. By the time the welfare children had reached age three, they had heard 10 million words. Twenty million words were heard by the children of the working-class families, and 30 million by children in homes headed by professional parents (cited in Chance, 1997, p. 507).

> The differences in parental behavior were associated with differences in the infants' achievement. Those children whose parents talked a lot--provided lots of positive feedback, lengthy explanations, and so on--scored higher on an I.Q. test and on measures of vocabulary development at age 3. When 29 of the children in the study were followed up in the third grade, the pattern of early parental behavior continued to predict performance on language and I.Q. tests.

> Neither socioeconomic level nor race could account for the differences in intellectual accomplishments. In fact, the correlation between socioeconomic level and test performance declined from age 3 to grade 3, while the association between parental behavior and test performance remained strong. What matters, it seems, is not whether the parents are black or white, rich or poor, educated or uneducated; what matters is what they do. (Chance, 1997, p. 507)

In an article in the <u>Omaha World-Herald</u>, Wright (1997) reported the reasons students are successful in school. The students who were interviewed gave credit to their parents for their success in school. From kindergarten to graduation, the students said their parents made the biggest difference between their success or failure and excellence or mediocrity in their education (Wright, 1997).

A popular educational speaker and the developer of the teacher training program, "Parents on Your Side," Canter advised teachers that parent involvement is crucial to their goal of educating students. According to Canter, even if the teachers have uncomfortable experiences at times, it is up to the teacher to make sure parents get the support they need to do their job (cited in Carlson, 1991).

Family Involvement

Most school administrators and teachers leave it to the families to decide how to become involved in their children's schools. Some families are highly involved in their children's education and provide important guidance for their children; whereas other families have much less involvement in the schools their children attend. Epstein (cited in Carlson, 1991) reported from her research in the 1980s that when teachers did not specifically seek contact with parents, the better educated parents tended to become more involved in the schools, and the result was higher achievement for their children. Epstein emphasized that researchers have not investigated whether less educated parents do not want to become involved with their children or whether teacher practices have inhibited their interactions (cited in Carlson, 1991).

The primary responsibility for a youth's social and personal development rests with the family. Changes in family structure, labor force participation, and the poverty rate have made it increasingly difficult for families to provide their children with the supervision, activities, and supports necessary for a successful transition into adulthood. Clearly, a growing proportion of youth and families needs assistance if the youth are

to overcome the forces of poverty, joblessness, and racism that place them at the risk of not realizing their potential as self-sufficient and productive citizens (Jones, 1990).

In 1992, 77 percent of the parents of public school eighth graders attended parent-teacher conferences, and 62 percent of the parents participated in policy decisions, according to reports from a sampling of principals (National Educational Goals Report, 1995).

> In 1993, 63 percent of parents of students in grades 3-12 reported that they participated in two or more activities in their child's school. These activities included attending a general school meeting, attending a school or class event, and acting as a volunteer at the school or serving on a school committee. (p. 56)

Strong Families, Strong Schools is a report in which 30 years of research compiled by the U.S. Department of Education were summarized (Ballen & Moles, 1994). The authors of this report found that what the family does to enhance learning is more important to student success than the family's income or educational level. From this research five key research findings were reported.

> Three factors over which parents exercise authority--student absenteeism, variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching--accounted for nearly 90 percent of the difference in eighth-grade mathematics test scores across 37 states and the District of Columbia on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Thus, controllable home factors account for almost all the differences in average student achievement across states.
>
> Although math and science performance of American students on NAEP and math scores on the SAT have shown improvement in recent years, NAEP reading scores and SAT

verbal scores have remained flat. Reading is more dependent on learning activities in the home than is math or science.

Studies of individual families show that what the family does is more important to student success than family income or education. This is true whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents finished high school or not, or whether the child is in preschool or in the upper grades.

The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.

International comparisons show the high academic success of students from Asian countries, which many attribute to the priority their families give to education. (Ballen & Moles, 1994, p. 111)

Raiche and others (1983) found four variables out of a wide range of factors that influenced the effectiveness of education. These included family commitment toward educational objectives, teacher attitudes toward students, classroom climate, and the use of direct instruction.

Student Attitudes

Urban educators, according to Haberman (1997), reinforce the anti-work values that currently pervade urban schools. According to Haberman, urban school educators struggle and fail at teaching their students basic skills. The urban school environment fosters a set of behaviors and beliefs that enable youngsters to slip and slide through middle school and high school. Urban youths are not only poorly prepared for work but are systematically and carefully trained to be quitters and failures.

According to Haberman (1997):

Students' life in urban schools is composed of periods and days that stand on their own. Textbooks are not taken home and homework is never completed. The curriculum that students are taught must be compressed into those isolated periods during stand-alone days. Students seldom remember anything they have been taught before. The introduction of any new concept or skill inevitably requires an extensive review of everything that precedes it. Some youngsters have learned to play dumb to keep teachers from teaching the lessons they have planned. In most cases, students are genuinely ignorant of the most elementary concepts--things that teachers must assume that students know if teachers are to stick to the required curriculum.

For peace in the classroom, teachers many times will give a student a D. If a student does not disrupt the class, the teacher ignores the fact that the student is doing nothing. Just being in class is all that matters. Work from these non-achieving students is not expected, only the absence of negative behavior. By rewarding inaction, un-involvement, and detachment, urban school educators promulgate the dangerous myth that the minimum standard for doing satisfactory work is merely showing up.

Students in urban schools feel that they can be late or absent as often as they wish, provided they have a good excuse, someone's permission, or a written note. With a valid excuse, there is no limit to the number of times a student can be late or absent from class and still be passing. If it is not the fault of the student that he/she is absent, then the student's attendance is as good as being there and being there is passing. In a recent survey urban middle school students were asked, "How many times can you be late or absent in a month and hold a regular job?" Over half of the students responded that they could be late as often as they had a good excuse. Half of the students said they could be absent any time from work if they had a good excuse. (pp. 500-501).

Students At-Risk

Twenty-one million children in the 1990s have been considered at-risk of failing in school and of failing to become productive members of the society. These children feel powerless and alienated and face a bleak future. Economic hardship is almost certain for the at-risk student in an increasingly technological economy where literacy and other basic skills are critical. School failure will drain the national economy through welfare and social service costs and seriously hamper the nation's ability to compete internationally. Children at-risk in the educational system lack a sense of connectedness to the world of school or work (D'Onofrio & Kleese, 1994).

Comer and his colleagues of the Yale University Child Study Center developed the New Haven Model for elementary school guidance. They noted that the key to breaking the cycle of underachievement was to obtain a better match between the message delivered at home and the message delivered at school. The New Haven Model, a team approach to school improvement, is led by the principal and composed of elected parents and teachers and a mental-health professional (cited in Mendel & Lincoln, 1991).

Student Success

In the early 1900s, research by Thorndike (cited in Texas Education Agency, 1989) showed strong correlations between student achievement and intelligence. Thorndike's highly influential experiments, however, involved all students receiving the same kind of instructions for the same amount of time. It was not until 1963 that Carroll (cited in Texas

Education Agency, 1989) demonstrated sharply different results, using a variety of teaching approaches and giving students as much time as they needed to achieve content mastery. The experiments by Carroll indicated that, given enough time and appropriate instructional delivery, almost any student can, in fact, attain mastery.

Many demographic characteristics, such as poverty and weak English-language skills, that students bring with them to the educational process have been shown to correlate with academic success (Texas Education Agency, 1989):

> The basic premise of the Effective Schools Movement is all students can succeed in school if given an appropriate environment and support. An important element of this concept is the presumption that all students can learn, although in different ways and at different rates. (p.2)

Characteristics of At-Risk Students

Researchers have shown that, for students at risk of school failure, drug use was a critical dimension of their culture and interactions with peers. Eggert and Powell-Cope (1994) found that a high-risk youth, who was a student in danger of failing or dropping out of school, reported greater drug involvement than did the typical youth, who was not in danger of failing or dropping out of school. Rosenbaum (cited in Eggert & Powell-Cope, 1994)) reported that an alarming number of adolescents were at high-risk of dropping out of school and were abusing drugs such as alcohol, cocaine, and inhalants.

Many of the same risk and protective factors present for drug abusers were also present for potential school dropouts. Jessor (1993)

reported that school deviance (truancy, poor performance) and drug involvement were co-occurring behaviors within an adolescent risk life style.

High-risk youth, compared to typical youth, had lower grade point averages, earned fewer semester credits, and were absent more from school. Use of smoking tobacco, beer/wine, hard liquor, and marijuana was significantly higher in the high-risk group than in the typical youth group. Also, the high-risk youth, compared to typical youth, reported significantly more problems with drug use control than did typical students, including not stopping after one drink, using more than one drug at the same time, using more than intended, and using drugs and alcohol to help solve problems. Overall, adverse consequences of drug use were more severe for the high-risk group; low levels of consequences were reported among typical youth (Eggert & Powell-Cope, 1994).

High-risk youth rated satisfaction with the school schedules high and rated school attendance low. The typical student rated attendance high and the school atmosphere low. High-risk students moved from school to school more often than typical students. Thirty-two percent of high-risk students moved two or more times while only 12 percent of typical students relocated. High-risk youth had a much less satisfying school experience; these students valued school less, evaluated school performance lower, and moved from school to school more than did the typical high school student (Eggert & Powell-Cope, 1994).

Peer influences and the social network factors, according to Eggert and Powell-Cope (1994) had different values for the high- and the low-risk

students. High-risk youth reported that over half of their friends used alcohol and skipped classes. High-risk youth had significantly more close friends who skipped classes, used alcohol and other drugs, invited them to use drugs, did not care about school, and often got into trouble. Eggert and Powell-Cope found that the characteristics of close friends suggested higher levels of deviant bonding for high-risk youth than for typical youth.

High-risk youth experienced more family disruptions and problems than typical school students. Fewer high-risk youth than typical students lived with both parents. Thirty seven percent of the high-risk students and 62 percent of the typical students lived with both parents. Also, 60 percent of the high-risk youth experienced parental divorce as compared to 36 percent of typical students. Parents of high-risk students used more drugs, and siblings used drugs and reported significantly lower levels of conventional family bonding in three areas: importance of family goals, family goals met, and time spent engaged in family activities (Eggert & Powell-Cope, 1994).

The evidence pointed to significant differences across a broad range of dimensions between students at-risk for school dropout and typical high school students. According to Eggert and Powell-Cope (1994), high-risk youth had more emotional problems, greater levels of drug involvement, more negative school experience, more family problems, and received less support in their social network than did typical students.

While risk factors of adolescents have been the focus of research and intervention, the role of protective factors has also become a concern, according to Jessor (1993). Jessor identified protective factors as resources

that promote successful adolescent development and/or buffer risk factors. The protective factors identified were the importance of school goals, self-esteem, life satisfaction, importance of family goals, success in meeting family goals, time spent on family activities, and amount of social support from important people in the student's network. Researchers have confirmed that potential high school dropouts display a complex web of risk factors and deficits in protective factors that are significantly different from those of typical high school students.

Eggert and Powell-Cope (1994) identified individual and personal factors for potential school dropouts in contrast to those of typical high school students. The researchers reported that at risk students had a greater pervasiveness for use of drugs at school, during the week and weekends and when partying with friends. The high risk students also used more tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and hard drugs. Emotional stress was also identified as an individual behavior for potential school dropouts.

Adolescent risk behaviors, such as drug use, unprotected sexual activity, and withdrawal from school environment, are an organized and interrelated constellation of risk and protective behaviors that were reported by Jessor (1991) and Eggert and Powell-Cope (1994).

Researchers have reported a link between underachievement and adolescent suicide behaviors. Lewis and colleagues (cited in Eggert and Power-Cope, 1994) found suicide attempters, relative to non attempters, had significantly lower school achievement.

According to Eggert and Powell-Cope (1994), potential dropouts, compared to typical youth, experienced both increased peer risk factors

and decreased peer protective factors, including more friends who used alcohol and other drugs and invited each other to use drugs or drink alcohol. Also high school students often got into trouble at school, were not active in school, and provided less support for school.

Other salient features of the social network for youth were the family structure and support within the family. Compared to typical youth, potential school dropouts in the Eggert and Powell-Cope (1994) study reported increased levels of risk factors including family distress and disorganization. At-risk students had more serious conflicts with parents, more parental divorce, and more multiple moves resulting in school moves. Also, high-risk students had parents and siblings who used drugs. Several researchers (cited in Eggert & Powell-Cope, 1994) reported that youth were at greater risk for school failure, drug involvement, and emotional distress when there were serious conflicts in the home, family disorganization, and family stress, and that parental and sibling drug use was one of the strongest predictors of adolescent drug involvement.

Potential school dropouts had a low satisfaction level with the school schedule and school atmosphere. At-risk students had poor school attendance and low grades, with lower levels of school protective factors as compared to the typical student. High-risk youth demonstrated weak conventional school bonding, felt like "outsiders" to typical teacher support, perceived classroom activities as boring, and had low regard for education. Often these students were perceived by teachers as "losers." Youth at high-risk of potentially dropping out of school had significantly greater risk factors and fewer protective factors in the domains of personal

resources, peer influences, family influences, and school environmental factors (Eggert & Powell-Cope, 1994).

Frymier (1992) conducted a study of 34 student at-risk variables. He reported that 98 percent of the 1,122 comparisons indicated that students at-risk on one item were more likely to be at-risk on other items than students not at-risk on the first item. In his study, more than 83 percent of the differences were statistically significant. If a youngster were at-risk on one variable, the odds were overwhelming that the student would be at-risk on many other risk items.

According to the Frymier (1992), academic failure was caused by personal pain, family tragedy, family socioeconomic situation, and family instability. Students who experienced academic failure tended to experience more personal pain and to come from families with higher incidences of family tragedy, lower socioeconomic levels, and less family stability.

Successful Students

The way students come to feel, think, and understand the learning process depends to a large extent on their attitudes and behaviors of volition, self-regulation, and self-efficacy (Ornstein,1996).

Volition refers to a disposition to do something based on one's own resources and efforts without external pressure. It represents a type of diligence, a strength of will, an industriousness that helps people engage in goal directness, focused behavior, and sustained activities. Self-regulated learning overlaps with volition. The term applies to students who understand their own thoughts and emotions related to learning and are

able to control and focus these thoughts and emotions on the task. Self-efficacy is primarily concerned with learners' confidence, their personal view of their abilities, and their tendency to attribute success to active engagement in learning (Ornstein, 1996).

Students' success is related to the way their resources and energies are expended, how time is managed, the ability to selectively attend to and complete a task, ability to cope with failure, and emotional control. Students who are identified as underachievers have the cognitive ability to produce average or above average schoolwork, but their lack of attentiveness, direction, and confidence puts them at a disadvantage so they are often slotted into below-average learning tracks. Teachers give up on lower-level students by discouraging them, ignoring them, allowing insufficient time for them to respond in class, and in general treating them as less capable than other students (Ornstein, 1996).

Self-regulated learners take charge and accept greater responsibility for their academic performance than do non-regulated learners. The high achieving students understand how to manipulate and make the environment work for them. When these students encounter obstacles such as poor teachers, poor texts, or inadequate study conditions, they make adjustments and still find ways to succeed. A underachiever or a non-regulated learner would not be as successful in adverse conditions (Ornstein, 1996).

