

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING INFLUENCES OF  
INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS, SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS,  
EDUCATIONAL CAPITAL, AND ACADEMIC CULTURE ON LEVELS OF  
ENGAGEMENT

by

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I dedicate this research to my children, Sadler and Brindley, and to all my students, past, present, and future, who deserve an engaging educational experience.

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## ABSTRACT

Student engagement at the high school level is not a new topic of discussion and study; however, many times discussions are one dimensional – specifically addressing emotional, behavioral, or cognitive engagement or only looking at one particular influence or factor on student engagement. In this study, I broadened the scope of influences taken into consideration to examine a more holistic view of the many, often interrelated, factors that contribute to the complete picture of student engagement. Individual characteristics, sociocultural factors, educational capital, and academic culture serve as the categories of influence from which the framework of understanding was constructed to better understand and support the interdependent relationships of factors impacting high school students’ emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement in their own learning experiences.

The resulting implications fuel the importance of understanding the dynamic interrelatedness that exists between the many personal, family, peer, and academic factors for high school students. Many of these influences can have strong impressions on students, such as family dynamics or previous learning struggles, and many are in flux depending on daily changes to situations around them, such as peer issues or grades. Ultimately, this study finds students’ abilities to set clear and attainable goals, develop resiliency or grit, be guided and supported through one or more positive adult connections, and be connected and motivated through involvement in positive peer groups and activities significantly influence higher levels of high school students’ engagement.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures .....	xi
List of Tables .....	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	2
Research Focus .....	3
Research Design.....	6
Assumptions, Limitations, Definitions of Terms.....	7
Assumptions.....	8
Limitations .....	8
Definitions of Terms .....	9
Significance of the Problem.....	13
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	16
Purpose of Qualitative Research.....	16
Student Engagement .....	17
Emotional .....	17
Behavioral.....	17
Cognitive.....	18
Internal and External Influences Affecting Levels of Engagement.....	18
Individual Characteristics .....	18
Motivation.....	18
Mindset/Self-Efficacy.....	22
Resiliency/Grit .....	25

Self-Regulation .....	32
Sociocultural Factors .....	35
Family Background and Socioeconomic Status .....	35
Peer Influence .....	40
Educational Capital .....	43
Previous Academic Experience .....	43
Cognitive Development .....	44
Previous Academic Struggle/Failure .....	49
Level of Parent Education.....	50
Level of Parent Support/Involvement.....	51
Academic Culture .....	52
Instructional, Grading, and Assessment Practices .....	52
Interventions .....	60
School Climate/Culture.....	63
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY .....	72
Background.....	72
Research Approach .....	74
Research Questions.....	76
Conceptual Framework.....	78
Research Context and Design .....	79
Participant Selection .....	80
Data Collection .....	80
Phase One.....	80
Phase Two.....	81

Phase Three .....	81
Data Analysis .....	81
Issues of Generalizability and Trustworthiness .....	82
Data Presentation .....	84
CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS .....	86
Phase One.....	86
Population and Purposeful Sample Process .....	86
Individual Narratives for Purposeful Sample .....	87
Student One.....	87
Student Two .....	87
Student Three .....	88
Student Four.....	89
Student Five .....	89
Student Six .....	90
Student Seven.....	91
Student Eight.....	91
Student Nine.....	92
Student Ten .....	93
Student Eleven .....	93
Student Twelve .....	94
Summary .....	95
Phase Two.....	96
Mid-Term Student Data and Teacher Report Information .....	96
Student Interviews .....	96

Summary .....	99
Student One.....	100
Student Two.....	103
Student Three .....	105
Student Four.....	108
Student Five .....	112
Student Six .....	115
Student Seven.....	118
Student Eight.....	121
Student Nine.....	124
Student Ten .....	127
Student Eleven .....	130
Student Twelve .....	132
Phase Three.....	136
End of Term Student Data and Teacher Report Information.....	136
Sample Final Questionnaire .....	136
Summary .....	136
Group 1: Should Be Engaged and Are.....	137
Group 2: Should Be Engaged and Are Not.....	140
Group 3: Should Not Be Engaged and Are.....	143
Group 4: Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not.....	148
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS .....	153
Discussion of Findings.....	153
Comparison and Contrast of the Four Engagement Groups .....	153



Group 1: Should Be Engaged and Are.....	153
Group 2: Should Be Engaged and Are Not.....	156
Group 3: Should Not Be Engaged and Are.....	162
Group 4: Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not.....	165
Conclusions and Implications .....	169
Conclusions.....	169
Factors of the Most Positive or Negative Influence.....	170
Implications.....	175
Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research.....	181
Summary .....	182
References.....	185
Appendices.....	192
Appendix A: Descriptive Data and Information.....	193
Appendix B: Student Engagement in School Questionnaire Validation and Instrument .....	194
Appendix C: Participant Selection and Additional Descriptive Data.....	199
Appendix D: Student Interview Questions .....	211
Appendix E: Mid-term Report and Participants’ Progress Report Grades, Attendance, and Behavioral Data.....	213
Appendix F: End-of-Term Short Answer Questionnaire.....	226
Appendix G: Final Teacher Reports (TERF-N) and Participant Data.....	244
Appendix H: Transcriptions.....	258
Appendix I: Initial Coding for Student Interviews .....	347
Appendix J: Final Themes and Generalizations .....	414

Appendix K: IRB Approval Letter ..... 422

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Hierarchical Goal Framework .....	33
Figure 2: Matrix of Dynamic Interrelatedness Between Types of Engagement and Outside Influences .....	78
Figure 3: Infrastructure for Engagement .....	174

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Four Dimensions of Motivation.....	20
Table 2: Breakdown of Interview Questions by Influence Category .....	96
Table 3: Student 1, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	100
Table 4: Student 2, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	103
Table 5: Student 3, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	105
Table 6: Student 4, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	108
Table 7: Student 5, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	112
Table 8: Student 6, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	115
Table 9: Student 7, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	118
Table 10: Student 8, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	121
Table 11: Student 9, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	124
Table 12: Student 10, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	127
Table 13: Student 11, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	130
Table 14: Student 12, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories.....	132
Table 15: Phase Three Final Analysis – Group 1 .....	137
Table 16: Phase Three Final Analysis – Group 2 .....	140
Table 17: Phase Three Final Analysis – Group 3 .....	143
Table 18: Phase Three Final Analysis – Group 4 .....	148
Table 19: Listing of Major Positive and Negative Factors by Influence Category .....	170
Table 20: Dynamic Interrelatedness Chart .....	175

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

As students progress from primary to middle to high school, researchers have documented decline in student engagement regarding their interest in challenge and curiosity, focus on mastery (Harter, 1981), motivation (Eccles, Midgley, & Adler, 1984; Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 2001), commitment to school (Epstein & McPartland, 1976), general interest in school life (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987), and engagement (Marks, 2000). The decrease in student engagement is troubling because it often translates to decreases in effort, attendance, completed work, student achievement, and increases in behavioral problems (Klem & Connell, 2004). According to an article by the Education Commission of the States (1997), “large numbers of students are not engaged in school, school-work or school-related activities and, as a result, do not take school or academic studies seriously.” This almost 20-year-old conclusion revealed that many students’ only educational goal was graduation, leaving other areas of performance to fall to the wayside. At an already critical time in adolescent development when students are more likely to participate in risky behaviors, a lack of engagement in school life could foster a reciprocal cycle of negative school and personal behaviors (Dryfoos, 1990; Kazdin, 1993; Roeser, Eccles, & Strobel, 1998). Students who disengage are less likely to reach their own potential and, ultimately, they are at higher risk of dropping out (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001; Newell & Van Ryzin, 2007).

## **Purpose of the Study**

In an effort to better understand and construct a plan of action to combat this decline in student engagement, this study will examine a student's overall levels of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement that are affected by both internal and external influences: individual characteristics, sociocultural factors, educational capital, and academic culture. While schools continue to absorb the burdens of and place attention on raising and meeting academic standards, their time and resources are often focused on more narrowly identified areas of need. The symbiotic relationship between engagement and student outcomes, however, is best understood when approached holistically to identify and meet other integral areas of need for true student engagement (Fredricks et. al., 2004). Newell and Van Ryzin (2007) found that "engagement in learning is encouraged when students' core developmental needs are met in school."

Many geographic areas affected by factors such as economic recession, job market shifts, or the moving of industrial operations have been coping with large economic demographic shifts. One such city system high school in southern Tennessee has not been immune to these struggles. This mid-sized high school, situated in a rural, socioeconomic disadvantaged county, no longer benefits from having a large population of highly-trained county residents employed by a local engineering center. Along with educational trend changes, technology advances, and typical evolving teenage factors, the researcher has observed a resultant decline in student engagement, and, as a result, this high school emerges as a viable choice for this study.

Along with the associated needs for the growing economically disadvantaged population, other engagement-related high school issues have also been on the rise at this

particular high school such as absenteeism, course failure, and an increased need for credit recovery as well as other intervention measures (See Appendix A). While continual bureaucratic school improvement processes focus on data-driven policies, procedures, and programs, their data are mostly hard, quantitative data. Unless quantitative data are merged with soft, qualitative data, schools will not get a complete picture of the varying internal and external factors that can significantly impact student engagement levels behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively. In addition, findings emerging from this study have the potential to positively inform and/or impact a student's level of engagement and serve as the basis for the development of an action plan to address this decline in student engagement.

### **Research Focus**

This high school has many strengths: high expectations for all, strong and supportive leadership, experienced and quality staff, as well as many other positive attributes that signify an overall high-achieving high school (see Appendix A). One growing area of deficiency, however, that the inquirer has informally observed, is that students are not arriving to high school as self-driven and engaged in this pivotal school experience as once perceived, or they quickly become that way when faced with the new burdens and challenges of high school. Many students are described as burned out, checked out, or just “over school” in general. To attempt to reverse the decline in student engagement and any associated negative student outcomes, research must be conducted more holistically to better understand the interwoven relationships in and key components of influences on student engagement.

The National Center for Student Engagement (2006) research reported that types of engagement (behavioral, emotional, or cognitive) and certain student outcomes are linked, not enough evidence exists to “draw conclusions about the nature of engagement and student outcomes.” The report also noted that work in the field of student engagement supported a multi-dimensional, and possibly bi-directional, flow of engagement factors and student outcomes. To better understand engagement at the student level and identify major influences and interconnectedness, one must examine factors as “dynamically interrelated” (Fredricks et. al., 2004) versus a narrowed approach and looking at singular factors or outcomes.

Students that walk through the halls of this specific high school have stories and a voice and deserve to have their frustrations and struggles processed in a way that is real, meaningful, and productive so that change can be enacted to maintain or improve student engagement through their educational journey. As sociocultural factors, individual characteristics, educational capital components, and academic culture fluctuate for students, understanding how those outside influences affect students is imperative for educators to better respond to support high levels of student engagement. Therefore, the over-arching questions of this study are:

1. What are the most significant influences affecting levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?
  - a. How do individual characteristics affect levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?
  - b. How do sociocultural factors affect levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?



- c. How do educational capital components affect levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?
  - d. How does academic culture affect levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?
2. What are the perceptions of these students regarding their particular levels of engagement and these outside influences?
    - a. What are students' perceptions of engagement that research and descriptive indicators suggest should be engaged and are?
    - b. What are students' perceptions of engagement that research and descriptive indicators suggest should be engaged and are not?
    - c. What are students' perceptions of engagement that research and descriptive indicators suggest should not be engaged and are?
    - d. What are students' perceptions of engagement that research and descriptive indicators suggest should not be engaged and are not?

Themes will emerge in this grounded theory study as students verbalize their educational and personal experiences that will enable the inquirer to construct a hierarchy of influences that positively or negatively influence students' behavioral, emotional, and/or cognitive engagement. Some influences will likely be interconnected with one or more type of engagement, and a reciprocal relationship between various factors is probable. This study aims to establish more rich and relevant information to construct a holistic framework for action to better engage students in their own learning in a more meaningful and positive manner.

## Research Design

Qualitative research has been chosen for this study because it “uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific setting” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 48) and seeks to “gain new perspectives on things which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively” (p. 49). Hoepfl (1997) identifies that “the ability of qualitative data to more fully describe a phenomenon is an important consideration” to construct meaning in that qualitative research can produce reports that are “typically rich with detail and insights into participants’ experiences of the world” (p. 49). Specifically utilizing grounded theory for “multiple stages of collecting, refining, and categorizing the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the researcher will search for a theory to emerge through these stages of qualitative data analysis (Kolb, 2012, p. 83).

This qualitative study will take place over the course of one nine week period. As the selected mid-sized school runs on a block schedule, full-year courses are covered each semester during 90-minute class periods. One nine week period, therefore, spans the seat time and workload of a semester’s worth of work. At the beginning of the quarter, 531 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students will be administered the Student Engagement Survey (Hart et al., 2011) to assess basic emotional, behavioral, and cognitive levels of engagement (See Appendix B). Descriptive demographics, average achievement scores, course grades, and behavioral data will also be examined to inform the purposeful sample selection of approximately twelve students (see Appendix A & C) from which input will be gathered that addresses the study’s overarching question 2 and sub-questions a, b, c, and d. Purposive sampling “relies on the judgement (sic) of the researcher when it comes

to selecting units (e.g., people, cases/organizations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied.” The goal is not random selection for the purpose of forming generalizations but the “focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest” to be able to best answer the research questions (Lund Research, 2012).

These students will be interviewed by the researcher at the mid-term about their perceptions of internal and external influences on levels of engagement (See Appendix D). Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and then coded using methods outlined by Saldaña (2009). These data will also be compared and triangulated with teacher report surveys with ten items aligned with the initial student survey to be completed by all teachers of each of the participants during this mid-term time frame. Mid-term progress report grades, attendance records, and behavioral data will also be noted for each participant at this time (see Appendix E).

At the end of the quarter, an online, follow-up questionnaire will be given, and students may respond to it by short answer either through typed responses or video recorded responses (see Appendix F). These responses will be coded in the same manner as the interviews. Another round of the teacher report surveys will be administered in addition to examination and collection of final student grades, attendance, and behavioral data (see Appendix G). The continuous collection of data, coding, and then inductive analysis to generate a theory that emerges from the various data is described as the constant comparative method (Kolb, 2012) and will be further discussed in Chapter III.

### **Assumptions, Limitations, Definitions of Terms**

Assumptions, limitations, and definition of terms will be discussed further throughout the study; however, the following information is useful at this point.

**Assumptions.**

1. The population from which to draw the purposeful sample was intentionally selected to be 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders since 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in the Spring semester may be too close to graduation to reflect accurate levels of their whole school experience and engagement levels while 9<sup>th</sup> grade students may be too new in their high school journey to provide substantive data.
2. Each student is a knowledgeable source regarding his or her own perceptions and experiences.
3. Unique school and community characteristics shape internal and external factors that influence levels of student engagement.
4. Teacher perceptions of student levels of engagement at mid-term will be similar to those of student perceptions.