Teachers' perceptions and expectations also have a significant effect on a child's success in school. Nash, Ryan, Stevenson, and Brophy and Good (cited in Brophy & Evertson, 1981) reported that teachers think well

of high achievers and usually share mutually satisfying patterns of interaction with them. Brophy and Good noted that teachers give more feedback to higher-level students; teachers are more persistent in seeking improved responses from higher level students; and the high achievers were taught in ways likely to maximize achievement.

Socio-Economic Background

Poverty

Researchers have shown that poverty is one of the leading causes of school failures and high school dropouts. Almost 50 percent of poor youth (ages 19-23) rank in the bottom fifth of the standardized test score distribution. Disadvantaged youth are three times more likely to leave school prematurely than middle and upper-class youth. Researchers have shown that, regardless of the race, young males, with a history of poverty, low levels of education, and lack of steady employment opportunities, are at the highest risk of incarceration (Jones, 1990).

The authors of Strong Families, Strong Schools (Ballen & Moles, 1994) stated that low-income children suffer serious academic losses over the summer, largely because low-income families and communities have limited academic resources. The authors noted that a family's use of educational resources is more important to student success than family income or education.

Freiberg (1993) reported that unemployed parents have fewer resources to support their children's school activities. Limited resources and other factors have damaged the resilience of inner-city families and

diminished their ability to focus on and support the education of their children. Moreover, many inner-city adults have negative memories of school. These parents' experiences of rejection in their schools, a decade earlier, are reinforced through their children's schooling experiences. Yet, individuals can overcome adverse conditions in their families, school, and communities with the help and support of a family member, a teacher, a school, or a community person.

Numerous children in low income households fare well. Studies have shown, however, that children in such circumstances are more likely to die in infancy and early childhood, suffer serious illnesses, become pregnant during their teen years, or drop out of school. They are also less likely to continue education beyond high school. Despite the association of these outcomes with poverty, the direction of causality is less clear. The diminished life chances of the poor may be linked to the lack of access to adequate health care and nutrition, the often lower quality of schooling in low-income neighborhoods, the stress of poverty on family relationships, or a variety of other elements (Kirst, 1993).

> In conjunction with poverty, an array of forces permeate American school systems and the lives of many youth, combining to create an environment that is inimitable to student development and success. These forces include: a lack of bilingual teachers and academic programs; a lack of environmental and emotional supports at home; too few significant adult relationships and a paucity of positive role models; low parental educational attainment; low teacher and school expectations; culturally insensitive teachers; unqualified teachers; a lack of supplies and inadequate facilities; disproportionately high suspension rates among certain groups of youth; students who are behind in grade level or older than classmates; high student-teacher ratios; tracking; gangs

and school violence; early marriage, pregnancy and parenthood; and a lack of connection between school and work that enables young people to see the value of academic attainment. (Jones, 1990, p 10)

Group Characteristics

Students who differ on certain group characteristics such as sex, socio-economic status, or ethnicity, differ in academic performance. The fact that group characteristics predict academic performance does not mean that particular groups of people have little academic potential. Instead, it may mean that the schools are failing to help certain groups live up to their academic potential. If this is the case, educators are not keeping up with the publicly stated goals of the public schools to provide equal education to all students (Lujan, 1980).

Liaw and Meisels (1993) reported that boys, minorities, and children from low socio-economic status (SES) families were disproportionately retained. Students who fall into these combined categories are often seen as less able by their teachers, regardless of their actual abilities.

Fedigan and Gay (1978) reported that various factors concerning achievement are inconclusive. Several characteristics that affect achievement in school can and often do exist simultaneously. For example, low achievement scores could be attributed to all or several of the following factors: socio-economic status, which varies from one area to another; teaching methods, which vary a great deal and are difficult to measure; and cultural attitudes toward schooling, which may vary over time

Minority Status

Minority students now account for 20 percent of the school age population, and by the year 2000, 40 percent of the students in the United States will come from minority races. Minority students' low achievement is well documented in educational literature, and the pervasiveness of low achievement and the anticipated numbers of minority students underscore the urgency of the problem. A major problem with minority achievement is the belief held by some educators that African Americans are intellectually inferior (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1995).

The strength of the nation is the ability of the schools to educate majorities as well as minorities, women as well as men, and children as well as adults. Quality education is not only a national goal; it is a necessity. An institution that provides "effective schooling" is one that is able to maintain sustained progress toward national goals and expectations for all students (Cooper, 1990).

Youth are not competing with other youth; however, the various levels of social class families do compete. Care and concern in each family can be constant and abundant; but, if the class resources are uneven, the outcome in the area of achievement will also be uneven. Each child has to have someone in their corner fighting for them in order to remove obstacles that the system puts in the way. Some minorities think that the core society wants the best and the brightest to succeed in education as long as these talented students are not from a racial minority; just as they were

not to be from a religious minority group many years ago (Betances, 1990).

> Many minority young people have experienced and are experiencing rejection. They have internalized a negative vision of themselves. They think there is something wrong with their eyes, or that they're ugly, or that they have been cursed by God or something. Somewhere along the line, when we talk about making schools work for under-achieving minorities, they've got to empower those children to reject rejection, not to reject themselves. (p. 29)

Cultural Beliefs

Cultural deprivation is often used as an explanation for low achievement. Evidence has been provided in various studies that culture, low socio-economic status, language, and general exposure can cause poor performance. These theories are not widely accepted, and other researchers have criticized and discredited such beliefs. According to a curriculum report prepared by researchers at the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1995), the enemy of black achievement can be categorized into four areas: precursors, perceptions, probabilities, and peers. Precursors is a past event, situation, attitude, or practice that may negatively affect black achievement. Perceptions become enemies of black achievement when such perceptions foster beliefs, behavior, and expectations that have negative impacts on academic performance. Probabilities become enemies of black achievement when these probabilities forecast negative events. Peers become enemies of African American achievement when their influence negatively affects academic performance, such as the gang element and educational values.

Minority Student Success

A study was conducted of 55,355 minority students who were classified as academically talented. To be classified as academically talented, the students had to score in the 95th percentile or above on the ACT assessment. Christensen and others (1992) found that the minority groups who were classified in the highest poverty category were most under-represented in this study. Despite the close relationship between SES and ACT scores, a surprising number of poor minority students did attain the 95th percentile on the ACT. According to the authors, many of these minority students were overcoming the restrictions of poverty through academic success.

Many students who are poor, minority, and live with a single parent do not fit the disadvantaged student stereotype: low achiever, dropout, drug abuser, and/or teen parent. Instead many at-risk students have been very successful in school, working in their communities and staying out of trouble. These successful at-risk students have resilience. Resilience in a student is the ability to respond to risk, stress, and adversity successfully. The critical issues in education should not be who is at risk or how many of the risk factors a student has; the issue should be on how educators foster resilience (Johns Hopkins University, 1992).

There are four protective mechanisms to help disadvantaged students develop resilience (Johns Hopkins University, 1992): reduce negative outcomes by altering either the risk itself or the child's exposure to the risk; reduce the effect of negative reactions that follow initial risk exposure; establish and maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy; and open

opportunities during critical periods in children's lives that will allow and help them attain the skills necessary for school and career success.

Research was conducted on the resilience and persistence of African-American males who graduated from high school. Two different groups of high school graduates were compared: the students who graduated from high school and went to college and the students who graduated from high school and did not go to college. Students who continued their education were more likely to formulate college plans during their senior year, aspire to a four-year degree, have positive peers, and be better prepared academically. Fatherhood and unemployment had negative implications for college enrollment (Johns Hopkins University, 1992).

Participation in public school intramural or interscholastic sports has been positively associated with the aspirations of eighth-grade African-American males to enroll in academic or college preparatory programs in high school. Athletic participation has also enhanced self-esteem, promoted positive peer relations, and related to plans to complete high school and attend college (Johns Hopkins University, 1992).

Peng and Wright (1994) researched the success of Asian American students in school. Traditionally, Asian students have had higher achievement scores, lower dropout rates, and higher college entrance rates than other students. Even Asian American students with disadvantaged backgrounds have had high academic achievement in school. Some scholars have theorized that certain characteristics of the Asian culture, such as docility, industriousness, respect for authority, and emphasis on learning, are compatible with those characteristics required for success in

school. Asian American students also have different home environments and educational activities. Their parents in general are more supportive of learning and provide them with greater learning opportunities, assistance, and pressure for learning. As documented by Coleman (1966), more than two decades ago, what students bring to school largely accounts for the difference in student achievement.

Three different analyses were done on seven different variables in the Peng and Wright (1995) study on the five primary racial groups. The racial groups were identified as Asian, Hispanic, black, white, and Native American. The total number of students involved in this sample was 9,685. In the first analysis, the three variables that had the most significant effect on student achievement were parents' educational expectations, which had a correlation coefficient of .42; parents' educational level, which had a correlation coefficient of .38; and family income, which had a correlation coefficient of .34. These data were further examined by racial-ethnic groups.

A second analysis was done by the researchers (Peng & Wright, 1995) with these data to examine the differences in the above variables between Asian American students and other racial-ethnic students. The researchers found that Asian American students had higher achievement scores than all other minority students. The difference in achievement between Asian American and white students was not significant at the .01 level. When examining the variables of home environments and educational activities, the results indicated that Asian American parents did not communicate with their children as much as black and white parents.

Asian-American parents implicitly or explicitly set higher expectations than all other parents and provided their children with more learning opportunities than other minority parents.

Some of the major differences that Peng and Wright (1995) found in this second analysis were that Asian-American students were more likely to live in a two-parent family; Asian-American parents were more likely to have an advanced degree; Asian students spent more time doing homework; and Asian students attended and participated in more educational activities outside of the regular school.

In the first two analyses of these data, the researchers (Peng and Wright, 1995) showed differences in home environments and educational activities between Asian American and other students. They did not show whether these differences accounted for the variation in academic achievement.

> Results of the first regression analysis show that race-ethnicity, as expected, was related to academic achievement. Overall, race-ethnicity accounts for 10 percent of the variance in student achievement (R (R) = .10). Results from the second regression analysis show that the school type, home environments, and educational activities account for 30 percent of the variance of student achievement (R(R) = .30), three times as much as race-ethnicity did. When all of the variables were included in the analysis, the proportion of variance accounted for was increased to 33 percent (R(R) = .33), which indicates that race-ethnicity added only 3 percent of the accountable variance (30%-33%).

> All these results indicate that the differences in home environments and educational activities largely accounted for the differences in student achievement between Asian American and other minority students. In other words, when home environments and educational activities were controlled,

the differences in student achievement were significantly reduced. (pp. 350-351)

Two major findings drawn from the study by Peng and Wright (1995) are home environments and educational activities are important factors of student academic achievement, and home environments and educational activities account for a large part of the difference in student achievement between Asian American and other minority students.

School Attendance

A study to examine factors that affect student achievement was conducted by Caldas (1993), a researcher for the Louisiana State Department of Education. Caldas categorized factors into three areas: input factors, process factors, and output factors. The input factors were defined as those factors over which the schools had little or no control. Process factors included those factors over which schools did have control, and output factors consisted of achievement scores.

The input factor variables were socio-economic background, school demographics, and school structure. The process variables were class size, school size, and student attendance (Caldas, 1993).

Caldas (1993) reported that attendance was the only statistically significant process factor of secondary school achievement. Many factors over which schools and districts had little or no control continued to have much influence on school achievement at all grade levels and geographic locations. Of those factors examined over which schools and districts did

have some control, the most significant margin was the percentage of student attendance.

Attendance is one variable that consistently emerges as the strongest predictor of graduation and school performance. Absenteeism is the best predictor of academic credit loss while a student is enrolled in school, according to Schellenberg's (1988) longitudinal study on loss of credit in high school. Truancy and absenteeism have been reported to be major at-risk indicators relating to students leaving school prior to graduation (Jacob & LoVette, 1996).

In the Louisiana Study, a study of various demographic factors and reasons for good and poor student attendance, Jacob & LoVette (1996) reported that those students with the highest GPA had the best attendance record. Boredom was reported to also be a variable that may have an effect on factors such as responsibility and personal motivation, which result in both good attendance and good grades.

Involvement In School Activities

Academic Achievement and Activity Participation

According to Lamborn and Finn (cited in Educational Research Service, 1995), extracurricular activities may increase students' sense of engagement or attachment to school and decrease the likelihood of school failure.

In his study, Christensen (cited in Klesse, 1994) found that success in college can be more accurately predicted from levels of individual achievement in such activities as debate, speech, drama, and journalism

than GPA, class rank, ACT or SAT scores, and grades in college. Similarly, studies of school dropouts have consistently shown that students who leave school prior to graduation are students who are unlikely to have participated in student activities.

A recent study was conducted by Neish (1993) to determine whether there was a correlation between participation in the cocurricular program and student success as evaluated by GPA; a positive relationship was found. Neish found that students who were involved in the cocurricular activities program attained a higher average GPA than those students who had not been involved in such programs. Neish could not conclude that participation in activity programs will guarantee academic success. It is apparent from his data that athletic and activity programs attract many bright, motivated students.

In 1992, a study (National Educational Longitudinal Study; Educational Research Service, 1995) was conducted involving high school seniors to examine the relationship between extracurricular participation and student engagement in school. Indicators of successful participation in school were found to be consistent attendance, academic achievement, and aspirations for continuing education beyond high school. Extracurricular participation was positively associated with each of these success indicators among public school seniors.

Researchers from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (Educational Research Service, 1995) stated:

> Participants in extracurricular activities reported better
> attendance than their nonparticipating classmates--half of them
> had no unexcused absence from school, and half had never

skipped a class, compared with one-third and two-fifths, respectively, of nonparticipants. Students who participated were three times as likely as nonparticipants to have grade point averages of 3.0 or higher and twice as likely to perform in the top quartile on a composite math and reading assessment. Participants were also more likely than nonparticipants to aspire to higher education--two-thirds of participants expected to complete at least a bachelor's degree, compared to about half of nonparticipants.

However, these data do not establish whether participation in extracurricular activities leads to success, successful students are more inclined to participate, or both. (p. 12)

Researchers from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (cited in Educational Research Service, 1995) found students of low socio-economic status (SEC) were less likely to participate in activities than were high-SES students. The participation of low-SES students was consistently lower than that of high-SES students in each type of activity, with the exception of vocational or professional clubs, such as the Future Farmers or Future Teachers of America. Low-SES student were more likely to participate in schools where they were in the majority and less likely to participate in more affluent school where they were in the relative minority.

In their study, Dowell, Badgett, and Hunkler (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) compared the relationship between athletic achievement and self-esteem in male athletes who had graduated from high school. The researchers reported that athletic achievement correlated positively with physical and motivational self-esteem but negatively with intellectual self-esteem. They reported that male high school athletics received somewhat higher grade point average (GPAs) than did non- athletes. Eidsmore (cited

in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported that the overall GPA of varsity football participants in Iowa was higher than the GPAs of nonparticipants. Schafer and Armer (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported similar findings. These researchers reported that male athletes averaged about .50 higher GPA than male non-athletes. The differences between the athletes and non-athletes was reduced to .11 GPA when the group was matched on father's occupation, IQ, curriculum, and previous GPA. Spreitzer and Pugh (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) did not find any significant relationship between GPA and athletic involvement.

Male students who participated only in athletics tended to have lower scores on standardized tests than did non-athletes, according to a study by Landers, Feltz, Obermeier and Brouse (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987). According to these researchers, male athletes who participated in both athletic and service activities had significantly higher SAT scores than the national average of males who participated only in athletics. Rehberg and Cohen (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported similar results.

According to Eidsmore (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987), varsity football players had higher GPAs than nonparticipants in 24 high schools studied. Schafer and Armer (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported that sophomore athletes had higher GPAs than sophomore non-athletes. Feltz and Weiss (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported that athletes-only had nonsignificantly lower scores on the American College Test (ACT). High SES-students who participated in more than five activities were positively related to high ACT scores. According to a study by Landers and others (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) athlete-only males

were below the male national average on the total verbal Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Students who were involved in athletics and service groups were above average on the SAT.

Personal-Social Characteristics

Research has been done in the area of extracurricular activity participation and self-esteem by Coleman (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987). Coleman reported that standards of acceptance were established by peers and that participation in peer-valued activities was associated with greater peer approval and higher self-esteem. Phillips (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) stated that for boys, across all activities a significant positive relationship existed between extracurricular participation and self-esteem. A significant relationship was not found for girls.

In a study on student participation in extracurricular activities, in which students in small high schools were compared to students in large high schools, Grabe (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) stated that highest scores on self-esteem were among successful small-school participants, and the lowest scores were among unsuccessful small-school male students. Grabe found the feelings of student alienation were greater in small schools than in large schools. He theorized that feelings of self-esteem and personal worth were related to pressure to participate and to achieve success in activities.

More than 40 studies reviewed by St. John (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) showed that race relations improved positive relationships with extracurricular participation. Slavin and Madden (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported that sport activities in which interracial student

interactions were promoted were related to positive racial attitudes and behaviors.

Educational Aspiration and Attainment

Researchers have indicated a positive relationship between activity participation and increased educational aspiration and attainment. Rehberg and Schafer (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) found a strong relationship among boys with low social economic standing (SES), low academic standings, and little parental encouragement and college attendance. Spady and Spreitzer and Pugh (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported similar results.

Social participation was positively correlated with educational achievement of males after high school, even when IQ and parental SES were controlled, according to Snyder (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987). Spandy (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported that boys who participated only in athletics had high self-perceived peer status and were less likely to actually attain educational goals than boys who did not participate in athletics or service activities or who participated only in service or in both service and athletic activities. Boys with high academic ability, as measured by IQ or grades, even if they participated only in athletics, were likely to achieve educational goals.

A study by Otto (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) was conducted on the effects of extracurricular participation on educational and occupational attainment independently of SES, academic ability, and academic performance. Otto reported that extracurricular participation accounted

for nine percent of the explainable variance in education attainment independently of SES, academic ability, and academic performance.

Participation in athletic activities did not directly contribute to educational attainment in males or females; however, for males social participation was strongly and independently associated with higher levels of educational attainment according to research by Hanks and Eckland (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987). Snyder and Spreitzer (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported that girls who participated in both sports and music had a statistically significant higher level of educational expectations than nonparticipants, but the differences between participants in sports-only, music-only, and nonparticipants were not significant.

Environmental Social Context and Extracurricular Participation

The school and community contexts in which extracurricular activities take place are likely to influence the perceived nature and value of extracurricular activities among students. Eitaen (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) found that small rural communities placed great value on and were more supportive of their high school athletic teams than did larger communities. School sports had high prestige particularly in communities with a lower percentage of professional persons and with a higher percentage of lower income families.

According to Hanks and Eckland (cited in Holland & Andre, 1987), the single greatest correlation was between extracurricular participation and grades for both males and females. These researchers reported that participants were likely to be those who previously had good grades, were

enrolled in an academic curriculum, had college-oriented friends, and had contacts with their teachers.

The available research indicates that participation in extracurricular activities, including both athletic and nonathletic activities, is positively correlated with desirable personality/social characteristics. Participation is associated with higher levels of self-esteem (Crain et al., 1982; Phillips, 1969: Schendel, 1968). Participation has also been correlated with improved race relations (Cain et al.), involvement in political and social activity as a young adult (Hanks, 1981; Lindsay, 1984), male academic ability and grades (Eidsmore, 1964; Schafer & Armer, 1968), educational aspirations (Spandy, 1971), feelings of control over one's life (Burbach, 1972, and lower delinquency rates (Landers & Landers, 1978). Males who participate in nonathletic, service/leadership-oriented activities are more likely to achieve educational aspiration than males who participate only in athletic activities (Spady, 1971).

Although such correlations have been shown to exist, the available research does not demonstrate convincingly that participation causes such desirable outcomes. As has been noted, participants and nonparticipants select themselves into or out of extracurricular activities. Preexisting personality and social differences between participants and nonparticipants may account for the observed correlations. Indeed, differences in such preexisting variables as father's occupation, IQ, curriculum, and previous GPA have been shown to substantially reduce or eliminate differences between male athletes and non athletes on GPA and between female participants and nonparticipants on educational attainment (Hanks & Eckland, 1976; Schafer & Armer, 1968). Some evidence, however, consistent with the hypothesis that participation produces causal effects exists. Some research, using modeling techniques, has indicated that, in males, participation does have relationships with the outcome variables of educational attainment that are independent of obvious moderator variables such as SES and academic ability (Hanks & Eckland; Otto, 1975, 1976; Otto & Alwin 1977). (Holland & Andre, 1987, p. 447)

Gender

Researchers over the last decade have shown that males and females have different classroom experiences because they learn differently and because teachers treat them differently. Achievement expectations for females in some subjects are usually lower, similar to those expectations and scores of members of certain racial and ethnic groups and economically deprived students. Traditionally, females have found advanced mathematics achievement elusive. Girls' mathematics achievement in the elementary grades is equal to boys' but decreases in the middle school. As girls progress through school, females are less likely to continue their math education, either taking more rudimentary courses or dropping the subject altogether (Hanson & Schwartz, 1992).

At home, parents may unconsciously fail to provide support for their daughters' interests in math, either by directing their interests elsewhere or by giving all their support for education to their sons. The attitudes of teachers and male students usually reinforce parents' messages (Hanson & Schwartz, 1992).

Evidence exists that males and females tend to approach learning from a different perspective, although the reasons for the differences continue to be debated. In the classroom, females prefer to use a conversational style that fosters group consensus and builds ideas on top of each other. Males learn through argument and individual activity-- behaviors fostered early. Most classroom discourse is organized to accommodate male learning patterns (Hanson & Schwartz, 1992).

Teachers who believe that participation is an indicator of learning, are likely to ignore females, because girls participate less than boys. Teachers are often unaware that the traditional style of teaching is much more effective for males than females (Hanson & Schwartz, 1992).

Males demand more attention and complain more if they do not receive attention, and teachers and female peers expect the males to get the attention. Claire and Redpath (1989) reported, from an analysis of classroom discussions involving children between the ages of 9 and 11 in different settings, that boys took three times as many turns speaking as the female students in the class. Krupnick (1985) studied college-aged students and found that men dominated discussions more as the male became older. In comparing the participation patterns of males and females, teachers are apt to treat females' discourse contributions with less respect, because girls exhibit less authority (Hanson & Schwartz, 1992).

A national survey was administered by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) (Rothenberg, 1995) to girls in early adolescence. From the results of the national studies, the officials of the AAUW reported that the middle grades can be a time of significant decline in self-esteem and academic achievement for girls. Reasons for the decline in self-esteem and the accompanying decline in academic achievement were not clearly indicated, but it is likely that multiple factors were involved. The AAUW researchers found evidence that boys received preferential treatment in school from teachers. The researchers found that boys asked more questions, were given more detailed and constructive criticism of

their work, and were treated more tolerantly than girls during outbursts of temper or resistance.

If girls observe that women hold positions of less status than men in society, females may infer that their role in life is less important than that of boys or that girls are inferior to boys (Debold, 1995). Cultural differences in sex role socialization, which are different in some cultures, can have an effect on girls' self-esteem and educational success. Parents' actions play a central role in girls' sex role socialization, and parents' choices and attitudes about toys, clothing, activities, and playmates can shape a girl's sense of herself (Rothenberg, 1995).

Researchers have observed other consequences associated with a general loss of self-esteem in preadolescent girls in addition to a decline in actual academic achievement. Debold (1995) reported that adolescent girls experience greater stress; are twice as likely to be depressed; and attempt suicide four or five times more often than boys, although boys are more likely to be successful. Girls' depression has been found to be linked to negative feelings about their bodies and appearance. Orenstein (1994) reported that poor body image and eating disorders, including obesity, is much more prevalent in adolescent girls than in boys. Smutny (1995) found some specific causes why girls have a low self-esteem and do not perform as well in school as the boys; gender stereotypes in television, movies, books, and the toy and fashion industries pose obvious challenges to girls' healthy psychological development.

The "perfect girl" or "nice girl" syndrome contributes to the self-image problems of young females. Brown and Gilligan and McDonald and

Rogers (cited in Rothenberg, 1995) stated many middle-class girls around the age of 10 have internalized the messages that the "perfect girl" is pretty, kind, and obedient, and never has bad thoughts or feelings. The researchers speculated that girls who try to keep up with the impossible demands of this unrealistic view of perfect feminine behavior may suppress some of their ability to express anger or to assert themselves and begin to judge themselves through others' eyes and to question their own worth.

Job

Barton (1989), in his study on academic achievement of employed high school juniors, found that the grades of students working less than 20 hours per week were no different from those of nonworking students. Students working more than 20 hours per week had significantly lower grades than students who did not work or those who worked less than 20 hours per week. Lillydahl (cited in Dewalt et al., 1994) used the National Assessment of Economic Survey to study the work factors of 3,000 high school students. Again, a limited number of hours at work had minor effects on school grades. However, those who worked more than 15 to 20 hours per week had higher school absence rates, spent less time on homework, and had lower GPAs.

Bracey (1996) reported a strong negative relationship between the proportion of young people holding jobs and test scores. The more students worked, the lower the scores. Students who held jobs and worked less than 15 hours a week got better grades than those who did not work at all or those who worked more than 15 hours a week. The biggest effects

of working was seen in the students' not attending college or, if they did attend, not completing four years of study.

Barton (1989) studied the academic achievement of employed high-school juniors. Barton's findings were similar to the data reported by Bracey (1996) in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report. Both Barton and Bracey reported that students working more than 20 hours differed in some important respects from those who did not work or worked only moderate hours. Students who worked very long hours appeared to be less likely to take the harder academic courses and did not attend four-year colleges. Bracey also reported that the less eleventh graders were attached to academics the more they were attached to work. Students who worked more than 20 hours per week were less likely to take rigorous academic subjects and more likely to expect to work after high school. D'Amico (cited in Barton, 1989) also found that students who worked fewer than 20 hours per week had higher GPAs than the students who did not work at all. Students who worked more than 20 hours per week had the lowest GPAs.

Lewis (cited in Barton, 1989) reported that work experience had either no effect or minimal effect on students' grades and class ranking. No effects were found for grade point averages of the males, while the results for females showed a somewhat mixed picture; working had a small adverse effect on grades but a slightly positive effect on class ranking.

The findings of the 1986 NAEP report and other researchers indicate there is no cause for alarm about the effect of student work on academic achievement. Average proficiency in mathematics, reading,

history, literature, and science differed little between students who worked and those who did not. Students who worked more than 20 hours had slightly lower average proficiency and were likely to be less involved in the academic content of schooling (Barton, 1989).

Homework

In his article, "Research for School Improvement," Mackenzie (1983) strengthened the case for homework in the school improvement process. He reported that a consistent emphasis on homework and study, encouragement for students to assume responsibility for their own learning and that of others, and a general acceptance of responsibility for outcomes all seem to be characteristics of a high-achieving environment. Goldstein (1960) reported similar findings--regularly assigned homework favors higher academic achievement. Foyle (1986) reported that homework increased student achievement when it was regularly assigned, clearly stated, regularly collected, promptly graded, and promptly returned.

In her 1981 study, Knorr found that practice or drill homework was not significantly related to reading and math scores or report card grades of primary school children. Knorr concluded from her review of the research literature that the question of how homework is related to academic achievement is inconclusive.

There are indications in the research that homework of a specific type under certain conditions does relate positively to achievement; other types of homework do not. Studies concerning learning as a function of

time indicate that homework as an extension of learning time may make a significant difference in student achievement (Turvey, 1986).

Homework can work as an advantage or a disadvantage to student achievement according to Foyle (1993). One enduring value of homework is that it furthers learning tasks through reinforcement, assimilation, practice, and application. Homework also helps students who fall behind in schoolwork because of inability or other circumstances. Independent study skills and work habits can also be developed through homework.

Not all homes, however, provide good study conditions, which becomes a disadvantage to some students. Some teachers agree that homework is often ill-chosen and poorly designed due to teacher time constraints and lack of expertise. Although there are disadvantages to homework, current research and practice indicate that homework is necessary (Foyle, 1993).

Researchers are beginning to document more thoroughly the relationship between homework and student achievement. In the article, "Homework Works at School," the authors reported homework assignments that are carefully structured by teachers and are meaningful to students can have an important influence on student achievement (Keith & Page, 1985).

A survey on homework use at the high school level revealed some interesting findings. Murphy and Decker (1990) reported that the amount of homework students are assigned has increased since A Nation at Risk was published. According to Murphy and Decker, ninety-eight percent of the teachers with college preparatory courses assigned homework. In

contrast, 77 percent of the teachers of vocational classes, 79 percent of the special education class teachers, and 83 percent of the general track teachers assigned out-of-class work. Murphy and Decker and other researchers have found that students in nonacademic track classes do considerably less homework than their academic track peers. If educational equity is the equal distribution of such things as time, quality instruction, and homework, then students who receive fewer of these items are disadvantaged by the educational process.

<div align="center">

Sense of Belonging

</div>

Teacher

The influence of teacher attitude on student achievement continues to receive considerable attention. According to Chaikin and Sigler (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984), teachers tend to exhibit more positive nonverbal behavior to students considered bright than to those considered dull. Baker and Crist (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) stated that teachers teach more, spend more time with, and demand more from students they consider to have more ability. Willis, Dalfen and Barrett, and Good (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) reported that slower learners are more likely to be ignored, receive less attention from their teachers, and are given fewer opportunities to respond.

In their research, Cohen and Finney and Wilkins and Glock (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) failed to provide evidence that teacher expectancy influences student performance. Brophy, and Evertson, McDonald and Elias, Rutter and others, and numerous other researchers (cited in Novak

& Purkey, 1984) supported the view that students are more likely to perform as their teachers think they will. Brophy and Goos (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) concluded:

> When teachers had higher expectations for students, they actually produced higher achievement in those students than in students for whom they had lower expectations. (p. 5)

One of the best known studies of teacher expectancy is that of Rosenthal and Jacobson (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984). These researchers studied student success by giving teachers favorable data about selected students. Rosenthal and Jacobson reported that teacher attitude influenced student performance.

Buber (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) said:

> Man wishes to be confirmed in his being by man, and wishes to have a presence in the being of the other. ... secretly and bashfully he watches for a Yes which allows him to be and which can come only from one human person to another. It is from one person to another that the heavenly bread of self-being is passed. (p. 15)

No one is self-made according to Buber's (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) research. Each day students are influenced by greetings from the school bus driver, policies established by the school board, and by food preparation and service in the cafeteria. Students are also influenced by maintenance of the physical environment, class conduct, and the nature and availability of programs. Among these various factors, nothing is as important as the people in the process. The people involved in the students' lives have a great impact on their ideas about themselves and their abilities.