**Limitations.**

1. Only twelve 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders will be selected from one high school to participate in the study. This study is designed to examine the culture and dynamics of one high school and its supporting community; thus, it will produce perspectives from the sample interviews regarding internal and external factors affecting levels of engagement. The findings of this study can be extrapolated to predict possible applications of the data beyond this study for the development of an action plan to address the needs of the students in this community.

2. Data collection is taking place over the course of a nine-week grading period in the spring semester. This is a relatively short time span. This school does operate on block schedule.
3. The study will be conducted the first half of the spring semester. The third quarter falls far enough into the year when students have substantive exposure and opinions regarding their school experience, yet it is not the final quarter of the year when the bulk of standardized testing takes place to possibly affect student feedback and also when motivation and student engagement can decline as the school year comes to an end.

#### **Definitions of Terms.**

1. **Engagement:** "...a growth-producing activity through which an individual allocates attention in active response to the environment" (Hart et al., 2011, p. 67); "a psychological process, specifically, the attention, interest, and investment and effort students expend in the work of learning" (Marks, 2000); "presumed to be malleable" and "results from an interaction of the individual with the context and is responsive to variation in environments" (Fredricks et al., 2004).
2. **Types of Engagement:**
  - a. **Emotional** - "a student's feelings toward his school, learning, teachers, and peers" (Hart et al., 2011, p. 68); "positive affective reactions in the classroom such as enjoyment and interest" and "personal identification and belonging" (Wang & Eccles, 2012, p. 877).

- b. **Behavioral** - “observable student actions or participation while at school and is investigated through a student’s positive conduct, effort, and participation (e.g., participation in extracurricular activities, attendance, and work habits; (Fredricks et al., 2004)” (Hart et al., 2011, p. 68); “positive conduct, compliance with school rules, and absence of disruptive behaviors” (Wang & Eccles, 2012, p. 877).
- c. **Cognitive** - “a student’s perceptions and beliefs associated to school and learning” and “the cognitive processing a student brings to academic tasks as well as the amount and type of strategies and student utilizes” (Hart et al., 2011, p. 68); “motivation to learn, intrinsic motivation, and task valuing in school” and “self-regulated learning strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating one’s own progress” (Wang & Eccles, 2012, p. 877).

### 3. ***Internal and External Influences Affecting Levels of Engagement.***

- a. **Individual Characteristics** – the following individual traits were chosen to be included in this study as significant factors for consideration based on the research discussed in Chapter II: motivation, mindset, self-efficacy, resiliency/grit, self-regulation.
- b. **Sociocultural Factors** - the demographic factors and external influences were chosen to be included in this study as significant factors for consideration based on the research discussed in Chapter II: family dynamic/background, socioeconomic status, peer influence.

- c. ***Educational Capital*** – this is a term developed by the researcher to describe the assets that a student brings into his/her own educational experience that provide readiness, enrichment/support, and an intuitive understanding of and adaptability to the educational system/structures (classroom level, school level, post-secondary planning); the following categories were chosen to be included in this study as significant factors for consideration based on the research discussed in Chapter II: previous academic experience, level of parent education, level of parental support/involvement.
  - d. ***Academic Culture*** – the following educational setting categories were chosen to be included in this study as significant factors for consideration based on the research discussed in Chapter II: instructional, grading, and assessment practices; school climate/culture.
4. ***Dynamic Interrelatedness*** – the three components of engagement (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive) are a “multi-dimensional construct” that unite in a “meaningful way”; “they are not isolated processes” and “considering engagement as a multidimensional construct argues for examining antecedents and consequences of behavior, emotion, and cognition simultaneously and dynamically, to test for additive or interactive effects” (Fredrick et al., 2004, p. 60-61).
  5. ***Qualitative Research*** - broadly defined as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17); in contrast to quantitative

researchers who seek “causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings,” qualitative research seeks “instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 47).

6. ***Grounded Theory*** – “a systematic strategy for theory development without a prior theoretical framework; grounded theories are developed through the use of conceptualization to bind facts together, rather than through inferences and hypothesis testing” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 364).
7. ***Constant Comparative Method*** – “used by the researcher to develop concepts from the data by coding and analyzing at the same time” (Kolb, 2012, p. 83); “combines systematic data collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling in order to generate theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing” (Conrad et al., 1993, p. 280).
8. ***Purposive Sampling*** – “a type of non-probability sampling technique” that “focuses on sampling techniques where the units that are investigated are based on the judgement (sic) of the researcher” (Lund Research, 2012).
9. ***Coding*** – “breaking a text down into manageable segments and attaching one or more key words to a text segment in order to permit later retrieval of the segment” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 363).
10. ***Member Validation*** – “the researcher’s interpretations presented to the subjects of an inquiry for discussion of their validity” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 365).



11. ***Block Schedule*** – school year is comprised of two semesters; during each semester a student is enrolled in four 90-minute classes to be completed during the two 9-week time periods of that semester.
12. ***Student Engagement in Schools Questionnaire (SESQ)*** – a comprehensive instrument developed to measure and study the multidimensional nature of student engagement (Hart, Stewart, & Jimerson, 2011); a self-report measure to obtain the student’s perspective “related to both the indicators and facilitators of engagement” (p. 68).
13. ***Teacher Engagement Report Form – New (TERF-N)*** – a survey tool to gather the teacher’s perspective of students’ levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Hart, Stewart, & Jimerson, 2011); original TERF format (2007) originally contained 6 questions but the work of Hart et al. (2011) produced the TERF-N (new) to ensure “expressly access teachers’ impressions of all three indicators” (p. 69).

### **Significance of the Problem**

If root causes of the decline in student engagement are not identified and addressed, the complexity and burdens of the dynamic interrelatedness of this issue can often manifest in ways that negatively affect present and post-secondary academic goals and promote student indifference to his or her general high school experience (Fredricks et al., 2004). For example, with regard to an initial low level of cognitive engagement, Garner (2007) writes she “saw many creative, intelligent students who disliked school and became ‘mental dropouts.’ They didn’t ‘get it,’ decided that they never would, and either resigned themselves to a kind of passive endurance or engaged in disruptive

behaviors” (p. xi). In addition, students who are not behaviorally, cognitively, and/or emotionally engaged are more likely to have disciplinary issues, have poor attendance habits, perform lower on achievement measures, have little or no post-secondary readiness or goals, or drop out altogether (Fredricks et al., 2004; Klem & Connell, 2004; Newell, 2007).

Some existing research guides educators to suggested practices for engaging students and for creating an educational system in which students feel they can be engaged (see Chapter II), but those findings must be reconciled with the academic demands and other student factors to present a holistic view of the engagement puzzle. Findings of this study are important because they can be used to provide current and future educators with holistic information to be used to not only motivate and involve students in their own learning process but also to encourage habits in students to positively impact their future paths. When students engage in their own learning, they are more likely to take responsibility for their own performance and achieve higher levels of academic and personal success (Klem & Connell, 2004).

The results of this research will include descriptive data produced from student perspectives regarding the often interrelated student and school factors that can contribute to high or low levels of engagement. As a result of the themes and patterns identified, the potential for negative affect can be recognized, awareness acquired, and action plans and supportive measures developed and taken to support and sustain student behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The dynamic interrelatedness that exists within the various components of student engagement also necessitates the development of intervention measures to scaffold the delicate balance that can exist between these factors

and student levels of engagement. Educators in all grades need a better understanding of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, an awareness of key influences on the overarching construct of student engagement, and tools for assessing and identifying at-risk students. When students arrive at the high school level specifically, many of their experiences inside and outside of school more concretely mold their personal motivation, attitudes, and behaviors. Educators, parents, and community organizations, through better understanding of student perceptions, will be able to more effectively develop an action plan consisting of positive intervention strategies, specific resources, and supportive measures utilized to reduce the effects of negative influences, help students realize and reach their potential, and promote more long-term, positive student outcomes.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following represents literature that covers existing research on major influences on levels of student engagement. This review organizes the research beginning with individual student factors and then zooms out to examine other factors at the broader, educational system level. Many of these topics are not exclusive, but in fact, can intersect one or more other related influences.

#### **Purpose of Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is largely defined as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). In contrast to quantitative researchers who seek “causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings,” qualitative research seeks “instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 47). This study sought to understand and shed light on the student perspectives on a variety of influences on levels of engagement. The multidimensional nature of engagement compounded by many external factors necessitated the rich, descriptive research produced from personal interviews and observation in lieu of generalized, numerical data. Grounded theory, “a systematic strategy for theory development without a prior theoretical framework” that is “developed through the use of conceptualization to bind facts together, rather than through inferences and hypothesis testing” provided a qualitative method for capturing

the emerging themes from the data which were then used to develop a plan of action (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 364).

### **Student Engagement**

Engagement was described by Hart et al. (2011) as "...a growth-producing activity through which an individual allocates attention in active response to the environment" (p. 67). Furthermore, regarding student engagement in school, Marks (2000) defined it as "a psychological process, specifically, the attention, interest, and investment and effort students expend in the work of learning" (p.154-155). Fredricks et al. (2004) wrote about the various dimensions and complexity of understanding the composition of student engagement as it is "presumed to be malleable" and "results from an interaction of the individual with the context and is responsive to variation in environments" (p. 61).

**Emotional.** One of the abovementioned dimensions of student engagement is emotional engagement, and it was described as "a student's feelings toward his school, learning, teachers, and peers" (Hart et al., 2011, p. 68). It can be observed in "positive affective reactions in the classroom such as enjoyment and interest" and "personal identification and belonging" (Wang & Eccles, 2012, p. 877).

**Behavioral.** Behavioral engagement is another category for consideration. Fredricks et al. (2004) framed behavioral engagement as "observable student actions or participation while at school and is investigated through a student's positive conduct, effort, and participation (e.g., participation in extracurricular activities, attendance, and work habits)" (as cited in Hart et al., 2011, p. 68). Wang and Eccles (2012) also specified

“positive conduct, compliance with school rules, and absence of disruptive behaviors” as indicators of behavioral engagement (p. 877).

**Cognitive.** The third dimension in student engagement is cognitive engagement. Hart et al. (2011) described this type of engagement as “a student’s perceptions and beliefs associated to school and learning” and “the cognitive processing a student brings to academic tasks as well as the amount and type of strategies and student utilizes” (p. 68). Additionally, Wang and Eccles (2012) specified “motivation to learn, intrinsic motivation, and task valuing in school” and “self-regulated learning strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating one’s own progress” as key components in cognitive engagement (p. 877).

### **Internal and External Influences Affecting Levels of Engagement**

#### **Individual Characteristics.**

**Motivation.** Usher and Kober (2012a) compiled a meta-analysis of pertinent research and studies and wrote a series of papers titled “Student motivation—An overlooked piece of school reform.” They began by simply defining motivation as “*why* anyone does any of the things that they do” and then differentiated intrinsic motivation from extrinsic referencing work by Pintrich (2003): “the desire to do or achieve something because one truly wants to and takes pleasure or sees value in doing so” versus “the desire to do or achieve something not for the enjoyment of the thing itself, but because doing so leads to a certain result.” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012b, p. 3) Rigby et al. and Murray discussed these two different types of motivation that are often debated as “true motivation and engagement” or just “holding one’s attention” while stating others argue that actions could be driven by a combination of both (as cited in

Usher & Kober, 2012b, pg 3). A student could be initially incentivized by the external result, but during the process, find a personal connection and begin to be intrinsically motivated (Usher & Kober, 2012b).

A student's motivation permeates all areas of his or her school experience. Usher and Kober (2012b) noted that motivation not only shapes students' attitudes toward school in general but also other important areas like "how much support they seek when they're struggling, how much they attempt to engage or disengage their fellow students from academics, how they perform on assessments..." (p. 2). According to a 2004 National Research Council report, a decline in motivation for large percentages of students is now a real problem with close to 40% disengaging from learning, not being attentive, exerting little effort on school work, and reporting being bored in school. Alarming, this report noted that students' motivation and engagement in school declines as students go from elementary to middle to high school. This report by the National Research Council found that "adolescents are too old and too independent to follow teachers' demands out of obedience, and many are too young, inexperienced, or uninformed to appreciate the value of succeeding in school" (2004, p. 18-19). The long-run problem for this growing lack of motivation for many students is dropping out of school. Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison (2006) conducted a survey in which 70% of high school dropouts claimed to be unmotivated.

Gottfried and Ryan and Deci all discussed the importance of individual student motivation to learn and excel as it links directly to academic performance and achievement gains (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012b). They concluded that greater levels of motivation are also tied to "greater conceptual understanding, satisfaction with

school, self-esteem, and social adjustment, and to lower dropout rates” (Usher and Kober, 2012b, p. 1). Usher and Kober (2012b) found that student motivation is a crucial piece of the puzzle for improving schools and student learning and that “without it, the rest of the puzzle falls apart.”

Pulling research and analysis from Bandura, Dweck, Murray, Pintrich, Ryan and Deci, and Seifert, Usher and Kober (2012b) outlined what they identified as the four dimensions of student motivation. Each dimension described a key component to students being motivated and engaged in their own learning. At least one of these dimensions must be met, and the level of student motivation improves with each additional dimension that is met.

Table 1: Four Dimensions of Motivation

Competence	The student believes he or she has the ability to complete the task.
Control/Autonomy	The student feels in control by seeing a direct link between his or her actions and an outcome and retains autonomy by having some choice about whether or how to undertake the task.
Interest/Value	The student has some interest in the task or sees the value of completing it.
Relatedness	Completing the task brings the student social rewards, such as a sense of belonging to a classroom or other desired social group or approval from a person of social importance to the student.

In addition, Seifert wrote that achievement goal theory supports the discussion of student motivation through the lens of trying to achieve a particular goal or goals (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012b). Usher and Kober liken this to describing a goal as “an extrinsic manifestation of intrinsic motivation” (2012c, p. 3). An interesting paradox to this is, as Barry described, that a student who lacks intrinsic motivation may not be able



to establish appropriate goals, but that with help, the establishment of proper goals may boost motivation and, in turn, personal achievement (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012b). Two types of goals are outlined: mastery and performance. Usher and Kober (2012c) again referenced Seifert when they wrote that these two types of goals “are closely linked to mindsets and a variety of outcomes with mastery goals showing more positive and productive outcomes” (p. 2).

Setting a goal and connecting it to something that interests the student may be of more benefit to the student who is not innately driven by intrinsic factors and love of learning (Usher & Kober, 2012b). An appropriate goal to help motivate these students should be described as realistic, achievable, and education-dependent. The student needs to have some ownership and buy-in to the goal and must feel a real connection to achieving it. Pintrich quoted research by Schultheiss in his article which synthesizes the premise of this topic well: “when explicit goals and implicit motives are congruent, then individuals are more motivated and perform better” (as cited in Pintrich, 2003, p. 670).

Additionally, Usher and Kober’s findings stated that it is also helpful “if the goal is supported by the people important to the student” (2012c, p. 16) as well as the positive impact on motivation and effort that a goal in the right context can have. Researchers Hardré and Sullivan (2009) conducted a survey that found that teachers that were most in tune with and had the most direct effect on student motivation were the ones that worked to build the internal characteristics. Their influence focused on “their interpersonal relatedness with students, and on links between education and things that students value, both now and into their futures” (Hardre & Sullivan, 2009, p. 12).