Students

Many researchers have focused on teacher attitudes and actions. Student attitudes also elicit certain expectations and behaviors in teachers. Students invite or disinvite teachers, just as teachers invite or disinvite students. Bellack and others (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) reported that students influence teacher behavior.

If students are to flourish in school, they must have an environment that nurtures student potential. When students are treated with indifference, they are likely to become indifferent to themselves and to school. These students also tend to give up on themselves and school. Willis (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) stated that students who have learned to feel bad about themselves as learners are vulnerable to failure, just as physically weak people are susceptible to illness.

Educational disenfranchisement is compounded among lower socio-economic groups. When examining the self-fulfilling prophecy, Rist (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) concluded that teachers inadvertently stratify students in accordance with perceived social-class membership. This tends to perpetuate a caste system that reinforces group prejudices and antagonisms in many classrooms.

Many students are disinvited by educators beyond the formal school policies of suspension, expulsion, labeling, tracking, and grouping. Students who reported that they felt disinvited in school described experiences that could be divided into three categories of self-perception: worthless, unable, and irresponsible. Canfield and Wells (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) referred to the term "killer statements" to describe the

means by which a student's feelings, thoughts, and creativity are ruined by another person's negative comments, physical gestures, or other behaviors. According to Novak and Purkey (1984) people have profound influences on each other. Whether intentional or unintentional, disinviting messages can have long-lasting effects.

Dewey (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) noted:

Everything the teacher does, as well as the manner in which he does it, incites the child to respond in some way or another and each response tends to set the child's attitude in some way or other. (p. 15)

Negative experiences may be motivation factors for an individual's future success only if students do not accept rejection and failure. Students who fight back against disinviting experiences do so only because they have a past history of invitations received, accepted, and successfully acted upon. The full impact of their world has yet to be determined. Student success or failure is related to the ways in which students perceive themselves and their environments and how those perceptions are influenced by the prevailing nature of the messages the students receive in school (Novak & Purkey, 1984).

Self-Concept

For students to learn in school, they must have sufficient confidence in themselves and their abilities to make some effort to succeed. Without self-confidence, students easily succumb to apathy, dependency, and loss of self-control. The result is that some students will expect the worst in every situation and will be afraid of doing the wrong thing or saying the wrong

word in the classroom.. Many times, the real problem of negative self-esteem is hidden beneath such labels as unmotivated, undisciplined, or uninterested (Novak & Purkey, 1984).

Coopersmith (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) reported that there are pervasive and significant differences in the experiential worlds and social behaviors of persons who differ in self-esteem. Persons high in their own self-esteem approach tasks and persons with the expectation that they will be well received and successful. Irwin, Rosenberg, and Ziller (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984) noted that individuals high in self-esteem are more independent of external reinforcement and more consistent in their social behavior.

Summary

Investigations of related pertinent research studies and articles showed that many factors are involved in student success and failure. This study centered primarily on nine of the many factors involved in student success and failure: gender, family, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, school attendance, involvement in school activities, homework, job, and sense of belonging.. According to a review of current research, all of the nine factors have a varying influence on student failure and success. Researchers have indicated that in all probability student academic success or failure is not determined by a single factor but rather is a cumulative effect of many factors.

Educational professionals have found that family background is a stronger predictor of academic success than school or teacher

characteristics. Researchers have shown that low parent educational level, poverty, and not living with both birth parents will increase a child's chances of experiencing problems in school.

Researchers have found that poverty background is one of the leading causes of school failures and high school dropouts. The diminished life chances of the poor may be linked to the lack of access to adequate health care and nutrition, the often lower quality of schooling in low-income neighborhoods, the stress of poverty on family relationships, or a variety of other elements.

Minority students' low educational achievement was well-documented in educational literature. The lack of educational success was related to many factors, such as beliefs held by some educators that some minorities are intellectually inferior, family structure, socioeconomic level, environment, and expectations.

School attendance was one variable that consistently emerged as the strongest predictor of graduation and school performance. Some variables that may have an effect on school attendance include the responsibility of the students for their education and personal motivation.

Researchers indicated a positive relationship between activity participation and increased educational aspirations and attainment. Extracurricular participation was positively associated with other success indicators relating to student achievement in school, such as school attendance, academic achievement, and aspirations for continuing education beyond high school.

Researchers have found that males and females have different classroom experiences because they learn differently and because teachers treat them differently. As girls progress through school, they are less likely to continue their math education, either taking more rudimentary courses or dropping the subject altogether.

When studying students who worked more than 20 hours a week, researchers found they did not perform in school as well as students who worked less than 20 hours a week. Students who worked over 20 hours during the school week were less likely to be involved in the academic content of schooling.

Homework assignments that were carefully structured by teachers and were meaningful to students had an important influence on student achievement. Researchers found that students in nonacademic track classes did considerably less homework than their academic track peers.

People involved in students' lives have been found to have a great impact on their ideas about themselves and their abilities. If students are to flourish in school, they should have an environment that nurtures student potential. According to the literature, when students are treated with indifference, they are likely to become indifferent to themselves and to school.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Introduction

The topic for this dissertation was chosen because of the vast number of students who graduate from high school each year with an inadequate education. The educational distance between those students who experience academic success and those who do not seems to be expanding. Why some students are very successful and others fail is a major concern of educators and parents. Underachieving students may become frustrated and dependent on others because of their lack of skills and career choices. Educators should look deeper into the students' backgrounds to find reasons why some students are successful and others struggle throughout school.

Based on the review of literature, nine characteristics were selected to study student success in the high school. The nine characteristics that were used as independent variables were: (1) family, (2) socio-economic background, (3) ethnicity, (4) school attendance, (5) gender, (6) involvement in school activities, (7) job, (8) homework, and (9) sense of belonging.

An extensive review of the literature was conducted to review the nine characteristics selected for this study. Sources that were used included the University of Nebraska Love Library, Chadron State College Rita King Library, Educational Research Service, Internet, National Association of

Secondary School Principal publications, ERIC files, and other educational publications.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was developed and designed around nine common characteristics that served as independent variables in the study. The students in the junior class were compared on success in school and the nine variables. Surveys used in similar studies and commercial instruments included the New York State Effective School Consortia Survey of Student Perceptions of School Programs and The Metropolitan Life Survey of The American Teacher, which were used as references to help develop the survey instrument for this study. Much of the data needed for this study were demographic data that were obtained from the students' records.

The survey was piloted in a project sophomore English class and a regular sophomore English class at Alliance High School. The two pilot classes were similar the junior class studied. Approximately 50 students were used in the pilot process at two different scheduled times. Before giving the pilot survey, an explanation was given concerning the importance of the survey and the purpose for conducting the survey.

During the pilot process, students were asked their opinions concerning questions they did not understand. Questions that were unclear to the students or which they did not answer completely were revised.

The Florida Key Self Evaluation (FKSE) instrument was used to determine a student's sense of belonging. To evaluate a student's sense of belonging the areas reviewed included how students related, asserted

themselves, invested themselves, and coped in school. This instrument was developed by Harper and Purkey (cited in Novak & Purkey, 1984)) to provide both inferred and professed measures of self-concept as a learner for students in grades one through 12.

All students in the junior English classes (N = 182) in the Alliance High School were selected as the sample for this research project. The research project was explained and the necessary IRB forms were given to all students. Students who wished to participate in the research project were asked to return the signed IRB forms to the junior class English teachers. Students who were absent from school were given the opportunity to participate in this study. Their junior class English teachers explained the research project to those students and gave them the necessary IRB forms.

Any other authorization that was needed, such as school board approval, superintendent approval, and building principal approval, was obtained.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected during the students' junior English class. Once the students had turned in a signed parent and student IRB form, they were given surveys to complete. Each student survey was enclosed in an envelope with the student's name on the envelope. Each survey had the student's gender, CTBS, GPA, school attendance for first semester of the 1997-98 school year, and free or reduced lunch data status prerecorded on the survey. After the students had completed their surveys, they returned the surveys to their junior class English teacher.

Once the surveys were completed in each junior English classroom, the teacher turned them into the principal's office.

Demographic data that were needed for the study were obtained from the student files at the Alliance High School office after permission was obtained from the school administration, students, and parents.

Data Analysis

The analyses used in this research project included a multiple regression analysis, correlations, and a comparison of means. The NEAR Center at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and the Clarus Corporation of Alliance assisted in the analyses of these data.

Conclusions were drawn from the data relating to student success and the nine selected student characteristics. Characteristics used to compare student success were reported to determine which selected characteristics were more dominant relative to student success.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose for conducting this study was to examine student success at Alliance High School, Alliance, Nebraska. The researcher compared student success, which was based on GPA and CTBS scores, with nine selected characteristics. The researcher attempted to determine whether any one characteristic was more dominant than other characteristics, based on success in school. The null hypothesis of this study was that student success in the junior class at Alliance High School and the nine selected characteristic used as independent variables were not related.

The dependent variable was "success" in school as measured by Alliance High School's weighted GPA scale and CTBS scores. Independent variables included the following: (1) family, (2) socio-economic background, (3) ethnicity, (4) school attendance, (5) involvement in school activities, (6) gender, (7) job, (8) homework, and (9) sense of belonging.

Student Survey

Of the 182 students in the junior class at Alliance High School, 112 students participated in this study, which was 61 percent of the class. Of the 112 students who participated in this study, 48 of the students were males and 64 were females.

Ninety-two percent of the students were absent 10 or fewer days during the first semester of the 1997-98 school year (see Table 1).

Table 1

Student Attendance

Number of days absent	Number of students	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	11	9.8	9.8
1	10	8.9	18.8
2	14	12.5	31.3
3	9	8.0	39.3
4	17	15.2	54.5
5	11	9.8	64.3
6	8	7.1	71.4
7	5	4.5	75.9
8	5	4.5	80.4
9	9	8.0	88.4
10	5	4.5	92.9
11	4	3.6	96.4
12	1	0.9	97.3
13	3	2.7	100.0

A total of 7.1 percent of the students had completed an application and were qualified to a free or reduced lunch.

Seventy percent of the students lived with two adults. The breakdown of the number of adults living in the household is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Number of Adults in Household

Number of adults living in the home	Number of Students	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	3	2.7	2.7
1	10	8.9	11.6
2	79	70.5	82.1
3	17	15.2	97.3
4	3	2.7	100.0

Seventy-three percent of the students lived with their biological mother and father, and 17 percent of with a biological mother or father (see Table 3).

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage of Adults with Whom the Students Lived

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mother and father	82	73.2	73.2
Mother	12	10.7	83.9
Father	8	7.1	91.1
Grandparents	1	0.9	92.0
Mother and stepfather	6	5.4	97.3
Father and stepmother	1	0.9	98.2
Brother or sister	1	0.9	99.1
Others	1	0.9	100.0

Students were asked to whom they would turn for advice in the event of disturbing or threatening problems in their lives. One-third of the students reported they would ask their mother for advice, and 19 percent stated they would ask their father. An interesting statistic is that 25 percent of the students would ask a friend for advice. The friend category was the highest category other than the students' mother (see Table 4).

Table 4

Persons from Whom Students Asked Advice

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mother and father	2	1.8	1.9
Mother	37	33.0	36.1
Father	22	19.6	56.5
Brother or sister	5	4.5	61.1
Grandparents	2	1.8	68.5
Uncle or aunt	3	2.7	71.3
Friend·	28	25.0	97.2
Teacher	1	0.9	98.1
School counselor	1	0.9	99.1
Employer	1	0.9	100.0

Forty-two percent of the 112 students reported their fathers had a high school education. Thirty-nine percent of students stated their fathers had training beyond high school (see Table 5).

Table 5

Educational Level of the Students' Father

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than high school graduate	3	2.7	2.7
GED	3	2.7	5.4
High school graduate	47	42.0	47.3
Junior college graduate	12	10.7	58.0
College graduate	24	21.4	79.5
Masters	4	3.6	83.0
Professional	3	2.7	85.7
Doctorate	1	0.9	86.6
Uncertain	15	13.4	100.0

Forty two percent of the students reported their mothers had a high school education. Over 39 percent of students reported their mothers had training beyond high school (see Table 6).

Table 6

Educational Level of the Students' Mothers

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than high school graduate	3	2.7	2.7
GED	3	2.7	5.4
High school graduate	47	42.0	47.3
Junior college graduate	12	10.7	58.0
College graduate	24	21.4	79.5
Masters	4	3.6	83.0
Professional	3	2.7	85.7
Doctorate	1	0.9	86.6
Uncertain	15	13.4	100.0

Students were asked the number of adults in their homes who worked. Over 38 percent reported that one adult in their home worked full-time; 53.6 percent of students reported that two adults worked full-time. Only five students reported that no adults worked full time (see Table 7).

Table 7

Number of Adults Who Worked Full-time

Number of Adults Working Full-time	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	5	4.5	4.5
1	43	38.4	42.9
2	60	53.8	96.4
3	3	2.7	99.1
4	1	0.9	100.0

The students were asked the number of adults in their home who were currently unemployed, but wished to work. Seven students reported an adult in their home who was unemployed (see Table 8).

Table 8

Number of Parents Unemployed Who Wished to Work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Employed	103	92.0	92.0
Not employed	7	6.3	98.2

Students were asked about their racial or ethnic background. One hundred and eight students were white, while the other four were of another ethnic race (see Table 9).

Table 9

Ethnic Background of Students

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Black	1	0.9	0.9
Hispanic	1	0.9	1.8
White	108	96.4	98.2
Other	2	1.8	100.0

Students were asked for their main reasons for being absent from school. Almost two-thirds reported sickness. Approximately one-third reported needing a day off or had other reasons (see Table 10).

Table 10

Student Reasons for Being Absent

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sickness	68	60.7	60.7
Family vacation	3	2.7	63.4
Need a day off	16	14.3	77.7
Others	25	22.3	100.0

The students were asked about making up work after an absence. Seventy-four percent of the students reported they always made up their work. Twenty-seven percent stated they made up their work most of the time. Less than ten percent reported they did their make-up work some of the time (see Table 11).

Table 11

Make-Up Work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Some of the time	11	9.8	9.8
Most of the time	27	24.1	33.9
Always	74	66.1	100.0

Students were asked if they liked school. Approximately one-half of the students reported they did not like school or liked it some of the time. Almost one-half of the students indicated they liked school most of the time or always (see Table 12).

Table 12

Number and Percentage of Students Who Liked or Disliked School

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Do not like school	12	10.7	10.7
Like school some of the time	47	42.0	52.7
Like school most of the time	47	42.0	92.9
Like school all of the time	6	5.4	100.0

Students were asked the number of activities in which they were involved. Over one-fourth of the students reported they were not involved in any activities. Almost half of the students reported involvement in one or two activities, and less than one-fourth of the students reported involvement in three or more activities.

Table 13

Number and Percent of Activities in Which Students Were Involved

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No involvement	32	28.6	28.6
One activity	24	21.4	50.0
Two activities	30	26.8	76.8
Three activities	13	11.6	88.4
Four activities	9	8.0	96.4
Five activities	1	0.9	97.3
Six activities	3	2.7	100.0

Students were asked the type of activities in which they were involved. Thirty-two students reported no involvement in activities. Seventy-three students reported involvement in athletics; 50 students reported involvement in the fine arts; 16 students were involved in speech and debate; and 39 students were involved in other activities (see Table 14).

Table 14

Type of Activities in Which Students Were Involved

	Frequency	Percent
No involvement	32	28.6
Football	12	10.7
Cross country	7	6.3
Tennis	11	9.8
Volleyball	5	4.5
Wrestling	5	4.5
Basketball	11	9.8
Track	8	7.1
Golf	14	12.5
Cheerleading	5	4.5
Band	21	18.3
Choir	12	10.7
Drama	13	11.6
Speech	12	10.7
Debate	4	3.6
Art club	4	3.6
Computer club	4	3.6
FFA	5	4.5
FBLA	7	6.3
FHA	2	1.8
Student council	6	5.4
Other	15	13.4

Students were asked to rate their perceived success in athletics or other activities. Most students perceived they were at least somewhat successful in their activities or athletics. Only two students reported they did not feel they were successful in the activities in which they participated, and 30 students were not involved in any activities (see Table 15).

Table 15

Success In Activities

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No involvement	30	26.8	26.8
Not successful	2	1.8	28.6
Some success	19	17.0	45.5
Successful	43	38.4	83.9
Very successful	18	16.1	100.0

Students were asked if academic success was important to them. Academic success was important to approximately 17 percent of the students some of the time. Over 81 percent of the students reported that academic success was important most of the time or always (see Table 16).

Table 16

Student Reports Concerning the Importance of Academic Success

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not important	2	1.8	1.8
Some of the time	19	17.0	18.8
Most of the time	47	42.0	60.7
Always	44	39.3	100.0

Students were asked if athletics was an important part of their school experience. Over 39 percent of the students perceived athletics to be important to them most of the time or always. Over 60 percent indicated that athletics was important some of the time or not at all (see Table 17).

Table 17

Student Reports Concerning the Importance Of Athletics

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not important	40	35.7	35.7
Some of the time	28	25.0	60.7
Most of the time	20	17.9	78.6
Always	24	21.4	100.0

Students were asked if school activities were important to them. Over 55 percent of the students perceived school activities to be important to them most of the time or always. Over 37 percent indicated that activities were important some of the time, and under ten percent of the students reported that activities were not important (see Table 18).

Table 18

Student Reports Concerning the Importance of School Activities

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not important	11	9.8	9.8
Some of the time	42	37.5	47.3
Most of the time	34	30.4	77.7
Always	25	22.3	100.0

Students were asked if the social activities in the school were important to them. Over 72 percent of the students perceived social activities to be important to them most of the time or always. Over 27 percent of the students perceived social activities to be somewhat important or not important (see Table 19).

Table 19

Student Reports Concerning the Importance Of Social Activities

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not important	5	4.5	4.5
Some of the time	26	23.2	27.7
Most of the time	47	42.0	69.6
Always	34	30.4	100.0

Students were asked if coaches and sponsors of the various activities took time to visit with them. Over one- third of the students reported that coaches and sponsors visited with them at school always or most of the time. Just under two-thirds indicated that coaches or sponsors visited with them some of the time or not at all (see Table 20).

Table 20

Student Reports Concerning Visits by Coaches or Sponsors

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No visits	26	23.2	23.2
Some of the time	44	39.3	62.5
Most of the time	32	28.6	91.1
Always	10	8.9	100.0

Students were asked if they felt comfortable when they participated in class. Over 36 percent of the students reported they felt comfortable when participating in class, while approximately 51 percent of the students felt uncomfortable some of the time. Seven percent of the students and over four percent of the students felt uncomfortable most of the time or all of the time, respectively (see Table 21).

Table 21

Student Reports of Their Comfort in Class Participation

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Comfortable	41	36.6	36.6
Uncomfortable some of the time	58	51.08	88.4
Uncomfortable most of the time	8	7.1	95.5
Always uncomfortable	5	4.5	100.0

Students were asked if the curriculum in the high school met their needs. Over 75 percent felt the curriculum met their needs for their future goals.

Students were asked what areas of the curriculum did not meet their needs for their future goals. Students were most concerned that math and social science did not meet their needs (see Table 22).

Table 22

<u>Student Reports Concerning Curriculum Areas that Did Not Meet Their</u>
<u>Needs for Future Goals</u>

	Frequency	Percent
Language arts	2	1.8
Math	9	8.0
Natural science	4	3.6
Social science	9	8.0
Computer education	4	3.6
Business	3	2.7
Career education	1	0.9
Diversified occupations	1	0.9
Health occupations	1	0.9
Industrial technology	4	3.6
Marketing education	1	0.9
Trade/industrial occupations	1	0.9
Art	2	1.8
Drama	2	1.8
Music	2	1.8
Personal health	3	2.7
Physical fitness	2	1.8
Others	1	0.9

Students were asked if they had a job or work responsibilities at home. Over 80 percent reported they had some type of work responsibilities .

Students were asked if they worked on school days. Over 66 percent indicated that they worked on school days. Over fourteen percent of the students did not work on school days, and over 19 percent of the students did not respond to the question.

Students were asked how many hours a week they worked. Almost 28 percent reported working more than 21 hours a week. Over 45 percent worked between 1 to 20 hours a week (see Table 23).

Table 23

Number of Hours Students Worked Per Week

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Did not work	30	26.8	26.8
1 to 5 hours	10	9.0	35.7
6 to 10 hours	11	9.9	45.5
11 to 15 hours	10	9.0	54.5
16 to 20 hours	20	17.9	72.3
21 to 25 hours	17	15.2	87.5
26 to 30 hours	7	6.3	93.8
31 and over	7	6.3	100.0

Students were asked if they perceived their job to be more important than school. Under ten percent reported that their job was always or most of the time more important than school. Almost 70 percent of the student thought school was more important than their job (see Table 24)

Table 24

Student Reports Concerning Perceptions of Job and School Importance

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response	23	20.5	20.5
Job not as important as school	46	41.1	61.6
Job not as important as school some of the time	32	28.6	90.2
Job as important as school most of the time	7	6.3	96.4
Job always as important as school	4	3.6	100.0

Students were asked if they took classes that required homework. Over 70 percent indicated that they took classes that required homework. Over 26 percent reported they were required to do homework some of the time (see Table 25).

Table 25

Student Reports Concerning Classes That Required Homework

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response	1	0.9	0.9
Some of the time	30	26.8	27.7
Most of the time	55	49.1	76.8
Always	26	23.2	100.0

Students were asked how much time they spend on home work. Over a third spend more that two hours a night on home work. Twelve percent of the students indicated that they spent a hour to a hour and half on home work. Almost 52 percent spent less than an hour on home work each night. (see Table 26).

Table 26

Amount of Time Students Spent On Homework

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No homework	5	4.5	4.5
5 to 30 minutes	22	19.7	24.1
31 to 60 minutes	31	27.7	51.8
61 to 90 minutes	14	12.5	64.3
120 minutes	17	15.2	79.5
150 plus minutes	23	20.6	100.0

Students were asked if they had support with their homework from someone at home. Over two-thirds reported they had support at home with their home work.

Students were asked if they used a word processor or a computer to complete their homework. Two-thirds said they used a computer or word processor to do their home work.

Students were asked how many times a week they were assigned homework. More than two-thirds of the students reported they were assigned homework four to five days a week (see Table 27).

Table 27

Frequency Of Homework Assignments

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 day a week	6	5.4	5.4
2 days a week	8	7.1	12.5
3 days a week	22	19.6	32.1
4 days a week	41	.36.6	68.8
5 days a week	35	31.3	100.0

Students were asked how often they completed their home work. Over 80 percent reported that they completed their homework often or all the time (see Table 28)

Table 28

Frequency Of Homework Completion

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	2	1.8	1.8
Some of the time	17	15.2	17.1
Often	41	36.6	54.1
All the time	51	45.5	100.0

Students were asked what or who helped them the most with their school work. Teachers were chosen by over 22 percent of the students. Other answers given by the students were friends, time, books, and computers (see Table 29).

Table 29

Responses Given by Students Concerning What or Who Helped Them Most with Their School Work

	Frequency	Percent
Teachers	25	22.3
Friends	13	11.6
Time	13	11.6
Books	9	8.1
Computers	5	4.5

Students were asked what or who hindered them the most with their school work. The availability of time hindered the students the most with their school work (17.9 percent). Over 16 percent of the students reported that teachers hindered them most with their school work. Other answers given by the students included distractions and job (see Table 30).

Table 30

Responses Given by Students Concerning What or Who Hindered Them Most with Their School Work

	Frequency	Percent
Time	20	17.9
Teachers	18	16.1
Do not understand	13	11.6
Distractions	10	9.0
Job	6	5.4

The Florida Key Self-Evaluation Survey

The Florida Key Self-Evaluation Survey was utilized to examine the variable, sense of belonging. When asked if they had positive relations with their peers, eighty-three percent of the students reported that they related with their peers fairly often. Four students reported they very seldom or once in awhile related with other students (see Table 31).

Table 31

Student Reports of Positive Relations with Other Students

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	0	0.0	0.0
Very seldom	1	0.9	0.9
Once in awhile	3	2.7	3.6
Occasionally	15	13.4	17.0
Fairly often	93	83.0	100.0

Over 72 percent of the students indicated positive relations with their teachers fairly often; 22 percent reported they related occasionally. Only two students reported that they very seldom related with their teachers (see Table 32).

Table 32

Student Reports of Positive Relations with Teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	0	0.0	0.0
Very seldom	2	1.8	1.8
Once in awhile	4	3.6	5.4
Occasionally	25	22.3	27.7
Fairly often	81	72.3	100.0

Students were asked if they kept calm when things went wrong. Over 27 percent of the students reported that when things went wrong they fairly often stayed calm; 48.2 percent said they occasionally stayed calm. Five students reported they never stayed calm when things went wrong (see Table 33).

Table 33

Student Reports of Keeping Calm When Things Went Wrong

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	5	4.5	4.5
Very seldom	7	6.3	10.7
Once in awhile	15	13.4	24.1
Occasionally	54	48.2	72.3
Fairly often	31	27.7	100.0

Students were asked if they said positive things about the school. Over 20 percent of the students reported they fairly often said good things about the school; just under 20 percent said that they never or very seldom said good things about the school (see Table 34).

Table 34

Student Reports Concerning Positive Responses About the School

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	11	9.8	9.8
Very seldom	11	9.8	19.6
Once in awhile	26	23.2	42.9
Occasionally	41	36.6	79.5
Fairly often	23	20.5	100.0

Students were asked if they told the truth about their work. Over 86 percent reported that they fairly often or occasionally told the truth about their work (see Table 35).

Table 35

Student Reports Concerning Telling the Truth About Their Work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	3	2.7	2.7
Very seldom	3	2.7	5.4
Once in awhile	9	8.0	13.4
Occasionally	42	37.5	50.9
Fairly often	55	49.1	100.0

In the five survey questions on The Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey was used to examine students' perceptions regarding how they related to school. Each of the questions was scored on a Likert scale from 0 to 4, with 4 the highest choice. All the means were above the midpoint on the Likert scale (X=2). The two highest items were "get along with students," and "get along with teachers." The lowest mean score was "I say good things about school" (see Table 36).

Table 36

Scores on The Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey for Section 1--How Students Related to School

Relating to School	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I get along with other students.	3.7857	0.5272
2. I get along with other teachers.	3.6518	0.6397
3. I keep calm when things go wrong.	2.8839	1.0288
4. I say good things about my school.	2.4821	1.2079
5. I tell the truth about my work.	3.2768	0.9223

Alpha = .7404

Students were asked if they spoke up for their own ideas. Over 78 percent reported they spoke up for their own ideas fairly often or occasionally. Just over five percent indicated that they very seldom spoke up for their own ideas (see Table 37).

Table 37

Student Reports About Speaking Up for Their Own Ideas

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	0	0.0	0.0
Very seldom	6	5.4	5.4
Once in awhile	18	16.1	21.4
Occasionally	33	29.5	50.9
Fairly often	55	49.1	100.0

Students were asked if they volunteered to speak in front of class. An approximately equal number of students reported they volunteered to speak in front of class, did so once in awhile, or chose not to (see Table 38).

Table 38

Student Reports About Volunteering to Speak In Front of Class

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	13	11.6	11.6
Very seldom	24	21.4	33.0
Once in awhile	33	29.5	62.5
Occasionally	24	21.4	83.9
Fairly often	18	16.1	100.0

Students were asked if they asked questions in class. A large percentage of students indicated they asked questions occasionally or fairly often (see Table 39).

Table 39

Student Responses Concerning Asking Questions in Class

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	8	7.1	7.1
Very seldom	16	14.3	21.4
Once in awhile	35	31.3	52.7
Occasionally	35	31.3	83.9
Fairly often	18	16.1	100.0

Students were asked if they asked meaningful questions in class. A larger percentage of students asked meaningful questions fairly often or occasionally, while a smaller percentage asked meaningful questions once in awhile or very seldom (see Table 40).

Table 40

Student Responses About Asking Meaningful Questions in Class

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	8	7.1	7.1
Very seldom	6	5.4	12.5
Once in awhile	28	25.0	37.5
Occasionally	43	38.4	75.9
Fairly often	27	24.1	100.0

Questions six through nine on The Florida Key Self Evaluation survey were used to measure assertive behavior in school. In the four questions that related to assertive behavior in school all the means were above the mid point on the Likert scale (X=2). The two questions that received the highest means were "I speak up for my own ideas," and "I ask meaningful questions in class." The lowest mean score was "I offer to speak in front of class" (see Table 41).

Table 41

Scores on The Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey for Section 2--
Assertive Behavior

Assertive Behavior	Mean	Standard Deviation
6. I speak up for my own ideas.	3.2232	0.9075
7. I offer to speak in front of class.	2.0930	1.2416
8. I offer to ask questions in class.	2.3482	1.1287
9. I ask meaningful questions in class.	2.6696	1.1181

Alpha = .8345

Students were asked if they sought out new things to do in school. A
fairly even percentage of students very seldom, once in awhile,
occasionally, and fairly often responded they sought out new things to do in
school (see Table 42).

Table 42

Student Responses to Seeking Out New Things to Do in School

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	8	7.1	7.1
Very seldom	19	17.0	24.1
Once in awhile	35	31.3	55.4
Occasionally	26	23.2	78.6
Fairly often	24	21.4	100.0

Students were asked if they offered to do extracurricular work in the classroom. One-third of the students reported doing extracurricular work in the classroom and two-thirds of the students were seldom or not involved in doing extra or additional work (see Table 43).

Table 43

Student Responses Concerning Extracurricular Work in the Classroom

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	19	17.0	17.0
Very seldom	15	13.4	30.4
Once in awhile	37	33.0	63.4
Occasionally	25	22.3	85.7
Fairly often	16	14.3	100.0

Students were asked if they spent time helping others. Almost 88 percent indicated that they were fairly often, occasionally, or once in awhile willing to help others (see Table 44).

Table 44

Student Responses Concerning Time Spent in Helping Others

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	3	2.7	2.7
Very seldom	11	9.8	12.5
Once in awhile	37	33.0	45.5
Occasionally	40	35.7	81.3
Fairly often	21	18.8	100.0

Students were asked if they showed interest in other people's work. Almost 88 percent reported that they fairly often, occasionally, or once in awhile showed interest in other people's work (see Table 45).