Motivation is a unique combination of factors for each student. Whether he or she

is intrinsically driven, externally motivated, or a combination of both, other elements, such as the areas mentioned above, and individual traits comprise any picture of a student's level of engagement. Pintrich wrote, "Some students may be motivated and sustained through their self-efficacy beliefs, whereas others are motivated to try hard, persist, and achieve because of their goals, their personal interests, their value beliefs or contextual factors..." (2003, p. 671).

*Mindset/Self-Efficacy.* Similarly, various bodies of research showed the impact of student belief in self on motivation, engagement, and success. Barry and Murray wrote specifically about levels of student motivation based on his or her own thoughts on capacity to learn (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012b). Pintrich's work in this specific area says that as a student's view of his or her learning capacity narrows, so does his or her academic motivation (Pintrich, 2003). This also is affected by how the student views and understanding key ideas such as "knowledge" and "learning" (Usher & Kober, 2012b).

A key researcher in this area is Carol Dweck. In her article "Mind-sets and Equitable Education," she asserted that "(i)f a student defines knowledge as a fixed quantity a person either has or doesn't have, that student is less likely to be motivated to learn than one who defines knowledge as a quantity that can change and grow" (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012b, p. 4). The latter type of mind-set she referred to as growth mind-set. Students with growth mind-set were found to have a straightforward idea of effort with "the idea that the harder you work, the more your ability will grow" and that one must work hard for his or her accomplishments (Dweck, 2008, p. 112). The contrasting fixed mind-set in students showed a belief that "if you worked hard it meant that you didn't have ability" because, otherwise, new knowledge and skills would come

easier to them. The problem with this thinking, as Dweck pointed out, is that it means that when students approach a task that is difficult and requires effort, it is now both “a threat and a bind” (2008, p. 112). She explained, “If they work hard at it that means that they aren’t good at it, but if they don’t work hard they won’t do well” (Dweck, 2008, p. 112). This mentality can inhibit success not just for school but for life in general.

Dweck (2008) pointed out that, starting in the 1990s, society placed self-esteem above effort as well as idolized talent. In recent years, parents and educators see that this does not actually motivate students as those with the fixed mind-set of natural talent “expect to sit there with it and be successful” (Dweck, 2008, p. 117). When these students are not innately successful at something, they get discouraged and give up. Likewise, students who do not believe they have the “natural talent” become demoralized and give up, often before they have ever tried. Dweck (2008) concluded that a fixed mind-set “dampened students’ motivation to learn, made them afraid of effort, and made them want to quit after a setback” (p. 112). Many capable students then struggle when challenged or stop trying when something gets hard. Murray, Barry, and Pintrich emphasized that “students need to recognize a correlation between effort and success. Students who feel they have no control over the outcomes of their efforts are less likely to put forth any effort to begin with” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012b, p. 4).

To measure the actual effects of the two mind-sets, Dweck (2008) and her colleagues conducted a two-year study starting with students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and following their math performance. The control group was taught study skills while the other half was taught study skills and trained in growth mind-set. The results showed that students trained in growth mind-set “focused on learning, believed in effort, and were

resilient in the face of setbacks” while the fixed mind-set, study skills only group continued to show declining grades, and they had not gained the “motivation to put their skills into practice” (Dweck, 2010, p. 27). Teachers were asked for their observations, and the results showed that they identified three times as many students that had been trained in growth mind-set than from the control group as “having shown clear changes in their motivation to learn” (Dweck, 2010, p. 27). They also made extensive observations regarding positive improvement in homework, attentiveness, study habits, and grades.

Having this growth mind-set, Dweck said, “helps those students remain engaged and achieve well, even in the face of stereotypes” (2010, p. 26). Citing studies from Blackwell et al., Good et al., and Aronson, Fried, and Good, Dweck noted that developing a growth mind-set is “especially important for students who are laboring under a negative stereotype about their abilities, such as Black or Latino students or girls in mathematics or science classes (as cited in Dweck, 2010, p. 26). She explained that for these groups of students, the negative stereotype is a “fixed mind-set belief that certain abilities are inherent and that your group doesn’t have them” (Dweck, 2010, p. 29). If these students, however, adopt a growth mind-set, ignoring any previous underperformance that may have occurred, they develop the belief that their efforts along with supportive school staff will develop their abilities. This can improve how these groups of students approach difficult situations as far as struggling through them instead of giving up.

Correcting the fallacies about natural talent and fixed mind-set and developing growth mind-set are necessary to keep students engaged and to encourage them that “no matter how smart or talented someone is...no one succeeds in a big way without

enormous amounts of dedication and effort” (Dweck, 2008, p. 118). Ericsson et al. emphasized that research increasingly shows that how hard someone has worked sets apart successful people from equally talented others (as cited in Dweck, 2008). Dweck (2008) contended that “it is the belief that intelligence can be developed that opens students to a love of learning, a belief in the power of effort and constructive, determined reactions to setbacks” (p. 112).

***Resiliency/Grit.*** In addition to her work on mindset, Carol Dweck joined David Yeager to review a series of studies and observations to draw conclusions about students’ mindsets as they pertain to possible improvement in academics and in dealing with peer conflict (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). They closely examined the attribute of resiliency. Resilience, as referenced by Yeager and Dweck, was “whether students respond positively to challenges” (2012, p. 302). Later in the article, resilience was referenced as “any behavioral, attributional, or emotional response to an academic or social challenge that is positive and beneficial for development” (2012, p. 303). The analyses, interpretation of data, and claims converged to validate the authors’ work toward promoting student mindsets and resilience to improve academic performance and student stress level in negative peer situations.

The discussion differentiated between implicit theories of intelligence and personality versus entity theory of these two topics. An implicit theory view on these two topics means the student believes he/she has the ability to improve intelligence and academic performance and/or personal attributes (Dweck & Yeager, 2012). Entity theory, however, suggests that these factors for any given person are fixed, pre-destined, and cannot be improved through increased training or effort.

Dweck and Yeager referenced other significant work that supported their claims on the implications for implicit theory and entity theory. The authors stated that “students’ implicit theories of intelligence predict their academic performance over time, particularly when they face challenging work” and that “an incremental versus entity theory shapes students’ goals..., their beliefs about effort (whether effort is a key to success and growth or whether it is a signal that they lack natural talent)...” (Dweck & Yeager, 2012, p. 304). Both of these claims cited the 2007 article in the *Child Development* journal written by Blackwell, Trzesniewski, and Dweck titled “Implicit Theories of Intelligence Predict Achievement across an Adolescent Transition: A Longitudinal Study and an Intervention.”

In this research article, the researchers conducted two studies to examine the role of implicit theories of intelligence in adolescents’ mathematics achievement. The first of the two studies was examined here as it was the most comprehensive while the second study replicated the test on a slightly different demographic with very similar results. The study was conducted at the junior high level; the authors described the social and structural changes that adolescent students undergo, and they asserted that “these changes point to a mismatch between the adolescent’s needs and the environment they are thrown into – one common result of which is disengagement from school” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 246). Regarding resiliency, Blackwell et al. explained that “how students negotiate these changes has major implications for their academic futures” (2007, p. 246). These overarching theories factor into the research and study design to address what Blackwell et al. described as “the motivational problem so prevalent in adolescence” (2007, p. 247).

In the first study, the researchers followed 373 junior high school students through their junior high transitional experience and measured implicit theories and “other achievement-related beliefs at the outset of junior high and then assessing their achievement outcomes as they progressed through the seventh and eighth grades” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 248). These 373 students encompassed four successive years of entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and were followed through both years at the junior high school. The sample selected from this population had variety in ethnicity, achievement, and socioeconomic status. The entering seventh grade students were given a preliminary survey measuring “theory of intelligence, goals, beliefs about effort, and helpless versus mastery-oriented responses to failure” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 249). The prior year sixth grade math achievement scores were collected as well as scores at the end of students’ seventh grade and eighth grade years. There was no mathematics grouping at this school, and the same teacher taught all students in each grade. Ability-wise, on average, the students were slightly higher than other students in New York public schools where the study was conducted but not to a large degree.

Math was chosen as the subject to use in the research because it was viewed as “a subject that many students find difficult; thus, it meets the requirement of being a sufficiently challenging subject to trigger the distinctive motivational patterns related to theory of intelligence” and was also a subject “in which progress requires building upon previously learned material; thus, deficits in math skills may tend to accumulate over time, producing longer term differences in achievement trajectories” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 249). In addition to the achievement scores, and of particular importance to this research project, were the surveys employed. Students were surveyed using various

Likert-type scale instruments to measure student perceptions on theories of intelligence, learning goals, effort beliefs, and response to failure. The results showed a positive association in an incremental theory of intelligence and the other items measured. These student levels “became a significant predictor of their mathematics achievement” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 251).

Although students with various levels of theories came into 7<sup>th</sup> grade without significant differences in their math achievement test scores, one group emerged by the end of the junior high journey: the implicit theory group. In addition, the researchers found that “theory of intelligence is related to a set of motivational constructs” and that those constructs needed to be taken into account “when discussing the effect of theory intelligence” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 251). Three different statistical analyses were applied to “address the question of why an incremental theory is related to increasing math grades” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 252). In the end, the researchers determined that the shared variance among the four mediators considered (learning goals, positive effort beliefs, low helpless attributions, and positive strategies) “explains the relation between theory of intelligence and grades, our process model suggests that there might be unique interrelations among the motivation constructs that explain *why* theory of intelligence is related to grades” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 253).

This study supported the validity of the proposed model of achievement motivation in an action research setting. Junior high school students with implicit theory of intelligence “affirmed learning goals more strongly, and were more likely to believe that working hard was necessary and effective in achievement...” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 253). These students were also less likely “to attribute a potential failure to lack of



ability, and more likely to say they would invest more effort or change strategy in response” (Blackwell et al., 2007, p. 253). This translated into significant difference in performance of the two categories of students – those of implicit theory outperforming those of entity theory – by the end of the two years in junior high school, controlling for prior achievement.

A new term that has emerged, *grit*, is from Angela Duckworth, a leading researcher in the field of how resilience impacts motivation and achievement. In an interview with Deborah Perkins-Gough (2013), Duckworth discussed usages and meanings of the words *grit* and *resiliency*. She stated that resiliency is often associated with terms and phrases like “optimism – appraising situations without distorting them, thinking about changes that are possible to make in your life,” “bouncing back from adversity,” or referring to students who have persevered despite being in at-risk situations (Perkins-Gough, 2013, p. 14). Duckworth contended that grit relates to these various descriptions because “part of what it means to be gritty is to be resilient in the face of failure or adversity” (Perkins-Gough, 2013, p. 14).

Other researchers agreed that, in today’s education world, qualities such as resilience and grit are an integral part of the reform process for reaching and engaging more students to increase achievement levels. Authors Goodwin and Miller (2013) wrote that *grit* is made up of several traits and behaviors that include:

- “goal-directedness (knowing where to go and how to get there)
- motivation (having a strong will to achieve identified goals)
- self-control (avoiding distractions and focusing on the task at hand)

- positive mind-set (embracing challenge and viewing failure as a learning)”  
(p. 74).

Referencing Poropat and Dweck, the researchers also contended that students need “the will to achieve” and a “growth mind-set – or the belief that they can become smarter and turn failure into success through their own efforts” (as cited in Goodwin & Miller, 2013, p. 74). Duckworth also noted that students with a growth mind-set tend to show more grit as well (Perkins-Gough, 2013). Furthermore, Duckworth agreed that grittiness incorporates additional elements. Separate from dealing with failure and adversity, she found that “having consistent interests – focused passions – over a long time” was an important element to having grit (Perkins-Gough, 2013, p. 16). When talking with Perkins-Gough (2013), Duckworth described this consistent interest and focused passion as meaning that one finds something in particular to focus on and is willing to give up other things to pursue that goal or interest. Grit is not “just having resilience in the face of failure, but also having deep commitments that you remain loyal to over many years” (Perkins-Gough, 2013, p. 16).

One of the first studies Duckworth conducted was with a group of first-year candidates at West Point Military Academy (Perkins-Gough, 2013). To be admitted, a candidate is assessed by the Whole Candidate Score which is made up of an SAT score, class rank, leadership ability, and physical aptitude. Despite picking the best of the best based on these Whole Candidate Scores, on average 1 of 20 new cadets do not make it through the summer training before beginning the first academic year. Duckworth and her team gave these cadets, along with the other psychological tests given, a short questionnaire based on grit. By the end of the difficult summer, they found that “grit was

the best predictor of which cadets would stick around” (Perkins-Gough, 2013, p. 16). They also found that it was actually a “much better predictor than the Whole Candidate Score” and that the Whole Candidate Score had “no predictive relationship with whether you would drop out that summer” (Perkins-Gough, 2013, p. 16) although it did better predict later academy performance and successes.

Duckworth also reinforced similar findings in studies of students in the National Spelling Bee and first-year teachers in difficult school situations (Perkins-Gough, 2013). Goodwin and Miller (2013) also referenced a study conducted by Duckworth et al. with high school students. Students were tasked to “envision the benefits of completing a PSAT practice workbook, to anticipate obstacles that might prevent their completing the workbook, and to develop plans to overcome those obstacles” (Goodwin & Miller, 2013, p. 75). The team found that students who worked through this process completed much more of the workbook than students who did not.

Whether they are faced with an academic challenge or a life challenge, Schechtman et al. said, “students need to learn how to size up a goal, relate it to their own interests, identify steps for achieving it, and think about how they can overcome difficulties that get in their way” (as cited in Goodwin & Miller, 2013). According to Goodwin and Miller (2013), grit has been found to “be as crucial as cognitive ability to student success.” (pg. 74) In her interview, Duckworth also added that “grit predicts success over and beyond talent” and that when talent is equal, the “grittier” students are more successful (Perkins-Gough, 2013, p. 16). Students who have struggled and practiced getting through that struggle have more advantage than those who are merely “talented.” They typically show themselves to be ambitious, not willing to settle,

hardworking, and passionate about something and will achieve more with this grit than students without.

***Self-Regulation.*** Tied very closely with the subjects of self-efficacy, resilience, and grit is another characteristic that relates to students' ability to meaningfully engage: self-regulation. Angela Duckworth saw this relationship when working with her research on grit, and she and a colleague James Gross recently completed an article titled "Self-Control and Grit: Related but Separable Determinants of Success" (2014). They recognized that talent or opportunity, or a combination of the two, often leads to being successful. Self-control may be the unmeasured piece of this puzzle, and it must be examined, compared, and contrasted to grit when considering student achievement outcomes.

Fujita described self-control as including both "inhibiting strong but ultimately undesirable impulses and activating weak but ultimately desirable impulses" (as cited in Duckworth & Gross, 2014, p. 319). Duckworth et al. referred to *grit*, a newer term, as a "passion for and perseverance toward especially long-term goals" (as cited in Duckworth & Gross, 2014, p. 319). Grit's indicator of high achievement is derived from a consistent and dedicated work ethic toward a goal over a long period of time. Self-control, early on in life, works as a predictor for later academic achievement and attainment as evidenced in studies by Duckworth and Carlson (2013) and Mischel (2014) (as cited in Duckworth & Gross, 2014). The cross-section of these two traits shows that some people can be very self-controlled but lack goals with meaning and focus while others can be successful in their passion but void of self-discipline in other areas.