Table 45

Student Responses Concerning Showing Interest In Others Work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	2	1.8	1.8
Very seldom	12	10.7	12.5
Once in a while	38	33.9	46.4
Occasionally	37	33.0	79.5
Fairly often	23	20.5	100.0

Students were asked if they were interested in assuming leadership responsibilities. Approximately 60 percent of the students reported they were interested in assuming leadership responsibilities (see Table 46).

Table 46

Student Responses About Interest in Leadership Responsibilities

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	7	6.3	6.3
Very seldom	15	13.4	19.6
Once in awhile	23	20.5	40.2
Occasionally	40	35.7	75.9
Fairly often	27	24.1	100.0

Students were asked if they initiated school projects. Approximately one-third of the students reported they occasionally or fairly often initiated school projects (see Table 47).

Table 47

Student Responses About Initiating School Projects

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	20	17.9	17.9
Very seldom	31	27.7	45.5
Once in a while	27	24.1	69.6
Occasionally	26	23.2	92.9
Fairly often	8	7.1	100.0

Students were asked if they talked to teachers about their personal concerns. Most chose not to talk to their teachers about their personal concerns (see Table 48).

Table 48

Student Responses About Talking to Teachers About Personal Concerns

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	32	28.6	28.6
Very seldom	31	27.7	56.3
Once in a while	27	24.1	80.4
Occasionally	15	13.4	93.8
Fairly often	7	6.3	100.0

Seven questions were used on The Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey to measure the students' investment of time in school. The means of five of the questions in this section were above the midpoint on the Likert scale (X=2). Questions that received the three highest means were "I show interest in others' work," "I spend time helping others," and "I show interest in being a leader." The question "I talk to teachers about my personal concerns" received the lowest mean score (see Table 49)

Table 49

Scores on The Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey for Section 3-- Students' Investment of Time in School

Investment of Time	Mean	Standard Deviation
10. I seek out new things to do in school on my own.	2.3482	1.1984
11. I offer to do extracurricular work in the classroom.	2.0357	1.2729
12. I spend time helping others.	2.5804	0.9922
13. I show interest in others work.	2.5982	0.9906
14. I show interest in being a leader.	2.5804	1.1751
15. I initiate school projects.	1.7411	1.2062
16. I talk to teachers about personal concerns.	1.4107	1.2122

Alpha = .8229

Students were asked if they finished their school work. Approximately 88 percent of the students indicated they finished their school work fairly often or occasionally (see Table 50).

Table 50

Student Responses to Completion of School Work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	0	0.0	0.0
Very seldom	4	3.6	3.6
Once in awhile	10	8.9	12.5
Occasionally	28	25.0	37.5
Fairly often	70	62.5	100.0

Students were asked if they paid attention to class activities. Over 85 percent indicated that they paid attention to class activities occasionally or fairly often (see Table 51).

Table 51

Student Responses to Paying Attention to Class Activities

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	0	0.0	0.0
Very seldom	4	3.6	3.6
Once in awhile	12	10.7	14.3
Occasionally	34	30.4	44.6
Fairly often	62	55.4	100.0

Students were asked if they did their school work carefully. Over 83 percent indicated they did their work carefully occasionally or fairly often (see Table 52).

Table 52

Student Responses to Doing School Work Carefully

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	0	0.0	0.0
Very seldom	6	5.4	5.4
Once in awhile	12	10.7	16.1
Occasionally	50	44.6	60.7
Fairly often	44	39.3	100.0

Students were asked if they exhibited confidence in their school work. Over eighty-three percent reported they exhibited confidence in their school work occasionally or fairly often (see Table 53).

Table 53

Student Responses to Exhibiting Confidence in Their School Work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	1	0.9	0.9
Very seldom	4	3.6	4.5
Once in awhile	14	12.5	17.0
Occasionally	55	49.1	66.1
Fairly often	38	33.9	100.0

Students were asked if they tried hard to do their school work. Over 82 percent reported that they tried hard on their school work occasionally or fairly often (see Table 54).

Table 54

Student Responses Concerning Trying Hard on Their School Work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	2	1.8	1.8
Very seldom	4	3.6	5.4
Once in awhile	14	12.5	17.9
Occasionally	39	34.8	52.7
Fairly often	53	47.3	100.0

Students were asked if they talked to others about their school work. Over 73 percent indicated that they talked to others about their school work occasionally or fairly often (see Table 55).

Table 55

Student Responses to Talking to Others About Their School Work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	5	4.5	4.5
Very seldom	6	5.4	9.8
Once in awhile	19	17.0	26.8
Occasionally	38	33.9	60.7
Fairly often	44	39.3	100.0

Students were asked if they joined school activities. Almost 60 percent indicated that they joined school activities occasionally or fairly often (see Table 56).

Table 56

<u>Student Responses to Joining School Activities</u>

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	13	11.6	11.6
Very seldom	11	9.8	21.4
Once in awhile	21	18.8	40.2
Occasionally	30	26.8	67.0
Fairly often	37	33.0	100.0

Seven questions were used on The Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey to measure how students coped in school. The means were above the midpoint on the Likert scale (X=2) for the seven questions that related to coping in school. The questions with the two highest means were "I finish my school work," and "I pay attention to class activities." The question with the lowest mean score was "I join in school activities" (see Table 57).

Table 57

Scores on The Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey for Section 4--
Coping in School

Coping in School	Mean	Standard Deviation
17. I finish my school work.	3.4643 .	0.8046
18. I pay attention to class activities.	3.3750	0.8179
19. I do my school work carefully.	3.1786	0.8298
20. I exhibit confidence in my school work.	3.1161	0.8247
21. I try hard in my school work.	3.2232	0.9272
22. I talk to others about my school work.	2.9821	1.0904
23. I join in school activities.	2.5982	1.3454

Alpha = .8628

Data Analysis

The two dependent variables utilized in this study to identify student success were GPA and CTBS. A Spearman correlation (r) was applied to determine the relationship of these two variables with the independent variables. Medium to weak correlations were found between the two variables and the independent variables (see Table 58).

Table 58

Correlations between the Dependent and Independent Variables

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Correlation
CTBS	School attendance	-.1604
GPA	School attendance	-.2552
CTBS	Adults worked full time	.0895
GPA	Adults work full time	.0785
CTBS	Adults unemployed	.1825
GPA	Adults unemployed	-.0911
CTBS	Involvement in school activities	.2597
GPA	Involvement in school activities	.3557
CTBS	Time spent on homework	.0971
GPA	Time spent on homework	.2329
CTBS	Homework assigned	.2960
GPA	Homework assigned	.2969
CTBS	Relating in school	.3375
GPA	Relating in school	.3498
CTBS	Assertive behavior	.0940
GPA	Assertive behavior	.1771
CTBS	Investing in school	.1911
GPA	Investing in school	.2599
CTBS	Coping in school	.3157
GPA	Coping in school	.4060
CTBS	Florida Key - Total score	.2959
GPA	Florida Key - Total score	.3817

The dependent variables and independent variables in which a significant relationship was found are listed in Table 59. The fathers' educational level, involvement in activities, and homework were the most significant relationships found in this study.

Table 59

Significant Relationships Found Between Dependent and Independent Variables

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	df	F
CTBS	Fathers' Educational Level	7	3.170
GPA	Fathers' Educational Level	7	2.816
GPA	Make up work	2	3.212
CTBS	Student involvement in school activities	1	11.440
GPA	Student involvement in school activities	1	19.346
CTBS	Academic success	3	11.401
GPA	Academic success	3	11.485
CTBS	Sponsors taking time to visit with students	3	3.143
GPA	Sponsors taking time to visit with students	3	3.592
CTBS	Comfortable with class participation	3	4.800
GPA	Comfortable with class participation	3	5.324
CTBS	Job more important than school	3	3.311
CTBS	Classes taken that required homework	2	4.942
GPA	Classes taken that required homework	2	4.912
GPA	Used computer with homework	1	14.919
GPA	Frequency of homework completed	3	3.153

Table 59 (continued)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	df	F
CTBS	Student involvement in drama	1	5.624
GPA	Students involvement in speech	1	4.562
GPA	Students involvement in FFA	1	4.671
GPA	Students involvement in student council	1	5.755
GPA	Students involvement in other activities	1	8.951

An alpha level of .9078 was found on the students' total score on the Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey when the Cronbach test of reliability was utilized. There were weak to medium correlations between seven areas of the Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey and the CTBS and GPA (see Table 60) .

Table 60
Correlations Between the Florida Key Self Evaluation Survey and the CTBS and GPA

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Correlation
CTBS	Relating in school	.3375
CTBS	Coping in school	.3157
CTBS	Total Florida Key Score	.2959
GPA	Relating in school	.3498
GPA	Investing in school	.2599
GPA	Coping in school	.4060
GPA	Total Florida Key Score	.3817

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose for conducting this study was to examine student success at Alliance High School, Alliance, Nebraska. The researcher compared student success, which was based on weighted GPA and CTBS scores, with nine selected characteristics to determine if certain characteristics were more dominant than other characteristics.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis of this study was that student success in the junior class at Alliance High School and the nine selected characteristics used as independent variables were not related.

Independent and Dependent Variables

The dependent variable was "success" in school as measured by the weighted GPA scale and CTBS scores at Alliance High School. Independent variables included the following characteristics (1) family, (2) socio-economic background, (3) ethnicity, (4) school attendance, (5) involvement in school activities, (6) gender, (7) job, (8) homework, and (9) sense of belonging.

Medium to weak correlations were found in several comparisons; nineteen comparisons were significant at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Summary of Findings

Correlations

The two dependent variables, CTBS and GPA, had the strongest correlations (.6966). Other correlations that related to success in school were weak but were evident.

Variables with Significant Relationships

1. The relationship between the father's educational level and the CTBS scores and GPA of the students was found to be statistically significant. Of the 112 students involved in this study, 29 students reported their father's educational level was beyond high school. Those students whose fathers had more than a high school education had higher GPAs and CTBS scores when compared to students whose had fathers with less education.

2. The relationship between CTBS scores and students involved in school activities and GPA and students involved in school activities was significant at the .05 level. Students with greater involvement in school activities had higher CTBS scores and GPAs than those students with less involvement in school activities.

3. Students who reported that academic success was important to them had significantly higher GPAs and CTBS scores.

4. Students who reported that sponsors or coaches took more time to visit had significantly higher GPAs and CTBS scores.

5. Students who reported they felt move comfortable participating in class had significantly higher GPAs and CTBS scores.

6. Those students who reported their job was more important than school had significantly lower CTBS scores.

7. Students who worked over 20 hours a week had significantly lower CTBS scores than students who worked less than 20 hours a week.

8. A significant relationship was found between the frequency of homework completed and GPA. Those students who were most actively involved in homework earned higher grades than students who were not involved in homework.

Additional Findings

1. Peer expectations seemed to have an effect on students, in both the negative and positive manner, as indicated by the data in this study. Twenty-five percent of the students involved in the study reported they would go to a friend for advice before they would go to their parents or another adult.

2. The relationship between success in school and family structure was not statistically significant. Ninety-one percent of the students lived with their mother and father, mother, or father. The other nine percent lived with a stepmother or stepfather, with grandparents, or with a brother or sister.

3. Socio-economic background, as determined by free or reduced lunches, showed little or no relationship to student success. However, the

hours some students worked influenced their success in school. and the reason for their employment could be related to their family socio-ecomomic situation.

4. Of the 112 students involved in this study, 108 of the students were white. Since only four students involved in the study were not white, ethnicity was not a factor related to student success.

Conclusions

In this study, there were many variables that related to students' success.

The family structure was apparently sound in Alliance and seemed to provide many of the students with stable lifestyles. The fact that many family members valued education may have been a factor in student success.

Socio-econonomic background did not appear to be related to the students' academic success in school. Socio-economic background was measured by free or reduced lunch recipients. Many of the high school students who qualified for the lunch program did not turn in the necessary forms to participate. One factor that seemed to indicate economic need was the number of students who worked over 20 hours a week.

Ethnicity was not a factor in this study. However, a concern of the researcher is why more minority students did not participate in the study. In Alliance High School, about 12 to 15 percent of the population were of minority status.

Involvement in school activities and student success showed a positive relationship. Some activities showed a stronger relationship to success than other activities. The relationship of school activities and student success is perhaps not a cause and effect relationship; however, students with a higher level of involvement in school activities developed more of an attachment to school and demonstrated higher academic success.

Students who reported they valued work more than school did not score as high on the CTBS as other students. Student employment and success in school was not found to be related. Researchers have noted that working over 20 hours a week negatively affects students' performance in school. Excessive work loads may discourage many students from taking more challenging classes and give them less opportunity to be involved in school activities and elective courses.

Homework completed, doing homework on a computer, and taking classes that required homework were three variables found to be significant factors in this study. Students who reported completing homework perceived themselves to be more successful in school than students who reported they did not complete homework.

Some researchers have claimed that homework is of little or no value. However, from the data compiled in this study, it was found that at Alliance High School homework did relate to students' success in school. Perhaps it was not the homework that made them more successful, but the teachers' expectations of the students.

A sense of belonging was one of the most significant factors related to student success in school. School activities, sponsors taking time to visit

with students, and students feeling comfortable participating in class were significantly related to student success in school. It would appear that developing and maintaining a positive environment that was inviting to all students seemed to be an element in the school improvement process essential for student success. Since not all students participated in school activities, school officials faced the problem of inaccessibility for some pupils.

Students who valued their education did better in school, and students who performed at above average level in school were more likely to report that academic success was important to them. This relationship could be the result of one or many factors. Many persons were helping these students be successful; the sponsor or coach was looking out for the needs of the students involved in certain activities; students felt more attached to school; students could work better within the school system; and the staff felt more comfortable interacting with students who to talked to them or worked with them.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the findings and conclusions of this study.

1. Consideration should given in developing a more positive school climate that is more inviting to all students. Within the school climate, better pupil to pupil relationships and teacher to public relationships need to be developed. Nothing is as important as the students involved in the educational process. Numerous researchers reported that students are

more likely to perform according to their teachers' expectations. When teachers have higher expectations for students, these students will achieve at a higher level (Novak & Purkey, 1984),

2. Parents should become more involved in their child's education. While the research in many areas is still inconclusive, one finding has been confirmed--parent involvement in education works. Parents are the only ones who oversee the child's entire education. Parents are responsible because they have their child every day (Carlson, 1991). Wlodkowski and Jaynes (cited in Carlson, 1991) noted, "The greater the positive relationship between teachers and parents in what they say and do about children learning, the more powerful their mutual influence can be upon children" (p.10).

3. More should be expected from all students in the school, and lower level students should be given more opportunities to use technology. More homework should be assigned to all students, and they should be expected to complete their homework on time. Foyle (1986) reported that homework increased student achievement when it was regularly assigned, clearly stated, regularly collected, and promptly graded and returned. One enduring value of homework is that it furthers learning tasks through reinforcement, assimilation, practice, and application. Some teachers have agreed that homework is often ill-chosen and poorly designed due to teacher time constraints and lack of experience. Although there are disadvantages to homework, current research and practice indicate that homework is necessary (Foyle, 1993).

Murphy and Decker (1990) and other researchers have found that students in nonacademic track classes do considerably less homework than their academic track peers. If educational equity is the equal distribution of such things as time, quality instruction, and homework, students who receive fewer of these items are disadvantaged by the educational process.

4. Students should be encouraged to work no more than 20 hours a week during school. Barton (1989), in his study on academic achievement of employed high school juniors, found that the grades of students working less than 20 hours per week were no different than those of nonworking students. Students working more than 20 hours per week had significantly lower grades than students who did not work or those who worked less than 20 hours per week. Bracy (1996) reported a strong negative relationship between the proportion of young people holding jobs and test scores. The more students worked, the lower the scores.

5. School personnel should find strategies to involve more students in student activities. According to Lambom and Finn (1995), extracurricular activities may increase students' sense of engagement or attachment to school and decrease the likelihood of school failure.

In 1992, a study (National Educational Goals, 1995) was conducted involving high school seniors to examine the relationship between extracurricular participation and student engagement in school. Indicators of successful participation in school were found to be consistent attendance, academic achievement, and aspirations for continuing education beyond high school. Extracurricular participation was positively associated with each of these success indicators among public school seniors.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

America 2000. (1991). Washington, DC: US Department of Education, Endowment for the Humanities.

Ballen, J., & Moles, O. (1994). Strong families, strong schools Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Barton, P. E. (1989). Earning and learning: The academic achievement of high-school juniors with jobs. Washington, DC: National Assessment of Educational Progress

Becker, H. J. (1987). Using computers for instruction. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 449 598)

Becker, H. J. (1990). How computers are used in United States schools: Basic data from the 1989 I.E.A. computers in education survey. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools.

Becker, H. J. & Sterling, C. W. (1987). Equity in school computer use: National data and neglected considerations. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 358 372)

Benjamin, L. A. (Aug. 1993, August). Parents' literacy and their children's success in school: Recent research, promising practices, and research implications. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 363 441)

Betances, S. (1990). Understanding the dimensions of our problem. Making schools work for underachieving minority students. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press.

Boese, L., & Briggs, L. (1991, October). A study of student basic characteristics contributing to success and progression through SCC's English skills course sequence. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 340 421)

Bracey, G. W. (1996, April). Jobs and achievement. Phi Delta Kappan, 577-578.

Brophy, J. E., & Evertson, C. M. (1981). Student characteristics and teaching. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing.

Bruer, J. T. (1994, August). How children learn. The Executive Educator, 32-36.

Burron, A. (1995, October). Heed community values if you value reform. Educational Leadership, 92-94.

Caldas, S. J. (1993, March/April). Reexamination of inout and process factor effects on public school achievement. Journal of Educational Research, 206-209.

Camp, W. (1990). Participation in student activities and achievement: A covariance structural analysis. Journal of Educational Research, 83 (5), 272-278.

Carlson, C. G. (1991). The parent principle: Prerequisite for educational success. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 337 278)

Chance, P. (1997, March). Speaking of differences. Phi Delta Kappan., 506-507.

Christensen, P., Colangelo, N., Kerr, B., & Maxey, J. (1992, May/June). Characteristics of academically talented minority students. Journal of Counseling and Development, 606-609.

Coleman, J. (1966). Equality of educational opportunity. Washington DC: US Government Printing Office.

Coleman, J. S. (1982). High school achievement. New York. Basic Books.

Community Update. (March, 1996). Secretary Riley defines education challenges, urges Americans to come together. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Cooper, E. (1990). Framework for effective schools. Making schools work for underachieving minority students. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press.

Cooper, J. (1971). Self-fulfilling prophecy in the classroom: An attempt to discover the processes by which expectations are communicated. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 063 453)

Debold, E.(1995). Helping girls survive the middle grades. Principal, 47.

Dewalt, C. K., Dewalt, M. W., Winkler, D. F., & Winkler, M. C. (1994, Winter). Student after-school jobs and student performance. ERS Spectrum, 12-15.

D'Onofrio, J. A. & Kleese, E. J. (1994). Student activities for students at risk. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, Division of Student Activities.

Educational Research Service (1995, Summer). Extracurricular participation and student engagement ERS Research Digest, pp. 12-15.

Eggert, L. L., & Powell-Cope, G. M. (1994). Psychosocial risk and protective Factors: Potential high school dropouts versus typical youth. Using what we know about at-risk youth: Lessons from the field. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing Company.

Fad, K. S., & Ryser, G. R. (1993, January/February). Social/behavioral variables related to success in general education. Remedial and Special Education, 25-35.

Fedigan, L., & Gay, G. (1978). Elements related to student in schooling and education. Executive Summary, 3-18.

Foyle, H. (1993, April). Is homework an effective tool? NASSP Bulletin, 96-98.

Freiberg, J. H. (1993). A school that fosters resilience in inner-city youth. The Journal of Negro Education, 62(3), 364-375.

Frymier, J. (1992). Growing up is risky business, and schools are not to blame. Final Report--Phi Delta Kappa Study of Students At Risk, 1, 3-13.

Garner, W. T. (1978, November). Linking school resources to educational outcomes: The role of homework. HMLT Research Bulletin, 10, 2-12.

Gaustad, J. (1991). Schools respond to gangs and violence. Eugene, OR: Oregon School Study Council.

Glasser, W. (1997, April). A new look at school failure and school success. Phi Delta Kappan, 597-602.

Goldstein, A. (1960). Does homework help? A review of research. The Elementary Journal, 60, 212-224.

Good, C. V. (1979). Dictionary of education (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Goodlad, J. I. (1984). A place called school. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Goto, S. T. (1995). Nerds, normal people, and homeboys: Asian American students and the language of school "success." Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Haberman, M. (1997, March). Unemployment training: The ideology of non-work learned in urban schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 499-503.

Hanson, K., & Schwartz, W. (1992). Equal mathematics education for female students. Washington, DC: US Department of Education

Heiman, G. (1995). Research methods in psychology. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Hieb, C. F. (1992). Why youths join gangs: Jefferson county gang task force tying neighborhoods together. Englewood, CO: Access Publishing.

Holland, A., & Andre, T. (1987, Winter). Participation in extracurricular activities in secondary school: What is known, what needs to be known. Review of Educational Research., 57(4), 437-465.

Hood, J. (1985). Microcomputers in school, 1984-85: A comprehensive survey and analysis. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 265 822)

Jacob, S., & LoVette, O. K. (1995, December). Why do so many high achieving high school students dislike school? NASSP Bulletin, 70-75.

Jessor, R. (1991). Risk behaviors in adolescence: A psychosocial framework for understanding and action. Sociology of Adolescent Medicine, 12, 597-606.

Jessor, R. (1993). Successful adolescent development among youth in high-risk settings. American Psychologist, 48(2), 117-126.

Jones, S. E. (1990, October). Structural impediments to success: A look at disadvantaged youth men in urban areas. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 328 656)

Johns Hopkins University (1992). Resilient children defy stereotypes, succeed against the odds. Baltimore: Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students, Johns Hopkins University.

Keith, T., & Page, E. (1985). Homework works at school: National evidence for policy change. School Psychology Review, 351-359.

Kirst, M. W. (1993, April). Strengths and weaknesses of American education. Phi Delta Kappan, 616.

Klesse, E. J. (1994). Student activities: The third curriculum. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, Division of Student Activities.

Knorr, C. (1981). A synthesis of homework research and related literature. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 199 933.

Koster, F. J. (1993, April). A look at the no pass, no play rule. NASSP Bulletin, 112-114.

Krupnick, D. (1985). Women and men in the classroom: Inequality and its remedies. On teaching and learning. Journal of the Harvard Danforth Center.

Liaw, F. R., & Meisels, S. J. (1993, November/December). Failure in grade: Do retained students catch up?. Journal of Educational Research, 69-77.

Lujan, J. (1990, November). How teacher behavior relates to student effort in classroom for low and high status students. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 193 222)

Mackenzie, D. E. (1983, December). Research for school improvement: An appraisal of some recent trends. Educational Research, 5-17.

Martin, D. (1991). How to be a successful student (2nd ed.). San Anselma, CA: Martin Press.

Mendel, R. A., & Lincoln, C. A. (1991). Guiding children to success: What schools and communities can do. Realizing America's hope. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 338 982)

Morris, W. (1981). The American heritage onary of the English language. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Motsinger, H. (1993, September). Recipe for success: Factors that help students to succeed. NASSP Bulletin, 6-15.

Moyers, B. (1989, April). America's shame, America's hope: Twelve million youth at risk. National Teleconference, Washington, DC.

Murphy, J., & Decker, K. (1990, February). Homework use at the high school level: Implications for principals. NASSP Bulletin, 40-43.

National Association of School Psychologists. (1990). Pathway to tomorrow: Preparing today's children for success. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 356 435)

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (1995, November). Precursors, perceptions, probabilities and peers: Enemies of African-American achievement. Reston, VA: NASSP.

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (1996). Breaking ranks: Changing an American institution. Reston, VA: NASSP.

National Educational Goals. (1995). Building a nation of learners. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

National Federation of State High School Associations. (1991). The case for high school activities. Kansas City, MO: NFSHSA.

Neish, M. A. (1993). Student activities and academic achievement at Marysville High School. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Neuman, D. (1991). Technology and equity. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 339 400)

Novak M. J., & Purkey W. W. (1984). Inviting school success: A self-concept approach to teaching and learning. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Orenstein, P. (1994). Schoolgirls: Young women, self-esteem and the confidence gap. New York: Doubleday.

Ornstein, A. C. (1996, June/July) Motivation and learning: A psychological perspective. The High School Magazine, 40-42.

Page, T. G., & Thomas, J. B. (1977). International dictionary of education. New York: Nichols Publishing Company.

Peng, S. S., & Wright, D. (1994, July/August). Explanation of academic achievement of Asian American students. Journal of Educational Research, 87(6), 346-352.

Pressley, J. S., & Whitley, R. L. (1996). Let's hear it for the "dumb jock": What athletics contribute to the academic program. NASSP Bulletin 80(580), 74-83.

Raiche, J. J., & Others (1983). School improvement: Research-based components and processes for effective schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 239 396)

Rothenberg, D. (1995). Supporting girls in early adolescence. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 386 331)

Schellenberg, S. (1988, April). Loss of credit and its impact on high P school students: A longitudinal study. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Smith, F. (1995, April). Let's declare education a disaster and get on with our lives. Phi Delta Kappan, 584-590.

Smith, J. W., Jr. (1994). Interscholastic athletic programs: A positive factor in school reform. NASSP Bulletin, 78(559), 93-99.

Smutny, J. F. (1995, March/April). Mixed messages: What are we telling our gifted girls? PTA Today, 30-31.

Southern Regional Education Board. (1994). School strategies: Motivating students to work hard to meet high performance standards. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 381 698)

Texas Education Agency. (1989). Effective school research and dropout reduction. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. Ed 335 774)

Turvey, J. S. (1986, February). Homework--Its Importance to student achievement. NASSP Bulletin, 27-35.

US Department of Education. (1959-1996). Strong families, strong schools: Building community partnerships for learning. Washington, DC: The Department.

Webster, M. (1977). Webster's new collegiate dictionary. Springfield, MA: Merriam Company.

Wright, K. (1997, May 18). Academic excellence begins at home: Successful students attribute achievements to their parents. Omaha World-Herald, p. 5.

Zill, N. (1992, August). Trends in family life and children's school performance. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 378 257)

APPENDIX A
IRB Approvals

Youth Assent For
(If the subject is 13-18 Years Old.)

IRB APP#98-03-298EP

An Analysis of Student Characteristics
We are inviting you to participate in this study because you are member of the junior class at Alliance High School which is the student population involved in this research project.

This study has a two fold purpose. The first purpose of this study is to identify characteristics that will help all students to be more successful in school. This study will also be used in writing my dissertation to earn a Doctorate Degree in Education at the University of Nebraska. I need your help with this project and your participation would be very much appreciated.

This research project will take 15 to 30 minutes of student time for child to participate. For a student to participate in this study, they will be asked to return to their 11th grade English teacher a signed parent or guardian consent form and a signed student assent form. Also, the students will be asked to complete a student survey during English class. The data collected from this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my office for a three year period and at the end of the three years the data will be destroyed. Your identity and responses will be totally confidential.

The students involved in this project will be ask to answer survey questions on a scale from 1 to 4 relating to student employment, family structure, social economic background, school activities, sense of belonging, and minority status. Other demographic information that will be used in this study are grade point average, composite scores from the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), gender, free and reduced lunch information, and school attendance records. There are no known risks associated with this research.

We will also need your parents or guardians permission for you to participate in this study. Please talk this over with your parents and have them sign the parent release form for their permission. These forms will be given to you in your 11th grade English class. Please return your consent forms to your 11th grade English teacher.

If you have any questions at any time, please ask the researcher, Patrick Cullen, or if the researcher has not answered your questions about your rights as a participant of this research, you may contact the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board, Telephone (402) 472-6965.

If you check "yes," it means that you have decided to participate and have read everything that is on this form. You are free to decide not participate in this study or to withdraw at any time during the study without adversely affecting

your relationship with the researcher or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You and your parents will be given a copy of the form to keep.

_____   Yes, I would like to participate in the study.

_____   No, I do not want to participate in the study.

Signature of
Student_____Date:_____
Signature of
Investigator_____Date:_____
Investigator: Patrick W. Cullen   Office: 308-762-3359   Home: 308-762-3678

Parental Informed Consent Form
IRB APP # 98-03-298EP
An Analysis of Student Characteristics

You are invited to permit your child to participate in this research study on student characteristics. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you have any questions please call.

Your child is eligible to participate in this study because your child is in the junior class at Alliance High School which is the group of students that are involved in this study. The students involved in this project will be ask to answer survey questions on a scale from 1 to 4 relating to student employment, family structure, social economic background, school activities, sense of belonging, and minority status. Other demographic information that will be used in this study are grade point average, composite scores from the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), gender, free and reduced lunch information, and school attendance records. There are no known risks associated with this research.

This study has a two fold purpose. The purpose of this study is to identify characteristics that will help all students to be more successful in school. Also, the data in this study is being used to write my dissertation to earn a Doctorate Degree in Education at the University of Nebraska.

This research project will take 15 to 30 minutes of student time for child to participate. For a student to participate in this study, they will be asked to return to their 11th grade English teacher a signed parent or guardian consent form and a signed student assent form. Also, the students will be asked to complete a student survey during English class. The data collected from this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my office for a three year period and at the end of the three years the data will be destroyed.

Your child's assistance in this study could help your child and other students to experience more success in school. This study could also be used as a tool in our school improvement process to identify and address student needs and improve the educational opportunities for all students.

Any information obtained during this study which could identify your child will be kept strictly confidential. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but your child's identity will be kept strictly confidential. Data that are reported from this research project will be reported as aggregated data only.

Your child's rights as a research subject have been explained to you. If you have any additional questions concerning your child's rights, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), telephone (402)472 -6965.

You are free to decide not to enroll your child in this study or to withdraw

your child at any time without adversely affecting their or your relationship with
the investigator or the University of Nebraska Lincoln. Your decision will not
result in any loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled.

Documentation of Informed Consent

You are voluntarily making a decision to allow your
child_____ (Student's Name) to participate in the research study.
Your signature certifies that you have decided to allow your child to participate
having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a
copy of this consent from to keep.