Grit and self-control are similar and different, yet they work together; therefore, Duckworth and Gross (2014) were prompted to illustrate this hierarchical goal framework:

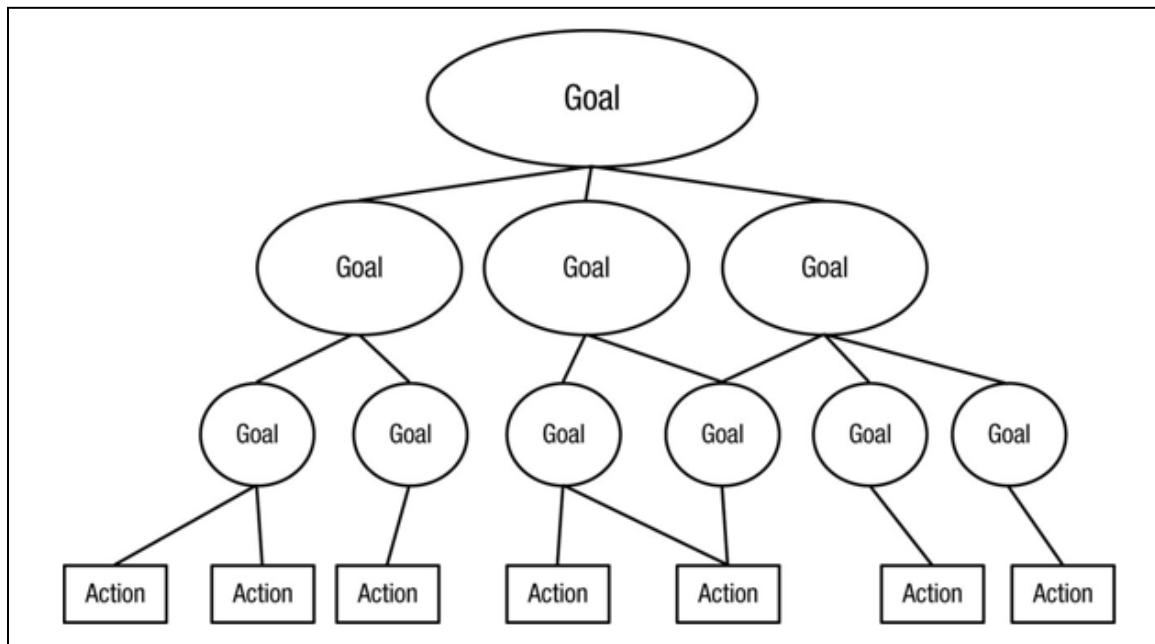


Figure 1: Hierarchical Goal Framework

Goals are typically organized in a hierarchy with bigger, more meaningful and long-term goals toward the top and smaller, more feasible and short-term goals beneath (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). Duckworth and Gross (2014) contended that a person “can have not only multiple goals but also multiple goal hierarchies,” and when this occurs, the “multiplicity of motives can lead to conflicts” (p. 321). Organized as such, self-control is represented by the “successful resolution of a conflict between two action impulses – one that corresponds to a goal that is more valued in the moment, and another that corresponds to a goal that is of a greater enduring value” (Duckworth & Gross, 2014, p. 321). With greater amounts of self-control, therefore, one can delay action of an

impulse to meet the higher need of another goal. As Duckworth and Gross (2014) wrote, “one cannot eat one’s cake and have it later, too” (p. 322).

Based on this thinking, Diamond, Mischel, and Oettingen indicated that concerning intervention measures, self-control is a skill or capacity (as cited in Duckworth & Gross, 2014). This means that, like other skills, one can improve his or her self-control, strengthening chances of success, through training and practice. Duckworth and Gross (2014) concluded that awareness of self-control illuminated the importance, as well as the struggle, of choosing actions to align with the most valuable goal while more rewarding options can be acted upon in the short term. In terms of student engagement, academic and life goals may be bigger, high-value goals, but actions toward achieving them could be taken away by an easier and more readily gratifying goal like watching television or spending time with friends.

Some of the most significant implications for self-control as it relates to student achievement and engagement were found in studies conducted in 2005 by Duckworth and Seligman. The researchers examined two consecutive years of 8<sup>th</sup> graders from the same school using self-reporting, parent reports, teacher reports, and analyses of hypothetical and behavioral measures of delay-of-gratification. A partial basis for the formation of the three hypotheses to be tested was from work by Mischel et al. that found “greater ability to delay gratification measured at age 4 predicted higher academic and social functioning more than a decade later” (as cited by Duckworth & Seligman, 2005, p. 939).

After the first year, self-discipline was found to be a predictor of final grades, school attendance, standardized achievement-test scores, and selection in the spring into a selective high school program (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). The second year added a

questionnaire of study habits and an IQ test for each of the students in the group. Initial self-discipline measures accounted for twice the variance as IQ with final GPAs. Eighth graders with higher self-discipline levels not only had higher GPAs and test scores but “were more likely to gain admission to a selective high school, had fewer absences, spent more time on their homework, watched less television, and started their homework earlier in the day” (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005, p. 941). These results, the authors suggested, show that self-discipline and regulation have a larger impact on academic performance than actual intellectual ability.

What does this potentially mean for students who are increasingly underachieving and disengaged from school? Duckworth and Seligman suggested that perhaps students conceivably might not reach their “intellectual potential” because of “their failure to exercise self-discipline” (2005, p. 944). Based on these studies, the researchers stated that many students “have trouble making choices that require them to sacrifice short-term pleasure for long-term gain, and that programs that build self-discipline may be the royal road to building academic achievement” (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005, p. 944). Similarly, Feldman and Matjasko suggested that programs that help develop self-discipline through “structured opportunities to challenge themselves, learn through failure, and experience improvement” have been linked not only to academic achievement but also “reduced dropout and substance abuse rates and higher levels of college enrollment” (as cited by Goodwin & Miller, 2013, p. 75).

### **Sociocultural Factors**

*Family Background and Socioeconomic Status.* To one degree or another, individuals are products of their environments; therefore, one should explore the effects

of a student's family dynamic, background, and socioeconomic status as it relates to the various dimensions of engagement. Grolnick, Friendly, and Bellas wrote that "through their parenting choices and actions, parents communicate a set of values and family characteristics to their children; these can affect how children conceive of their own identities, abilities, and goals" (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 7). Usher and Kober's (2012d) meta-analysis found that family background "can also result in contextual differences that may affect achievement and motivation" (p. 5) such as many of the elements discussed in the Educational Capital section found later in this chapter.

Dweck's (2010) research emphasized that parental influence and opinion can "impact children's mindsets about control over academic achievement and their conceptualization of intelligence as something fixed or something one can work to attain" (Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 7). Thus, students from different cultural backgrounds may display different levels of engagement when his/her educational values are influenced by home culture and "reinforced by their families" (p. 7). Similar research by Murdock suggested that these cultural differences in values and behaviors could impact motivation specifically (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d).

For example, when looking at a group of immigrant families, researchers found that the values passed from parents to students showed the likelihood for contributing to difference in motivation. On the positive end of the spectrum, researchers Graham and Hudley stated that "communicated parental values about hard work and the importance of a good education appear to be among the most important factors accounting for higher achievement among immigrants and children of immigrants" (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 8). This was found to be especially true for Asian and Latino immigrant groups



who appeared to have higher student motivation when there were higher academic expectations. The researchers noted that “immigrant parents may also stress values such as hard work and persistence in the face of adversity—traits that were necessary in their immigration experience but also serve to foster motivation in their children” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 8). Another related factor for high achievement was the immigrant parents’ emphasis on obligation to the family which led students to consider the well-being of the whole family instead of only themselves when making decisions.

The literature supports that key factors such as parental background, family context, and family values are important to students’ academic motivation, but an equally important factor that can weigh differently for each child depending on the previously mentioned factors is socioeconomic status. Usher and Kober (2012a) pointed out that “[c]reating a home environment that nurtures motivation involves effort for any parent, but it can be especially problematic for socio-economically disadvantaged families—those with limited financial resources, low educational levels, single-parent homes, and other stresses” (p. 5). As McLanahan (2004) discussed more specifically, children in these circumstances, noting particularly single-parent homes, have lower chances of receiving the amount of parental attention, engaging in rich activities, and benefiting from a full range of resources that promote development of the key soft skills discussed earlier (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d). These soft skills contribute to a student’s engagement through motivation and academic success or struggle; therefore, when examining the socioeconomic role in achievement gaps, researchers found it necessary to look not only at income but “parents’ educational attainment and parenting skills, family

structure, the quality of the neighborhood, and associated social position and privileges” (Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 4).

Unfortunately, research shows the academic gap for this subgroup beginning from the time students start kindergarten and continuing through secondary school. Reardon observed that students who perform better in school, seem more engaged and internally driven, and have more successful learning experiences tend to be in the mid to upper economic classes (2013). He also illuminated some of the reasons that long-term academic success may not be the case for many students from lower income families: students come from less stable home environments, parents spend less time reading to them, they have limited access to quality childcare and preschool, and, overall, they experience less cognitively stimulating activity (Reardon, 2013).

Eric Jensen (2013) expanded on this discussion in his article with seven reasons students with a low socioeconomic status have difficulty engaging in school. In the introduction, Jensen noted some observations common to many who have worked with students of low socioeconomic status. Referencing a 2008 work by Gorski, he stated that “we know...that the poor and middle class have many overlapping values, including valuing education and the importance of hard work” (Jensen, 2013, p. 24). He asserted that “if poor people were the same cognitively, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally as those from the middle class, then *the exact same teaching* provided to both middle-class students and students from poverty *would bring the exact same results*” (Jensen, 2013, p. 24).

His article then revolved around identifying seven differences that exist between middle-class students and students from poverty, and by addressing these differences,

“teachers can help mitigate some of the negative effects of poverty” and improve engagement for low socioeconomic students (Jensen, 2013, p. 24). Before listing and describing the differences, he stressed the following piece of advice: “...get to know your students well. Without respect – and without taking time to connect with your students – these seven factors will mean little” (Jensen, 2013, p. 24).

The seven differences Jensen (2013) discussed are health and nutrition, vocabulary, effort, hope and the growth mind-set, cognition, relationships, and distress. The article examined some of the psychology and research behind the perceived differences in effort between students from poverty and those who are not. He stated that because of cognitive problems experienced by many low-socioeconomic students, including “short attention spans, high levels of distractibility, difficulty monitoring the quality of their work, and difficulty generating new solutions to problems,” they often “act out (exhibit problem behavior) or shut down (show learned helplessness)” (Jensen, 2013, p. 28). To foster engagement and achievement, Jensen recommended focusing on core cognitive skills – how to organize, study, take notes, prioritize, and remember key ideas – before moving on other skills like “problem-solving, processing, and working-memory skills” (2013, p. 28). Teachers tend to associate students’ postures and/or attitudes as unmotivated or even lazy, but many times that is not the case (Jensen, 2013, p. 26). Jensen emphasized that parents do not pass down “inherited laziness” (p. 26). This misperception is actually a display of a lack of hope or optimism. Citing a 2012 work by Butterworth, Olesen and Leach, Jensen revealed that “low socioeconomic status and the accompanying financial hardships are correlated with depressive symptoms” (as cited in Jensen, 2013, p. 26). The slouchy, lazy position that teachers often describe “may

actually be *learned helplessness*, shown for decades in the research as a symptom of a stress disorder and depression” (Jensen, 2013, p. 26).

Jensen also stated that cognitive problems experienced by many students of low-socioeconomic status, including “short attention spans, high levels of distractibility, difficulty monitoring the quality of their work, and difficulty generating new solutions to problems,” often result in students who “act out (exhibit problem behavior) or shut down (show learned helplessness)” (2013, p. 28). To foster engagement and achievement, Jensen recommended focusing on core cognitive skills—how to organize, study, take notes, prioritize, and remember key ideas—before moving on to skills like “problem-solving, processing, and working-memory skills” (2013, p. 28).

As mentioned previously, Jensen’s article also discussed the negative affect that distress plays for economically disadvantaged students. Chronic amounts of negative stress affects brain development, inhibits academic success, impedes social competence, impairs behaviors, reduces attentional control, boosts impulsivity, impairs working memory, and, therefore, influences engagement (Jensen, 2013, p. 29). Through building relationships and support, Jensen suggested that educators can slowly begin developing fundamental cognition and behaviors that will improve engagement.

***Peer Influence.*** As previously identified, relatedness is an important dimension of motivation, and motivation is a large component in higher levels of student engagement. Usher and Kober (2012a) discussed relatedness as a component that “brings the student social rewards, such as a sense of belonging to a classroom or other desired social group or approval from a person of social importance to the student” (p. 2). They also stated that relatedness “can be affected by what students perceive is expected of them by

society, how they will be judged by people of social importance, or what goals other members of their own social group or another desirable social group are pursuing” (2012c, p. 2). Rigby et al. (1992) discussed a similar dynamic defined as “motivated by internal pressure driven by external demands” (as cited by Usher & Kober, 2012c, p. 3). This type of pressure is driven by relatedness as students perform a task because they think they should or that they are expected to. The researchers found that while this type of motivation can be effective in terms of work ethic, “it is also correlated with dropping out of school, anxiety, and maladaptive strategies for coping with failure” (Usher & Kober, 2012c, p. 3).

The desire to maintain or break free from a certain cultural identity affects motivation as well. Researchers reported that “a desire to maintain a distinct cultural identity in opposition to the dominant group can negatively affect academic motivation” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 7). Graham and Hudley (2005) identified factors—such as cultural stereotypes and discrimination, the perceptions of others, and a desire to protect their group identity—“that have motivational significance for people of color” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 6). The researchers noted that negative peer interaction related to discrimination can “damage the confidence of students of color and contribute to academic disengagement” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 6).

Socially, peer groups may promote perceptions that certain positive behaviors, such as doing homework, “are pointless and ‘not for people like me’” when peer identity is formed in an environment that “provides no example of how academic achievement might be relevant to their personal goals” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 6). Murdock (2009) explained that these variously comprised peer groups can help students

to “define who they are and construct a vision of who they might become” wherein students can “view academic achievement as a realistic aspect of their group identity and develop positive images of that identity” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 6).

Murdock also asserted that how students see themselves and their peer groups “in the context of their school and community can influence students’ identity formation, values, feelings of competence and relatedness, and goal-setting” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 6). This positive example of relatedness demonstrates a context in which motivation and engagement can be fostered.

A longitudinal study by Wang and Eccles (2012) reviewed factors such as gender, racial identity, and parent and teacher support as positive and/or negative contributors to levels of engagement from middle to high school. Their results identified four different indicators of engagement: “school compliance (positive behaviors), participation in extracurricular activities, school identification (interest and enjoyment), and the subjective value of learning (intrinsic motivation)” (p. 877). Surprisingly, parental support was found to correlate with all four indicators and to be a better predictor of school engagement than peer affect for three of the four indicators. Furthermore, teacher support was found to be important for compliance, school identification, and value of learning.