_____

Signature of Parent   Date

_____

Signature of Investigator   Date
PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR   Patrick W. Cullen   Office 308-762-3359   Home
308-762-3678

Informed Consent Form

Identification of Project:

This study is an Evaluation of Selected Characteristics of the students in the Junior Class at Alliance High School, Alliance, Nebraska

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research project is to identify student characteristics that would help all students to experience more academic success in school.

Procedures and Student Participation

This research will take about 30 to 45 minutes of student time. Students participating in the research project will be required to have their parents sign a consent form. Students participating is this study will be require to:

1. listen to an explanation of the research project.
2. have their parents sign a parent consent form.
3. fill out a student survey.

Participates in this study will be students in the junior class at Alliance High School. This group was chosen as the subject for this study because they are a good representation of the student body at Alliance High School.

Risk and / or Discomforts

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this research project.

Benefits

The results of this research could be a benefit to all people involved in education. The researcher is trying to identify characteristic of why students are successful in school. Your participation and cooperation could open the doors for others to receive a better education, and a style of life that is more rewarding and fulling.

Confidentiality

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as aggregated data.

Opportunity to Ask Questions

You may ask any question concerning the research before agreeing to participate or during the study. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.

Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska or other participating agent. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Signature of Student _____

Date:_____

Investigator   Patrick W. Cullen   Office: 308-762-3359   Home: 308-762-3678

ALLIANCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
"SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS"
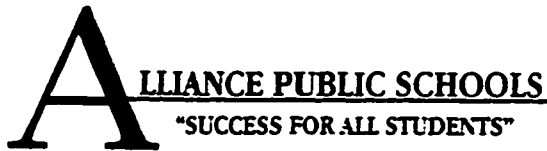
6/24/98

From: Martin Petersen
        Superintendent of Schools
        Alliance City Schools
        Alliance, Nebraska   69301

Re: Research

The administration at Alliance City Schools gives Patrick W. Cullen permission to do research on the junior class at Alliance High School during the second semester of the 97-98 school year.

The research will consist of collecting data relating to the following characteristic; grade point average, social economic background, family, school activities, homework, job, gender, school attendance, social status, and sense of belonging.

Students who participate in this research project will be required to have parent permission and complete a student survey at school during Channel One. Other demographic information that will be used from the student records are attendance records, free and reduce lunch classificationc, CTBS data, and grade point averages.

_____   _____
Superintendent Signature   Date

Martin Petersen
Superintendent
Alliance Public Schools
Alliance, NE

APPENDIX B
Student Survey

Student Survey

Introduction

The data from this survey will be used to identify characteristics to help all students to be more successful in school. Your assistance with this project would not only be beneficial to yourself but also for other students as they go through school.

The information collected will be anonymous and confidential so nobody will know who provided the information.

_____

Question #1 **GENDER** _____

Question #2 **ATTENDANCE** _____

Question #3 **CTBS**_____

Question #4 **GPA** _____

Question #5 **FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH** _____

_____

START HERE

<u>Question #6</u>
How many adults — that is, people who are age 18 or over - -live in your household? (Write the number below)

_____

<u>Question #7</u>

Which of the adults listed below do you live with most of the time? (Check the one that applies)

(Check the one that applies)

- □ 1. Mother and Father
- □ 2. Mother
- □ 3. Father
- □ 4. Grandparent(s)

- 5. Mother and Stepfather
- 6. Father and Stepmother
- 7. Uncle or Aunt
- 8. Brother or Sister
- 9. Foster Placement
- 10. Others_____

Question #8

If you have a problem in your life that is disturbing or threatening is   there a person you can go to for advice or help?
- 1. Yes
- 2. No (If no go to question #10)

Question #9
If yes, who is this person?
(Pick One Choice)
- 1. Mother and Father
- 2. Mother
- 3. Father
- 4. Brother or Sister (Older)
- 5. Grandparent
- 6. Uncle or Aunt
- 7. Priest or Pastor
- 8. Friend
- 9. Teacher
- 10. Coach
- 11. School Counselor
- 12. Employer
- 13. Other_____

Question #10
What is your father's educational level?
- 1. Not a High School Graduate
- 2. GED
- 3. High School Graduate
- 4. Junior College Graduate
- 5. College Degree
- 6. Master's Degree
- 7. Professional Degree
- 8. Doctor's Degree
- 9. Not Sure / Don't Know

Question #11
What is your mother's educational level?
- ☐ 1. Not a High School Graduate
- ☐ 2. GED
- ☐ 3. High School Graduate
- ☐ 4. Junior College Graduate
- ☐ 5. College Degree
- ☐ 6. Master's Degree
- ☐ 7. Professional Degree
- ☐ 8. Doctor's Degree
- ☐ 9. Not Sure / Don't Know Know

Question #12
How many of the adults in your home work full-time?
(Write the number below)
Full-time_____

Question #13
How many of the adults in your home are currently
unemployed, but   would like to work? (Write the number below)

_____

Question #14
What is your racial or ethnic background?
- ☐ 1. Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ 2. Black/African American
- ☐ 3. Hispanic
- ☐ 4. Middle East
- ☐ 5. Native American
- ☐ 6. White
- ☐ 7. Other _____

Question #15
What is your main reason for being absent from school?
- ☐ 1. You are sick
- ☐ 2. Family vacation
- ☐ 3. Need a day off
- ☐ 4. Others

Question #16

After you return from being absent from school do you do any make up work?

- □ 1. Not at all
- □ 2. Some of the time
- □ 3. Most of the time
- □ 4. Always

Question #17

Do you like school?

- □ 1. Not at all
- □ 2. Some of the time
- □ 3. Most of the time
- □ 4. Always

Question #18

Are you involved in school activities?

- □ 1. Yes
- □ 2. No (If no, move on to question #21)

Question #19

Please check the activities that you are involved in.

- □ 1. Football
- □ 2. Cross Country
- □ 3. Tennis
- □ 4. Volleyball
- □ 5. Wrestling
- □ 6. Basketball
- □ 7. Track
- □ 8. Golf
- □ 9. Cheer Leading
- □ 10. Band
- □ 11. Choir
- □ 12. Drama
- □ 13. Speech
- □ 14. Debate
- □ 15. Art Club
- □ 16. Computer Club
- □ 17. FFA
- □ 18. FBLA
- □ 19. FHA

□ 20. Student Council

□ 21. Other_____

Question #20

In athletics or other activities, do you feel that you are?

□ 1. Not successful at all

□ 2. Experience some success

□ 3. Successful

□ 4. Very Successful

Question #21

Is academic success important to you in school?

□ 1. Not at all

□ 2. Some of the time

□ 3. Most of the time

□ 4. Always

Question #22

Are athletics important to you in school?

□ 1. Not at all

□ 2. Some of the time

□ 3. Most of the time

□ 4. Always

Question #23

Are school activities important to you in school?

□ 1. Not at all

□ 2. Some of the time

□ 3. Most of the time

□ 4. Always

Question #24

Are your social activities important to you in school?

□ 1. Not at all

□ 2. Some of the time

□ 3. Most of the time

□ 4. Always

Question #25
>Do coaches or sponsors of different activities take time to visit with you.
- □ 1. Not at all
- □ 2. Some of the time
- □ 3. Most of the time
- □ 4. Always

Question #26
>Do you feel uncomfortable when you participate in class?
- □ 1. Not at all
- □ 2. Some of the time
- □ 3. Most of the time
- □ 4. Always

Question #27
>Do you feel the curriculum in the High School is meeting your needs for your future goals.
- □ 1. Yes (If Yes ---go to Question #29)
- □ 2. No (If No -----go to Question #28)

Question #28
What is the curriculum area of concern?
Academic
- □ Language Arts
- □ Foreign Language
- □ Mathematics
- □ Natural Sciences
- □ Social Science
- □ Computer Education

Vocational
- □ Agriculture
- □ Business
- □ Career Education
- □ Diversified Occupations
- □ Health Occupations
- □ Home Economics
- □ Industrial Technology
- □ Marketing Education
- □ Trade and Industrial Occ.
- □ Vocational Special Needs

Fine Arts
  □ Art
  □ Drama
  □ Music

Health / Physical Education
  □ Person Health
  □ Physical Fitness

Special Education / Chapter I
  □ Special Education

Other
  □ Driver's Education
  □ Other

Question #29
        Do you have a job or work responsibilities at home or in the family   business?
  □ 1. Yes
  □ 2. No (If no, move on to question #33)

Question #30
Do you work on school days?
  □ 1. Yes
  □ 2. No

Question #31
How many hours a week do you work?

_____

Question #32
Is your job more important to you than school?
  □ 1. Not at all
  □ 2. Some of the time
  □ 3. Often
  □ 4. All the time

Question #33

Do the classes you take require homework?
☐ 1. Not at all **(If not at all go to Question #39)**
☐ 2. Some of the time
☐ 3. Often
☐ 4. All the time

Question #34
On an average, how much time do you spend on home work each day?

_____

Question #35
Is there somebody at home who supports you with your homework?
☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

Question #36
When you do your homework do you use a word processor, or a computer?
☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

Question #37
How often are you assigned homework?
☐ 1 day a week
☐ 2 days a week
☐ 3 days a week
☐ 4 days a week
☐ 5 days a week

Question #38
How often do you complete your homework?
☐ 1. Never
☐ 2. Some of the time
☐ 3. Often
☐ 4. All the time

Summary

<u>Question #39</u>

What is the <u>one</u> thing that helps you the most with your school work?

_____

_____

_____

_____

<u>Question #40</u>

What is the <u>one</u> thing that hinders you the most with your school work.

_____

_____

_____

_____

The Florida Key-- Self Evaluation Survey

Place your responses using the following scale in the spaces provided in the column on the right side of the page.

Never=0; Very Seldom=1; Once in a While =2; Occasionally = 3; Fairly Often = 4

Compared with other student my age,

Question #41

1. I get along with other students. _____
2. I get along with other teachers. _____

3. I keep calm when things go wrong. _____
4. I say good things about my school. _____
5. I tell the truth about my work. _____

Total 1-5 _____

Question #42

6. I speak up for my own ideas. _____
7. I offer to speak in front of class. _____
8. I offer to ask questions in class. _____
9. I ask meaningful questions in class. _____

Total 6-9 _____

Question #43

10. I seek out new things to do in school on his/her own. _____
11. I offer to do extracurricular work in the classroom. _____
12. I spend time helping others. _____

13. I show interest in others work. _____
14. I show interest in being a leader. _____

15. I initiate school projects. _____
16. I talk to teachers about personal concerns. _____

Total 10-16 _____

Question #44

17. I finish my school work. _____
18. I pay attention to class activities. _____
19. I do my school work carefully. _____
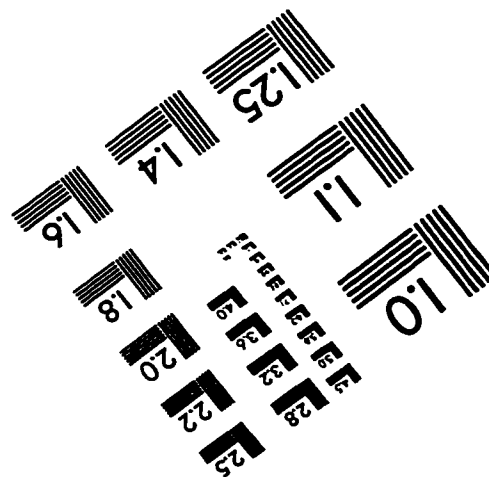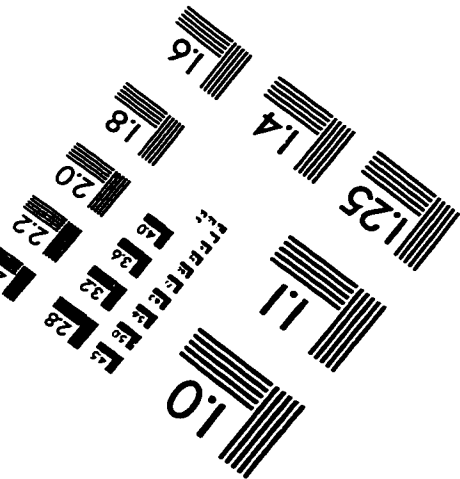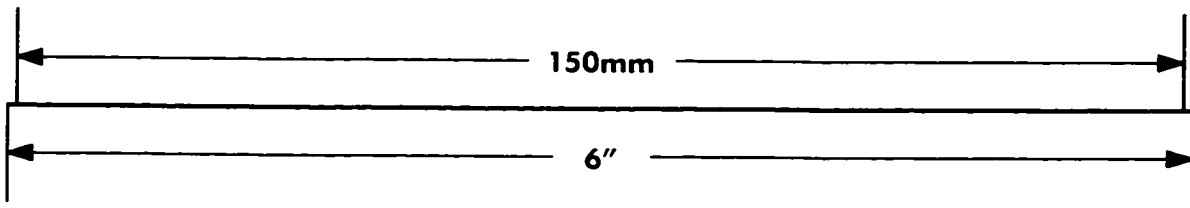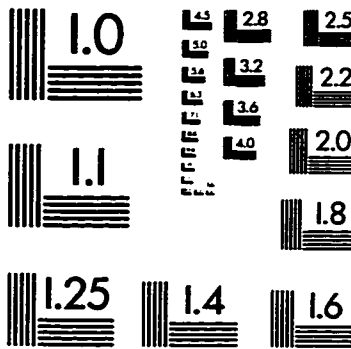20. I exhibit confidence in my school work. _____
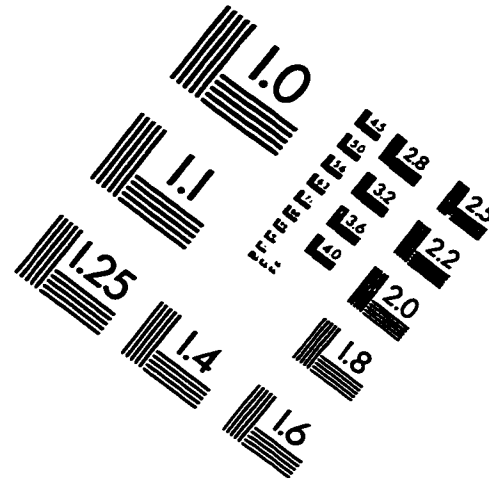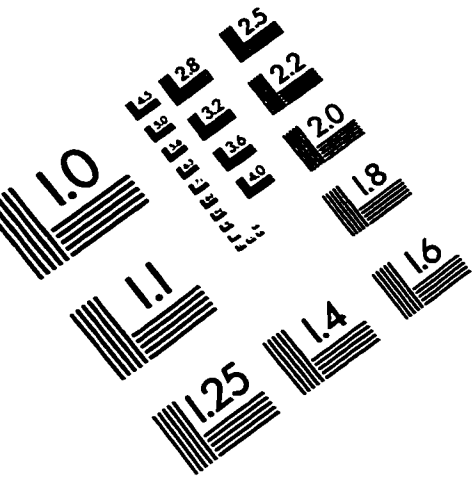
21. I try hard in my school work. _____
22. I talk to others about my school work. _____
23. I join in school activities. _____

Total 17-23_____
Question #45 TOTAL

SCORE_____

Thank you for your honest effort in completing this survey. Your help is greatly appreciated.

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

150mm

6"