Reports regarding peer support were more complex. With positive peer support, students were more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, see value in learning, and identify with their school (Wang & Eccles, 2012). The findings for the compliance indicator depended upon the type of peer support and the student’s peer group values resulting in the conclusion that “across all of the behavioral components of school

engagement, peers are just as likely to exert positive influences on adolescents as negative influences” (Wang & Eccles, 2012, p. 891). In summary, the researchers stated:

“the shift in adolescent social priorities toward peer relationships is not as universal as is often assumed to be true. Perceived support from both teachers and parents is an important buffer against the general declines in school engagement found during the secondary school years. [The] results suggest that most adolescents continue to be influenced substantially by their teachers and parents when it comes to school engagement even though they may be tempted into misbehavior outside of the classroom by their peers” (Wang & Eccles, 2012, p. 890).

### **Educational Capital.**

*Previous Academic Experience.* Nobel laureate James Heckman used his work as well as others’ to discuss cognitive and non-cognitive skill gaps in students with a full range of socioeconomic statuses. These early forming non-cognitive, or “soft,” skills are traits like “motivation, the ability to work with others, the ability to focus on tasks, self-regulation, self-esteem, and the ability to defer gratification” and have been discussed previously (Heckman, 2011, p. 76). From his work, Heckman suggested that family factors can have influence on both the cognitive and non-cognitive factors for children even while in utero. By kindergarten, economically disadvantaged students were more likely to have cognitive and non-cognitive lags in comparison to advantaged students. More troubling, these gaps “have been shown to persist as children age” (Heckman as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 4).

“Cognitive stimulation” was defined by researchers as exposure to different types of learning materials, activities, and media and “the active pursuit of cognitive stimulation in the home,” which fosters “curiosity and exploration,” promotes inquisitiveness, and provides opportunities to develop competencies (Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 1998, p. 1457). Heckman noted that disadvantaged mothers tended to “talk to their children less and are less likely to read to them daily...[they] tend to encourage their children less, adopt harsher parenting styles, and be less engaged with their children’s school work” (2011, p. 80). Usher and Kober (2012d) concluded in their meta-analysis that economically disadvantaged children do not usually have home experiences prior to school that “foster competence, encourage them to find interest or see value in learning, promote autonomous learning, or develop social relationships that support and value achievement” (p. 5). Some families with low socioeconomic status do not provide cognitively stimulating home environments, but that, however, is not always the case.

***Cognitive Development.*** Linking strongly with students’ early learning and developmental experiences as they factor into levels of engagement are a variety of cognitive developments. Garner wrote that she “saw many creative, intelligent students who disliked school and became ‘mental dropouts.’ They didn’t ‘get it,’ decided that they never would, and either resigned themselves to a kind of passive endurance or engaged in disruptive behaviors” (2007, p. xi)... Judy Willis indicated that when educators understand the brain processes that occur during learning and can relay that information to students that “the empowerment for both enriches motivation, resilience, memory, and the joys of learning” (2010, p. 47). In her book *Getting to Got It*, Garner asserted that “when a person uses his or her cognitive structures, that person develops metability”



(2007, p. xiv). *Metability* is a word that Garner coined which she described as a combination of “*meta* meaning ‘change,’ ...and *ability*—to describe the ongoing, dynamic, interactive cycle of learning, creating, and changing” (2007, p. xv). Students must interact in some meaningful way for them to change and grow in their learning. This learning, she stated, is “created by the learner and generates its own energy that reinforces itself through a cycle of ongoing creativity and change...The more engaged students are in creating meaning, the more they change and learn” (Garner, 2007, p. xv).

Judy Willis (2010) discussed this learning through engaging and challenging instruction as it relates to the format of popular computer and video games. She noted that each level and challenge “motivates practice and persistence because the player feels the challenge is achievable” (2010, p. 48). In the classroom, these “achievable challenges” keep students in the Zone of Proximal Development and “are motivating and build mastery,” and similarly to the video games, allow students to improve and “thus experience the neurochemical response of pleasure” (2010, p. 48). Fogarty reiterated Willis’s premise in *Brain-compatible Classrooms* when she wrote “Puzzlement, wonderment, and curiosity cause the brain to kick in and begin its intense search for patterns and connections. There seems to be nothing more engaging for the mind than to have a challenging problem to solve” (2009, p. 71).

In contrast, Willis (2010) discussed the impact of high-stress situations on students, their emotions, and their brain function. She stated “research now supports recommendations to avoid high-stress instructional practices such as use of fear of punishment and to incorporate appropriate environmental, social, emotional, and cognitive considerations into instruction” (2010, p. 49). Willis referenced neuroimaging

studies that show stress routes sensory input to the lower brain, which is the “involuntary reactive brain,” and “that input is not available for higher cognitive processing” (2010, p. 49). For the higher brain to successfully retain input, it must first pass through the reticular activating system (Willis, 2010). When a student has a perception of threat, stress, fear, or anxiety within a classroom setting, “the RAS filter gives intake preference to input considered relevant to the perceived threat, at the expense of the sensory input regarding the lesson” (2010, p. 50). During these times, Willis explained that “neural activity is evident in the lower brain, and the reflective, cognitive brain (prefrontal cortex) does not receive the sensory input of important items” such as lesson content (2010, pg 50).

As researchers understood more about information and stress and the initial processing through the RAS, they also looked at strategies to improve brain function and engagement (Willis, 2010). Willis showed that when the RAS is curious, students will be “engaged and motivated to discover” (2010, p. 52). The RAS also “admits sensory input associated with pleasure,” and Willis noted that humans, as do all animals, “seek to repeat behaviors that are pleasurable and survival related,” and “engaged and focused brains are alert to sensory input that accompanies the pleasurable sensations” (2010, p. 52). The element of curiosity in lessons provides students the pleasure input allowing information to “flow through the RAS gateway to reach the higher, cognitive brain” (Willis, 2010, p. 53).

Willis also included the discussion of dopamine—a neurotransmitter that, when levels rise, is associated with pleasurable feelings (2010, p. 54). In learner-friendly classroom environments, student levels of dopamine can rise “promoting motivation,

memory, and focus along with pleasurable feelings” (Willis, 2010, p. 54). This creates what Willis called a “dopamine-reward system” which she related back to the achievable challenge aspect of the video game example (2010, p. 55). Citing O’Doherty (2004), Willis wrote, “when students experience the dopamine pleasure of a correct prediction in class, they are intrinsically motivated to persevere through the challenges and apply effort to reach the next level of learning (2010, p. 55).

A foundational premise in brain-based instruction comes from the four-corner framework detailed by Fogarty in *Brain-Compatible Classrooms* (2009). In this framework, teaching *for* thinking, teaching *of* thinking, teaching *with* thinking, and teaching *about* thinking are discussed as:

“essential to the thoughtful classroom, to the classroom that requires rigor and vigor in thinking, to the classroom that values cognitive and cooperative structures for increasing student achievement and fostering high self-esteem, and to the standards-based classroom that honors the teaching-learning process” (Fogarty, 2009, p. 23).

There is also much discussion about the potential held in enriched learning environments to maximize these learning opportunities. Brain research showed that dendrites in the brain grow with a “variety of rich sensory inputs and language experiences”; this growth allows for more connections in the brain and “the more capacity one has for establishing patterns and seeing the interrelatedness between ideas” (Fogarty, 2009, p. 29). Garner (2007) reiterated this process in *Getting to Got It* when she discussed making meaning and developing basic cognitive structures based on these patterns.

Jensen also extensively discussed environmental factors and their effect on learning in his book *Brain-based Learning: The New Paradigm of Teaching* (2008). He referred to a “connect the dots” (p. 7) approach that exists when including a multi-sensory approach to learning. To encourage higher cognition and increased engagement for students, Jensen discussed several connections that take place for the brain in learning when physiological and sensory factors are considered in the learning environment: physical movement, reduction of negative stress and threat, sight, touch, taste, smell, sound, and emotion (2008). Research suggested that these factors help form connections and interactions in the brain to encourage and improve the thinking and learning process (Jensen, 2008, p. 13).

Jensen described *thinking* as one “trying to manipulate internal symbols in a meaningful way” and “a process whereby the brain accesses prior representations for understanding or creates a new model if one does not exist” (2008, p. 142). Categories of representational thinking include symbolic language, indirect knowledge, and direct sensations (Jensen, 2008). He noticed that within all three categories “the mind, body, and feelings are all involved; there is no separation” (Jensen, 2008, p. 142). This dynamic should drive the type of learning environment teachers seek to create for their students if they are to both learn and engage. Jensen stated that “when an environment is conducive to learning, positive motivation naturally follows” (2008, p. 143).

Through Jensen’s work in *Brain-based Learning*, he concluded that:

“Until learners get motivated to use and enhance their cognitive skills, they are likely to remain ensconced and stagnant in their relative comfort. The best way to

strengthen learner motivation is to provide meaningfulness, learner choices, and emotional support while affirming the individual” (2008, p. 143-144).

Judy Willis, in her book *Brain-Friendly Strategies*, predicted that brain-based learning will continue to support three ideas: the most successful instruction is designed for meaning and understanding, the “most learning-conducive classrooms are those that are low in threat yet high in reasonable challenge,” and “students who are actively engaged and motivated will devote more effort to strive for meaningful goals” (2007, p. 8). If teachers can scaffold learning for students struggling cognitively and involve students meaningfully in safe but challenging learning environments, teachers have a much higher probability of engaging students in their learning process and, therefore, working to their potential.

***Previous Academic Struggle/Failure.*** Usher and Kober (2012e), in their series of papers on student motivation, identified that “[s]ome students lose motivation when they become overwhelmed by their schoolwork; they can’t keep up, fall further behind, and eventually give up” (p. 4). A problematic cycle can occur when students experience learning and general academic difficulties, whether documented or not, early in their school careers. Students who believe early on that they cannot do a task or be successful on an assessment are not meeting any of the four dimensions of motivation previously outlined nor the school identification and subjective value of learning indicators of engagement from Wang and Eccles’ work.

This negative, fixed mindset relates back to Dweck’s work (2008) with fixed versus growth mindset. Students who were praised for intelligence when they performed well lost that confidence once a learning task became difficult. If a learning task did not

come easily for them, they believed they must not be smart and they could do nothing about it. As a result, enjoyment in school decreased and performance levels followed. In contrast, students who were commended for their effort showed sustained levels of confidence, motivation, and in turn, performance despite the work being perceived as difficult. Students with the fixed mindset, when faced with academic struggle, become indifferent to school because the fear of failure outweighs their confidence to take risks in learning.

In addition to regular learning tasks, Nichols and Berliner (2008) stated that “for students who struggle academically, high-stakes testing can diminish self-worth and academic motivation” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012c, p. 8). Stiggins’ research in 1999 began looking at this learning and assessment dynamic when he reported that “...if students don’t understand what steps they can take to succeed on the exam, or have opportunities to prepare for it, they feel hopeless, and their control and autonomy are undermined” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012c, p. 7). This disconnect devalues the importance of the assessment to these students and, therefore, the value of and interest in their performance. Students who fail, however, or still fear failing may experience a “profound and long lasting loss of confidence” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012c, p. 7). Students who fail and must repeat grades are at a high risk of losing their feelings of relatedness, and motivation and engagement may continue to decline.

***Level of Parent Education.*** Duncan and Magnuson concluded in 2005 that parents’ educational and skill levels play a role in their children’s development linking parents’ education and cognitive development in children as early as three months old (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 5). Additionally, Ferguson (2007) discussed not only

parents' level of schooling and academic skills but socioeconomic status and general knowledge of social networks and sources of information and assistance as factors for student success and motivation. When parents can help students navigate the academic system, access support, and pursue post-secondary goals, students are more likely to be motivated because the adults around them support the value and attainment of their goals.

***Level of Parental Support/Involvement.*** Very similarly to parent education, Usher and Kober (2012d) addressed the issues of parental support and involvement stating that “the circumstances in which children are raised and the involvement of their parents in their early education play a role in shaping academic mindset and motivation” (p. 9). Studies by Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1994) showed a correlation specifically with parental involvement, children’s educational development, and intrinsic motivation. Ferguson’s “research-based tips for high-achievement parenting” outlined suggestions for effective parental involvement such as encouraging reading at home, discussing reading materials in a fun way, and seeking opportunities at home for discussion and application of what children learn at school (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 2). Additionally, Ferguson made recommendations about parental monitoring of and involvement in homework, watching television, extracurricular activities, opportunities for exploration and creativity, as well as developing individual talents (Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 2). Usher and Kober (2012d) concluded that “parents who are actively involved in their children’s education and provide a stimulating learning environment at home can help their children develop feelings of competence, control, curiosity, and positive attitudes about academics, according to various studies” (p. 2). Connecting with previously discussed individual characteristics, parental support

encourages autonomy and students are more likely to be “intrinsically motivated and engaged in school and have a better ability to self-regulate at school” (Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 2).

Grolnick, Friendly, and Bellas (2009) wrote about extenuating circumstances that often inhibit parents from being able to provide an adequate level of support and involvement to students. Outside stressors, time and resource constraints, and not knowing how to navigate educational systems and resources were listed as common difficulties for some parents. Fortunately, these same researchers found that while these parents may not be as involved in school activities, they can still help by being aware and supportive of their students’ academic achievements and progress (Grolnick, Friendly, & Bellas, 2009). Grolnick, Friendly, and Bellas (2009) concluded that parents can “still play a vital role by encouraging students’ feelings of competence and control and positive attitudes towards academics” even if they cannot specifically help them with academic content (as cited as Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 1). More specifically, the authors concluded that:

“[W]hen parents believe in children’s competence and have high expectations for them, provide the resources that children need to feel connected to others, and facilitate a sense of autonomy by supporting children’s initiations and problem-solving, children’s motivation is most likely to thrive” (Grolnick, Friendly, & Bellas, 2009, p. 295).

### **Academic Culture.**

*Instructional, Grading, and Assessment Practices.* Usher and Kober (2012d) emphasized in their series of papers examining student motivation that “[c]lassroom



instruction is important, and how an instructor approaches a topic can determine whether students are engaged” (p. 5). Their synthesized research showed that teachers use several strategies to more closely align instruction with motivational theory implying “that if teachers can find ways to spur feelings of competence, autonomy, interest, and relatedness, students should respond with increased motivation” (Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 5). Additionally, the analysis showed that teachers “whose instructional styles encouraged autonomy were also more effective motivators, while those who reported a more controlling style were less effective motivators” (Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 6).

One engaging instructional strategy is formative assessment. In Stiggins’ article “From Formative Assessment to Assessment for Learning,” he discussed the shift that is taking place between traditional uses and approaches to assessment and “assessment for learning” (2005). Concerning traditional approaches and student engagement, Stiggins (2005) stated:

“Traditionally, schools have used assessment—the pending final exam, the unannounced pop quiz, and the threat of low or failing report card grades—to motivate students... Assessment has served as the great intimidator. Pressure to get high test scores and good grades, it was believed, would motivate greater effort and thus more learning” (p. 324).

Brain research showed that students’ perception of threat and distress can be prohibitive to higher order thinking and, therefore, negatively impact test performance, yet these intimidating traditional approaches have been the philosophy and increasing trend over the last many years.

Stiggins (2005) mentioned that some students are able to learn easily and perform well early on. He stated, “The emotional effect of this was to help them to see themselves as capable learners, and so these students became increasingly confident in school.” (Stiggins, 2005, p. 325). This taste of success and sense of self-efficacy helps perpetuate continued efforts toward learning and success. Stiggins (2005) referred to these types of students as “academic and emotional winners” highlighting that “the trigger for their emotional strength and their learning success was their perception of their success on formal and informal assessments” (p. 325).

Unfortunately, not all students experience this. For students who struggle, Stiggins (2005) said, “[t]he emotional effect was to cause them to question their own capabilities as learners. They began to lose confidence, which, in turn, deprived them of the emotional reserves needed to continue to take risks” (p. 325). He also observed that

“As their motivation waned, of course, their performance plummeted. These students embarked on what they believed to be an irreversible slide toward inevitable failure and lost hope. Once again, the emotional trigger for their decision not to try was their perception of their performance on assessments” (Stiggins, 2005, p. 325).

The unintended but real result of this pattern of assessment is that instead of teachers or school leaders being the ones to make meaningful inferences from test data, the student makes inferences instead; and in this case, it may mean the difference between continuing down the path of success or giving up. Simply affirmed by Stiggins (2005):

“Students are deciding whether success is within or beyond reach, whether the learning is worth the required effort, and so whether to try or not. The critical

emotions underpinning the decision-making process include anxiety, fear of failure, uncertainty, and unwillingness to take risks-- all triggered by students' perceptions of their own capabilities as reflected in assessment results” (p. 325).

The end result then can be an unfortunate negative backlash of the very assessment intended to improve and show growth in student learning. Stiggins (2005) concluded that “[i]nstead of leaving no child behind, these practices, in effect, drove down the achievement of at least as many students as they successfully elevated” (p. 325).

Additionally, as evidenced by study of achievement gaps and generational poverty, many times, these students are also minority or disadvantaged students (Usher & Kober, 2012d, p. 4-5).

This phenomenon promotes two specifically defined tracks: either a student experiences success as defined by the test scores and perseveres or the student struggles with low achievement as identified by the test data and spirals into a self-destructive pattern of hopelessness (Stiggins, 2005). Reflecting on best practices and philosophy for instruction, therefore, Stiggins (2005) made the following statement:

“Teachers must believe that all students can achieve a certain level of academic success, must bring all of their students to believe this of themselves, must accommodate the fact that students learn at different rates by making use of differentiated instruction, and must guide all students toward the attainment of standards” (p. 326).

This sheds new light on traditional classroom approaches and the importance of early identification and intervention as well as implications for students' engagement later in their school careers. Stiggins (2005) wrote, “The driving forces must be

confidence, optimism, and persistence-- for all, not just for some. All students must come to believe that they can succeed at learning if they try” (326). This new identification and intervention focuses on including the student in self-assessment and assessment *for* learning versus assessment *of* learning. Stiggins (2005) calls formative assessment “the label used for assessments conducted during learning to promote, not merely judge or grade, student success” (p.326).

When using assessment *for* learning, “...students learn about achievement expectations from the beginning of the learning by studying models of strong and weak work...they come to see and understand the scaffolding they will be climbing as they approach those standards” (Stiggins, 2005, p. 327). Students play an important role in their own learning as they peer-assess, self-assess, and track their own progress. Stiggins (2005) noted that “students are inside the assessment process, watching themselves grow, feeling in control of their success, and believing that continued success is within reach if they keep trying” (p. 327-328). Usher & Kober (2012a) reiterated Stiggins’ idea when they wrote that “Motivational theory suggests that assessments that reward growth and effort encourage a mastery-based mindset and therefore have a stronger motivational effect” (p. 4).

The implications of Stiggins’ (2005) article began with the premise that simply testing students more often does not drive more engagement and success but rather what is done with the data being collected from a variety of assessments makes the difference. Stiggins (2005) concluded:

“The actions students take-- and therefore their ultimate success at learning-- are determined by their emotional reaction to the assessment results. That response

can be optimistic or pessimistic. An optimistic response leaves learners ready to keep trying and knowing what to do next: students maintain their desire to achieve and press on. A pessimistic response leaves learners feeling that the target remains beyond reach: students stop trying” (p. 328).

In an article by Ian Clark (2008), he described the promotion and implementation of the Assessment for Learning program directed by the Assessment Action Group, related research regarding the Assessment for Learning program, and the findings of the Assessment Reform Group after evaluating the implementation of this program with increased emphasis on formative assessment interventions.

One of his first assertions was that “the current policies and practices that govern assessment place a counter-productive distance between the teacher and the student...” (Clark, 2008, p. 6). Clark wrote that the continuance of old assessment procedures and untapped potential with true formative assessment “assessment has yet to be seen as a direct and powerful drive of school improvement” (p. 6). Clark (2008) stated:

“...it is difficult to forge a new system within ‘post-modern’ societies which are typified by cultural fragmentation, states of flux and rapid and turbulent change. Yet, these are the challenges we face in our societies and therefore in our schools. If we cannot resolve them, then those we teach will be ill-equipped to deal with the challenges facing mankind” (p. 6-7).

Clark’s emphasis was on educator interaction with the students during the teaching and learning process to best educate the whole student.

Studying previous practice and assessment policies, Clark credited the “crisis of student disaffection” to the “current assessment policy and it is impairing huge numbers

of students” (2008, p. 7). He blamed teachers and policy makers for not doing enough fast enough to counter the decline in student engagement and for perpetuating the importance placed on summative assessments and not promoting and capitalizing on the use of formative assessments (Clark, 2008). Clark (2008) stated that “consequently, the enduring preoccupation with performance related goals (i.e. grades) continues to dominate the agenda and intimidate the student” (p. 7). The complacency of teachers and policy makers has allowed the current assessment trends to continue and grow in some cases. This resulted in Clark’s claim that

“A very serious consequence of the ever more robust application of traditional assessment systems is the creation of large numbers of disaffected students, particularly among lower achieving students (Harlen & Deakin-Crick, 2003). This negative impact of current policy has been well documented” (2008, p. 7).

To illustrate his case for effectively using formative assessment to better engage students, Clark (2008) referenced a study that compares two different math teachers with two different assessment styles. One teacher took up homework, graded it for accuracy, and made it count 30% of the students’ final grade. The other teacher used homework as a tool for students to self-assess their comprehension and levels of understanding on each question by flagging them with different colors. The teacher and students addressed questions as needed, the teacher offered descriptive feedback instead of a numerical grade, students could redo their work, and homework only counted 10% of their grade. This teacher was “more successful in motivating students to turn in their homework” while, in the other teacher’s class, “some students exhibited self-defeating behaviours rather than risk low evaluations of their earnest efforts to succeed” (Clark, 2008, p. 7-8).

The students experiencing more formative practices “were not risking their self-worth each time they did their homework but were attempting to learn in a supportive environment where mistakes were viewed as acceptable and used to inform the next steps in the learning process” (Clark, 2008, p. 8). Clark also emphasized an idea from Covington:

“High-stakes testing creates disaffected students, and disaffected students don’t achieve their full potential. This is a reproductive phenomena and those students who exhibit disaffection often experience an ever deepening spiral of self-defeating learning behaviours and motivational problems (1984)” (as cited in Clark, 2008, p. 8).

Upon reviewing academic feedback, the research synthesized by Hattie and Timperley (2007) determined that “feedback regarding the task, the process, and self-regulation is often effective, whereas feedback regarding the self (often delivered as praise) typically does not enhance learning and achievement” (as cited in Marzano, 2010, p. 5). As for specific implications in the classroom, this encourages a type of effective teacher feedback that describes “how well a task is going (task), the process they are using to complete the task (process), or how well they are managing their own behavior (self-regulation) is often effective” (Marzano, 2010, p. 5). With feedback as part of the bigger formative assessment picture, Hattie and Timperley (2007) also concluded that challenging learning goals, learned self-assessment and evaluation, self-regulation, and increased belief in self to meet the learning goals and complete tasks can enhance understanding, learning, and mastery (as cited in Marzano, 2010, p. 5).

If students are not actively involved in the assessment and feedback process, they are deprived of the opportunity to be vested in their own learning, to track and monitor their learning process, and to self-regulate their own behaviors based on their perceived level of control over their learning environment and engagement with the instructional content. Without formative assessment and assessment for learning, students are on the outside looking in at their own learning and have very little chance to change its course once traditionally derived grades are handed out weeks after the assessment with little to no constructive feedback. The current overuse of summative assessments and underuse of formative assessments can potentially disengage students and disconnect them from their drive to learn while assessment for learning has the potential to draw students in and give hope for success in learning.

***Interventions.*** When examining academic and motivational intervention measures, Usher and Kober (2012e) suggested that

“efforts to influence student motivation can be grouped into three major categories: programs that specifically target students most ‘at risk’ of losing motivation, efforts that focus on the role of teachers and other school staff as motivators, and attention to the design and structure of the school itself” (p. 2).

Based on the Four Dimensions of Motivation identified and discussed earlier, Usher and Kober (2012b) then offered these reflective questions when choosing intervention measures that can also be positively related to a student’s motivation:

- *Competence:* What steps can teachers take to help students feel more competent? How does teaching style affect students’ feelings of competency?
- *Autonomy/control:* How does teaching style affect students’ perception of



control and autonomy? How can programs specifically targeting at-risk students help those students to regain a feeling of control over their education?

- *Interest/value*: How does the way a school day is structured increase or decrease student interest? What strategies can teachers use in the classroom to bring more interest and value to the subject matter? What types of programs can help at-risk students better understand the value of their education?
- *Relatedness*: How does the way a school is organized affect relationships among students and between students and faculty? How can a student body be organized to create stronger and more beneficial social bonds? How can the design of a school help or hurt the relationships between students and faculty? What can teachers do to foster more effective relationships with students?

While schools traditionally focus on academic performance, the Usher and Kober (2012a-e) papers stressed academic motivation and noted that some non-academic factors can influence student's performance in school. They mentioned several examples: "emotional problems, violence or other issues at home, health problems, malnutrition, poverty, homelessness, and a myriad of other challenges can prevent students from fully engaging in academics." (Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 11) By effectively intervening in the non-academic areas as well, research by the National Research Council in 2004 found that students can experience "increased achievement, attendance, feelings of self-esteem, confidence and perseverance, and improved classroom behavior" (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 11).

Research supports the intentional and well-planned use of learning progressions as a path for identifying skill-by-skill learning for each student to aid in academic

intervention. Marzano (2010) discussed learning progressions as “a well-articulated sequence of knowledge and skills” that helps in the formative assessment process to “provide students with feedback as to their current status regarding a specific learning goal and what they must do to progress” (p. 10). He also examined two of the most persuasive arguments for serious consideration of intentional learning goals: thinking of “learning goals as a series of related goals that culminate in the attainment of a more complex learning goal” and using learning progressions to specifically track student progress (Marzano, 2010, p. 10).

Learning progressions can be likened to a recipe. The end goal is a cake, and the steps for putting in the ingredients and arriving at the final product are broken down into a logical progression, foremost, to help the baker arrive at the desired final product, and secondly, so that if the cake does not turn out correctly, the baker can retrace his/her steps and find where and why the mistake was made. When translated into a learning environment, students are more likely to understand and be engaged in the expected learning if they are not overwhelmed by a wordy standard that has no relevance or perceived connection to previous learning. Once students can see the breakdown of what they already know, what skills will be expected of them along the way, and the concept(s) they are expected to grasp at the end (the cake), they have a much more manageable goal before them. They can also track their progress throughout the journey to self-assess and be assessed on key components leading up to the major concept or learning goal.

Black et al. (2004) outlined several years of research regarding various questions surrounding formative assessment in their article “Working Inside the Black Box” and

categorized findings into four categories: questioning, feedback through grading, peer- and self-assessment, and the formative use of summative tests. One conclusion derived that teachers needed a method “to give their students feedback that they knew in advance was going to be useful,” and for that to happen, “they needed to build up models of how students learn” (Black et al., 2004, p. 16) These models also fostered an increase of student involvement in learning tasks and awareness of prior knowledge. The authors stated “the key to effective learning is then to find ways to help students restructure their knowledge to build in new and more powerful ideas.” (Black et al., 2004, p. 16)

Stiggins and Chappuis (2005) also supported increasing student involvement in the learning and assessment process to improve motivation and achievement. They concluded that instruction must maintain a balance where students can both feel capable of success and yet challenged at the same time. They wrote, “(s)tudents must understand that, when they try to grow academically, at first, they may not be very proficient, and that is all right” and that “wise teachers use the classroom assessment process as an instructional intervention to teach the lesson that small increments of progress are normal” (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005, p. 13). To have checks for understanding and mastery at small increments, a clear and logical learning progression must be in place. As an additional benefit to the learning, Stiggins and Chappuis (2005) found that as students track their progress, “they gain a sense of control over their own learning” (p. 13).

### ***School Climate/Culture.***

An integral piece of creating the most advantageous learning environments for students is paying due attention to not only their cognitive development and academic achievements but also to their social and emotional learning. In *Promoting Social and*

*Emotional Learning*, an author wrote, “when schools attend systematically to students’ social and emotional skills, the academic achievement of children increases, the incidence of problem behavior decreases, and the quality of the relationships surrounding each child improves” (Elias et al., 1997, p. 1). Social and emotional competence is defined as:

“the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one’s life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems, and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development. It includes self-awareness, control of impulsivity, working cooperatively, and caring about oneself and others” (Elias et al., 1997, p. 2).

Garner (2007) and Driscoll (2005) discussed the importance of similar functions in their respective books. *Getting to Got It* detailed the cognitive development of spatial orientation of perspective and temporal orientation that helps students think before they act, delay gratification, control impulses, and consider cause and effect (Garner, 2007). *Psychology of Learning for Instruction* discussed our nature as social beings and the implications of situated cognition for learning through social settings (Driscoll, 2005). Middleton and Toluk (1999) stated that “as individual knowledge does not exist outside of a social context, neither do the individual’s motivational structures” and that “the child’s understanding of his or her engagement patterns grows as he or she engages in such social experiences that develop and make use of psychological tools” (p. 101-102).

When these various factors are taken into account, valuing and fostering a positive school climate and culture to grow student social and emotional competence will

lead to a more productive engagement in their school experiences. Elias et al. (1997) referenced Garmezy (1989) and Haynes et al. (1996) in their assertion that “how students experience and perceive their school and classroom climate has been shown to be significantly related to their psychosocial and academic development, and to their school adjustment and performance outcomes” (p. 75).

Schools have the potential to bridge an important motivational gap “where parents leave off or stepping in when parents are unable or reluctant to be actively engaged” (Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 1). Such aspects as “student body, methods of grouping students, school and class schedules, and school climate can all have an effect on engagement.” Usher and Kober (2012e) determined that:

“Teachers themselves can affect motivation through their interactions with students, their assignments and tests, and their classroom climate. Aspects of school organization can also affect students’ relationships with their peers and with administrators and teachers in ways that encourage or discourage motivation” (p. 1).

Through strategies that address low motivation and the strength and type of relationships fostered with students, teachers and school administrators can potentially positively affect student motivation and engagement.

In addition, teachers’ relayed beliefs about what motivates students has been found to predict the level of motivation found in their classroom environments (Hardré & Sullivan, 2009). Similar to Dweck’s (2010) findings, Hardre and Sullivan (2009) determined that “teachers who believed that student motivation was fixed at a certain level had less supportive classrooms than teachers who adopted the internally-focused

beliefs described above” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 6). Academic settings that encourage a mastery-based mindset versus a performance-based mindset produce students who are “more likely to be motivated and confident” (Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 5). Stipek et al. (1998) explained that

“teachers who emphasized mastery and understanding rather than grades and performance, embraced the belief that effort would bring success, and encouraged students to take on risks and challenges ultimately had students who were more engaged, performed better, had higher self-confidence about their abilities, and were less concerned about their performance” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 6-7).

There are other angles to the influence on a student’s emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement from the school and classroom climate. Wentzel (1997) described three conditions for optimizing school impact on student engagement:

1. “communicating expectations that students’ behavior will reflect their best intentions and abilities should teach students to attribute their behavior to internal, controllable causes,”
2. “providing opportunities for autonomous decision making and democratic interaction styles should foster the development of positive beliefs about personal autonomy and competence,” and
3. “nurturance and approval should promote the development of positive feelings of self-worth” (as cited by Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 5-6).

Research from a National Research Council report (2004) upheld Wentzel’s conditions by suggesting that teachers can increase student motivation when they encourage students

to do their best. This was found to be especially pertinent for low-income students because they may not receive as much academic involvement or pressure from their home environments. Additionally the report noted that teachers can increase motivation by:

“setting high expectations for homework completion, attendance, behavior, and academic performance; facilitating student choice in the classroom wherever possible to facilitate autonomy within the context of clear expectations; requiring high-order thinking, innovative strategy use, and collaborative, participatory-based lessons; and providing opportunities for students to address conceptual misunderstandings or difficulties before they lose interest” (National Research Council, 2004, p. 48).

When the school climate supports characteristics of a positive climate like frequent communication, increased social support and feelings of relatedness, clear expectations, readily available help, student feelings of control and autonomy increase (Usher & Kober, 2012e). In this environment, teachers are also “more apt to spot a student losing interest or competence and address the problem before it worsens” (Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 9).

When examining the greater school climate, Bender et al. (1998) found in a study of Chicago public schools that schools described as having highly-centric learning environments consistently, positively affected student motivation (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012e). These schools were characterized by teachers who showed “both personal concern and high academic expectations for their students, classrooms were neat, other students were on task, and students felt safe” (as cited in Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 13).

In these environments, regardless of ethnic makeup or socioeconomic status, there were “fewer instances of tardiness or truancy, fewer absences, more time spent doing homework, more participation in school activities, and more engagement” (Usher & Kober, 2012e, p. 13). The researchers concluded that the student-centric learning environment played a role in the increased student engagement and motivation.

School climate can play a particularly impactful role in engagement for economically disadvantaged students. Jensen wrote that “research from 60 high-poverty schools tells us that the primary factor in student motivation and achievement isn’t the student’s home environment; it’s the school and the teacher” (2013, p. 26-27). Citing a study by Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, and Hutchins, Jensen indicated that the purpose of the study “was to investigate the relationship of school characteristics and schooling experiences to the educational achievement and aspirations of youth from high-poverty rural communities” (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1225). Students from poverty often face educational struggles that students from other economic backgrounds do not such as lower levels of motivation, achievement, and graduation; therefore, key academic and schooling factors were discussed in the introduction and contextual sections. Topics related to high-poverty areas discussed were high schools and adolescent development, ecological systems view of schools, school characteristics, and schooling experiences (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1226-1227).

Using a “developmental ecological framework,” this study sought to “investigate the relative influence of several aspects of the high school context on two important measures of positive youth development” (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1228). The first of those two measures was school characteristics. Specific characteristics assessed were grade



span, percent of students eligible for free lunch, pupil-teacher ratio, location, school size, and percent of students from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1230). The second measure assessed was schooling experiences, and the factors included for this measure were college preparation program, postsecondary preparation activities, academic self-concept, school valuing, and school belonging (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1231).

The authors stated that these measures were analyzed “in order to determine which school characteristics and schooling experiences may promote or constrain the academic achievement and educational aspirations for rural youth who encounter poverty” (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1228). As there was no prior research focusing on rural adolescents from high-poverty communities, the first goal of this study was “to determine whether the school characteristics and schooling experiences examined may promote or constrain the educational achievement of youth in high- and low-poverty rural communities” (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1228-1229). Secondly, the researchers wanted to “test differences in the relationship of school characteristics and schooling experiences to the educational achievement and aspirations of youth in high- versus low-poverty rural communities” (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1229).

As for methodology, the sample included 6247 students from 43 low-poverty and 21 high-poverty rural communities. The data collection was comprised of separate student and teacher instruments. The student instrument was a written questionnaire given by trained researchers; first period teachers of these students completed a short survey assessing ratings of school performance factors listed previously. From these different instruments, several measures of educational achievement and aspirations were set “as the focal outcome variables because these are indicators of successful adolescent

adaptation and development” (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1230). The four categories of measurement were (1) student characteristics, (2) family characteristics, (3) school characteristics, and (4) measures of schooling experiences (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1232). Once all the data were sorted, correlations run, and analyses complete, this result emerged:

“After controlling for student and family background, school characteristics (e.g., lower student-teacher ratio) were predictive of achievement for rural youth from high-poverty communities. Schooling experiences (e.g., positive perceptions of their ability, a sense of school valuing and belonging, and preparation for postsecondary education) were predictive of educational achievement and aspirations for rural youth from high- and low-poverty communities” (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1225).

The limitations included are important to note. As this study design was “cross-sectional and only involved a single point in time,” the authors remarked “directionality and causality cannot be determined” (Irvin et al., 2011, p. 1237). Other findings from this study connected to Jensen’s (2013) article:

- 1) the identification of “several aspects of the school environment that may promote or constrain key developmental outcomes of rural youth who have received limited attention in prior research focusing on more family and community influences that constrain adolescents’ adaptation to adulthood” (p. 1238); and
- 2) that results demonstrated “that schooling experiences (e.g., postsecondary preparation) are predictive of a substantial amount of variance in educational

outcomes after controlling for student and family background and school characteristics” (p. 1238).

Payne also contended that “a teacher or administrator who establishes mutual respect, cares enough to make sure a student knows how to survive school, and gives that student the necessary skills is providing a gift that will keep affecting lives from one generation to the next” (2008, p. 52). A sense of community, mutual respect, and a truly collaborative culture establish a safe learning environment and a stable construct in which students can thrive (Garcia, 2011; Payne, 2008). A culture of high expectations and trust help pull together all the other intervention measures to provide a feasible path to achievement (Leithwood, 2010; O’Doherty & Ovando, 2009).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Background**

The study sought to better understand the influences in engagement in learning in high school students at a particular southern Middle Tennessee rural high school. The variety of student and school-specific influences on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement had an equally varied set of implications when the influence is negative. These influences could be internal—such as motivation and resiliency—or external—such as socioeconomic status and school culture. Research showed that when students are not behaviorally, emotionally, or cognitively engaged, they are at risk for lower achievement, attendance and behavior problems, or dropout. The increasing number of students arriving to high school “burned out” on school and “checked out” of their own learning needs to be better understood in order to be reversed. If the goal is for students to be self-driven, responsible, lifelong learners, then one must examine the students’ perspective of the value of education, education style, and ownership of their own learning and success.

To better understand and construct a plan of action to combat this decline in student engagement, this study examined twelve students’ overall levels of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement that are affected by both internal and external influences such as individual characteristics, sociocultural factors, educational capital, and academic culture. A school’s time and resources can often be pulled in many directions to absorb the burdens of and place the focus on raising and meeting academic

standards, and other designated, narrowed areas of need. Mandates on required courses for graduation, Response to Intervention (RTI) time allotments, time spent insuring tested standards are covered, and effort made to address observed attendance and behavioral issues consume the time, energy, and often focus of educators and students during school hours. Therefore, the symbiotic relationship between engagement and student outcomes should be studied and approached to holistically identify and meet other integral areas of need for true student engagement (Fredricks et. al., 2004).

Since most top-down school improvement processes focus on data-driven policies, procedures, and programs, their data are typically hard, quantitative data. Unless these quantitative data are merged with related, descriptive data gathered from the student level, schools will not get a complete picture of the varying internal and external factors that can significantly impact student engagement levels behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively. The findings that emerged from this study could potentially inform and/or impact a student's level of engagement in a positive manner and serve as the basis for the development of an action plan to address decline in student engagement.

While various links among types of engagement (behavioral, emotional, or cognitive) and certain student outcomes exist, sufficient study has not been completed to “draw conclusions about the nature of engagement and student outcomes” (National Center for Student Engagement, 2006). The National Center for Student Engagement's report also recognized that work in the field of student engagement supported a multi-dimensional, and possibly bi-directional, flow of engagement factors and student outcomes. To better study and understand engagement at the student level and identify major influences and interconnectedness, this research examined factors as “dynamically

interrelated” (Fredricks et. al., 2004) versus a narrowed approach and focusing on singular factors or outcomes. As sociocultural factors, individual characteristics, individual educational capital, and academic culture fluctuate for students, understanding how those outside influences affect students is imperative so educators can support high levels of student engagement.

### **Research Approach**

This study employed a qualitative research approach, which is broadly defined as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). In contrast to quantitative researchers who seek “causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings,” qualitative research seeks “instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 47).

Grounded theory served as the theoretical framework as “a systematic strategy for theory development without a prior theoretical framework” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 364). This approach was particularly appropriate as “grounded theories are developed through the use of conceptualization to bind facts together, rather than through inferences and hypothesis testing” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 364). More specifically, the constant comparative method, “used by the researcher to develop concepts from the data by coding and analyzing at the same time” (Kolb, 2012, p. 83), was followed to support the theory development. The constant comparative method was chosen because it “combines systematic data collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling in order to generate theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing” (Conrad et al., 1993, p. 280).

The themes that emerged in this grounded theory study through student reports of educational and personal experiences enabled the inquirer to construct a hierarchy of influences that positively or negatively influenced students' behavioral, emotional, and/or cognitive engagement. Some influences were interconnected with one or more types of engagement, and a reciprocal relationship between various factors existed. This study sought to establish more rich and relevant information to construct a holistic framework for action to better engage students in their own learning in a more meaningful and positive manner from the themes and emerging theory.

The investigator utilized Post-Modernist and Constructivist Interpretive Frameworks to explore and produce better understanding of the inter-related relationships between many individual and external factors and students' levels of engagement. Creswell (2013) described a Post-Modernist view as knowledge not being neutral and as reflecting power and social relationships within society; therefore, knowledge construction aids people in improving society. Constructivism describes individuals as seeking to understand the world in which they live and work and developing subjective meanings for their experiences, and researchers as looking for complexity of views and relying as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation.

The Constructivist and Post-Modernist views come together under the epistemological philosophy as both frameworks portray a co-created, co-constructed reality (Creswell, 2013). Again, the constructivist approach describes reality as "shaped by individual experiences." The Post-Modern framework describes "co-created findings with multiple ways of knowing" (Creswell, 2013, p. 36). Reality is unique and real to every person. Students are the product of their individual environments and

circumstances, and this means that what a person finds as real and true is shaped by the context and lens through which that person views the world. Students' backgrounds may cause them to view a similar classroom or school experience differently, thrive or not thrive in a certain type of school culture, or react to stressors such as high-stakes testing differently than intended or differently than others with dissimilar past experiences.

The investigator employed the ideals from a Constructivist approach with additional influence from Post-Modernism. Creswell (2013) stated Constructivism is the “use of an inductive method of emergent ideas (through consensus) obtained through methods such as interviewing, observing, and analysis of texts” (p. 36). Additionally, after analysis of phases of descriptive and survey data for selection of the sample population, the investigator conducted interviews and observations, coded through techniques described by Saldaña (2009), and watched for emerging themes and ideas. Ultimately, the investigator sought to understand the implications for students to create an action plan for meeting academic and engagement needs of all students.

### **Research Questions**

The over-arching questions of this study were:

1. What are the most significant influences affecting levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?
  - a. How do individual characteristics affect levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?
  - b. How do sociocultural factors affect levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?



- c. How do educational capital components affect levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?
  - d. How does academic culture affect levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students?
2. What are the perceptions of students regarding their particular levels of engagement and these outside influences?
- a. What are perceptions of engagement held by students who, according to research, *should* be engaged and *are* engaged?
  - b. What are perceptions of engagement held by students who, according to research, *should* be engaged and *are not* engaged?
  - c. What are perceptions of engagement held by students who, according to research, *should not* be engaged and *are* engaged?
  - d. What are perceptions of engagement held by students who, according to research, *should not* be engaged and *are not* engaged?

## Conceptual Framework

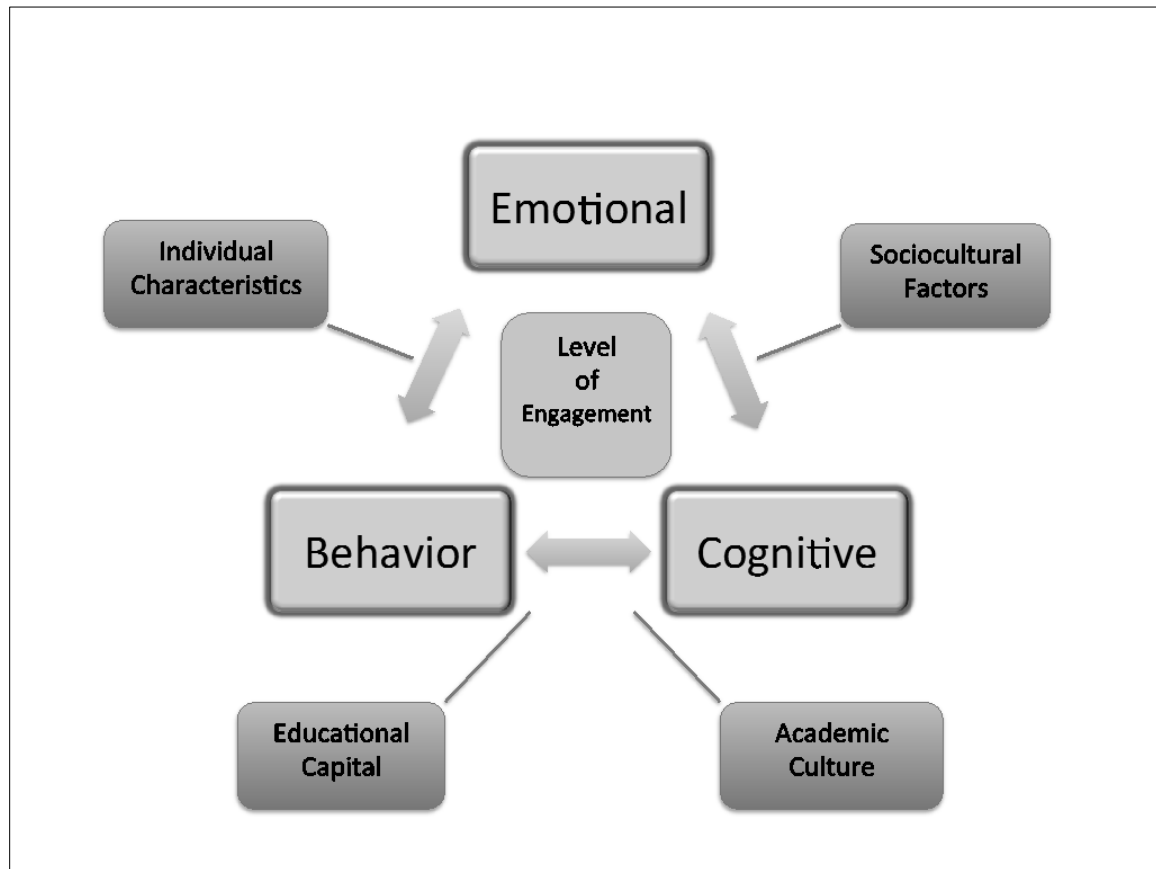


Figure 2: Matrix of Dynamic Interrelatedness Between Types of Engagement and Outside Influences

As previously discussed, research supports a matrix of individual-based factors (individual characteristics, sociocultural) and education-based (educational capital, academic culture) factors that are dynamically interrelated with students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. These influences often have overlapping, interwoven, and/or reciprocating relationships with students' engagement. Data analyses can be focused on one aspect and work to intervene or improve in that area, but in reality, students have a multi-dimensional composition of engagement. Therefore, schools must holistically examine the whole picture of student engagement.

## **Research Context and Design**

This study was qualitative in design because it “used a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in a context-specific setting” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 48) and sought to “gain new perspectives on things about which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively” (p. 49). Hoepfl (1997) identified that “the ability of qualitative data to more fully describe a phenomenon is an important consideration” to construct meaning in that qualitative research can produce reports that are “typically rich with detail and insights into participants’ experiences of the world” (p. 49). The investigator utilized grounded theory for “multiple stages of collecting, refining, and categorizing the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to enable a theory to emerge through these stages of qualitative data analysis (Kolb, 2012, p. 83).

As a complement to the qualitative data, both in the early purposive sampling process and through Phase Two and Three of interview collection, a compilation of survey data was also be recorded. This data, in the form of Likert-scale rated answers from a Student Engagement Survey (see Appendix B) and Teacher Report Form (see Appendix E), was used to serve as descriptive and comparative data to inform and enhance the validity and richness of qualitative data collected.

This qualitative study took place over the course of one nine-week period. As the selected mid-sized school runs on a block schedule, full-year courses are covered each semester during 90-minute class periods. One nine week period, therefore, spans the seat time and workload of a semester’s worth of work.

## **Participant Selection**

The investigator began with a population of all tenth and eleventh grade students. Ninth grade students were considered to not have enough high school experience to contribute significant input, and twelfth graders in the spring semester could contribute distorted data as high school completion and graduation will be very near. Tenth and eleventh grade students were administered the Student Engagement Survey (Hart et al., 2011) to assess basic emotional, behavioral, and cognitive levels of engagement (See Appendix B). Descriptive demographics, average achievement scores, course grades, and behavioral data were also examined to inform the purposeful sample selection of approximately 20 students (see Appendix A & C) from which input was gathered that addressed the study's overarching question 2 and sub-questions a, b, c, and d. Purposive sampling "relies on the judgement (sic) of the researcher when it comes to selecting units (e.g., people, cases/organizations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied" (Lund Research, 2012). The goal was not random selection for the purpose of forming generalizations but the "focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest" to be able to best answer the research questions (Lund Research, 2012).

## **Data Collection**

**Phase One.** At the beginning of the quarter, 531 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students were administered the Student Engagement Survey (Hart et al., 2011) to assess basic emotional, behavioral, and cognitive levels of engagement (See Appendix B). The results of these surveys were combined with descriptive demographics, average achievement scores, course grades, and behavioral data to inform the purposeful sample selection of approximately 20 students (see Appendix A & C). The researcher then worked to obtain

parental consent and student assent to collect interview data, teacher report data, and additional descriptive data.

**Phase Two.** These students were interviewed by the researcher at the mid-term regarding their perceptions of internal and external influences on levels of engagement (See Appendix D). Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded using methods outlined by Saldaña (2009). These data were also compared and triangulated with teacher report surveys with 10 items aligned with the initial student survey to be completed by all teachers of each of the participants during this mid-term time frame. In addition, mid-term progress report grades, attendance records, and behavioral data were noted for each participant at this time (see Appendix E).

**Phase Three.** At the end of the quarter, an online, follow-up questionnaire was given to which students responded by short answer either through typed responses or video recorded responses (see Appendix F). These responses were coded in the same manner as the interviews. Another round of the teacher report surveys was administered and final student grades, attendance, and behavioral data was collected and examined (see Appendix G).

### **Data Analysis**

Purposefully sampled students were organized into groups (should be engaged and are, should be engaged and are not, should not be engaged and are, and should not be engaged and are not). Descriptive data—demographic, academic, attendance, and behavioral—was collected throughout the nine week period to triangulate with the qualitative findings. Interviews and follow-up questionnaires were designed to gather

students' perspectives on a variety of factors recognized by previous research as influential on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement (see Chapter II).

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded using methods outlined by Saldaña (2009). The investigator checked all transcripts against the audio-taped interviews for accuracy as well as conducted member validation of transcriptions. These data were also compared and triangulated with continuing descriptive data and Teacher Report Surveys (see Appendix E). The responses to the Student Follow-Up Questionnaire (see Appendix F) were coded in the same manner as the interviews.

Grounded theory was used as the guiding methodology for this process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Kolb, 2012) and began with initial coding for each transcription. Initial codes that appeared and re-appeared were used to sort data into larger, focused categories of meaning. Finally, theoretical coding examined the relationships between and among categories to create a framework for understanding. The continuous collection of data, coding, and inductive analysis generated emerging themes from the various data as described by the constant comparative method (Kolb, 2012). This produced a theory of how students view various personal and external factors affecting levels of engagement and also which factors were the most significant in positively or negatively influencing student engagement.

### **Issues of Generalizability and Trustworthiness**

Generalizability, or transferability, can be described as “ways in which the study’s findings will be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or questions of practice” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 252). This study attempted to understand the internal and external dynamics of influences of levels of high school

students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. On a broad spectrum, low levels of student engagement in school and in their own learning are concerns that have been noted and studied nationwide. Individual characteristics, such as motivation and resiliency, and other factors, such as socioeconomic status, cognitive development and peer influence, resonate with those working with high school students.

This study took place in a rural, mid-sized high school in the South; therefore, students' experiences and perspectives on the abovementioned factors may differ from urban or Northern or West Coast students. Significant regional differences may have influenced findings making them less generalizable or transferable. Accounting for similar demographic and geographical descriptors, the triangulation with students' descriptive data, teacher report, and students' perspectives could lend the findings to be extrapolated and generalizable at other comparable high schools.

Within the school's setting, the findings from the purposefully sampled students have a greater chance to be transferred across the population. The sampled students were grouped by similar demographics and school descriptive data, and it is not unreasonable to assume that many other students in the same setting shared common threads of regional influence, previous academic experience, and current academic culture. Information from these findings can also be considered by the lower grade schools serving students that feed into this high school as many of the influences studied are culminations of students' experiences and factors that exist and occur prior to high school.

According to Lincoln and Guba, the inquiry must also be "credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities" and establish confidence in the truth of the

findings (1985, p. 296). This study included member validation of the transcription of students' interview and questionnaire responses as well as the triangulation of multiple data points. Students' demographic and descriptive performance data was examined in conjunction with interview and questionnaire responses and with teacher perspectives of students' engagement in their individual classes. This examination aimed to connect student perspective with student reality allowing any findings to become more applicable not only within this school but also to other similar settings.

To establish dependability, the researcher "accounted for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study and changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 253) through discussion of specific conditions during the study, identify limitations, and any related changes that may have occurred in Chapter 4. Confirmability, or the "degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), was also addressed through the triangulation of multiple data points representing various angles of the phenomenon.

### **Data Presentation**

Initial descriptive data and Student Engagement in School Questionnaire responses for each student who were purposefully sampled is presented in Appendix C. Phase I analysis is presented in Chapter 4 and consists of short narratives for each of the sample students based on the preliminary descriptive data and survey responses. For Phase II, mid-term students' data, teacher report information, and focused coding of students' interview transcription data was analyzed in groupings of the following four



categories: should be engaged and are, should be engaged and are not, should not be engaged and are, and should not be engaged and are not. The same process was repeated for Phase III with the final round of students' descriptive data, teacher report forms, and focused coding of final students' questionnaires. Finally, an overall process analysis was conducted with theoretical coding presented not only within groups but also across all groups to examine themes unique to like-grouped students and any themes that were found across all students.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### Phase One

##### **Population and Purposeful Sample Process.**

The researcher began by compiling baseline school-wide data that included items such as the ethnic breakdown of the school and percentage of economically disadvantaged students (see Appendix A). The baseline data showed how sampled students may fit into the school demographics or compare to the school or state averages. Additionally this data shows comparison for other schools looking at transferability of the findings from the study data.

Next, the Student Engagement in School Questionnaire was administered at the beginning of a quarter grading period via a Google Docs form to the school's tenth and eleventh grade population (see Appendix B). This survey instrument contained 33 statements regarding affective, behavioral, and cognitive engagement which students rated using Leichardt scale scores of 1 to 5. The investigator examined survey response trends in combination with student descriptive data to inform a purposeful sample of three to five students for each of the research question categories: should be engaged and is, should be engaged and is not, should not be engaged and is, and should not be engaged and is not (see Appendix C). Students were asked to participate on a volunteer basis and required to return Parent Consent and Student Assent forms. Twelve students volunteered and returned the required documentation to participate.

### **Individual Narratives for Purposeful Sample.**

***Student One.*** This student is a junior in high school and a white female. She qualifies for free or reduced lunch, classifying her as economically disadvantaged, but she does live with her aunt and uncle who have been her guardians since a very young age. She is currently taking English III, Spanish II, Chemistry I and is on the Yearbook staff. Over her previous two years at the high school, she has been an A and B student taking core academic classes, other classes like Music, Cosmetology, and Stagecraft, serving on the Yearbook staff during her sophomore and junior years, and has mostly average state standardized test scores. She has had average to good attendance missing minimal full days of school and having excuses for almost all absences, check-ins, and check outs. She did have one disciplinary issue as a sophomore that included a confrontation with another female student resulting in one day of In-School Suspension. This was an isolated incident, and she has no other referrals or issues on record. Her SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that she feels she has a high level of behavioral engagement, moderate levels of affective or emotional engagement, and moderate to high levels of cognitive engagement. With her guardian status, course participation and grades, good attendance, overall good behavior, and moderate to high levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should be engaged and is.”

***Student Two.*** This student is a sophomore in high school and a white female. She does not qualify for free or reduced lunch and lives with both parents at home. She is currently taking Algebra II Honors, Anatomy and Physiology, US History, and English II Honors. She has been an A and B student, mostly A’s, taking Honors sections of core

academic classes, completing other classes like Choir, Health Science, and Marketing, and earning high scores on state standardized tests. She has had average to good attendance missing minimal full days of school and having excuses for all absences, check-ins, and check outs. She has had no disciplinary issues. Her SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that she feels she has a high level of behavioral engagement, moderate to high levels of affective or emotional engagement, and moderate to high levels of cognitive engagement. With her parent/economic status, honors course participation and grades, good attendance, exceptional behavior, and moderate to high levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should be engaged and is.”

***Student Three.*** This student is a sophomore in high school and a white male. He does not qualify for free or reduced lunch and lives with both parents at home. He is currently taking Chemistry I Honors, AP US History, Symphonic Band Honors, and Pre-Calculus Honors. Over his previous time at the high school, he has been an all A (high A's) student taking AP and Honors sections of core academic classes, a member of the marching and symphonic bands, and he has earned high scores on state standardized tests. He has had very good attendance missing minimal full days of school and having excuses for all absences, check-ins, and check outs. He has had no disciplinary issues. His SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that he feels he has a moderate to high level of behavioral engagement, moderate to high level of affective or emotional engagement, and moderate to high level of cognitive engagement. With his parent/economic status, Honors and AP course participation and grades, good attendance,

exceptional behavior, and moderate to high levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should be engaged and is.”

***Student Four.*** This student is a junior in high school and a white female. She does not qualify for free or reduced lunch and lives with both parents at home. She is currently taking Chemistry I Honors, AP Calculus AB, AP English Language, and AP Macroeconomics. She has been an all A (high A's) student taking AP and Honors sections of core academic classes, other classes like Chorus and Spanish I and II, and earning high scores on state standardized tests. She has had good attendance missing minimal full days of school and having excuses for all absences, check-ins, and check outs. She has had no disciplinary issues. Her SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that she feels she has a moderate to high level of behavioral engagement, mostly moderate level of affective or emotional engagement, and low level of cognitive engagement. With her parent/economic status, Honors and AP course participation and grades, good attendance, exceptional behavior, and low to moderate levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should be engaged and is not.”

***Student Five.*** This student is a junior in high school and a white male. He does not qualify for free or reduced lunch and lives with both parents at home. He is currently taking AP English Language, Chinese II, Algebra II, and Symphonic Band. He has been a mostly A and B student taking AP and Honors sections of several core academic classes, a member of the marching and symphonic bands, and earning good to high scores on state standardized tests. He has had very good attendance missing minimal full days of school and having excuses for all absences, check-ins, and check outs. He has had no

disciplinary issues. His SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that he feels he has a low to moderate level of behavioral engagement, moderate level of affective or emotional engagement, and low to moderate level of cognitive engagement. With his parent/economic status, Honors and AP course participation and grades, good attendance, exceptional behavior, and low to moderate levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should be engaged and is not.”

***Student Six.*** This student is a sophomore in high school and a white female. She does not qualify for free or reduced lunch and lives with both parents at home. She is currently taking Visual Art I, Psychology, Biology I, and English II. Over her previous time at the high school, she has been a mostly B and C student taking core academic classes, other classes like Intro to Human Development, Family Studies, and Personal Finance, and has mostly average state standardized test scores. She has had average to good attendance missing minimal full days of school and having excuses for almost all absences, check-ins, and check outs. She did have disciplinary issues as a freshman that revolved around continuous issues and confrontations with other female students resulting in three referrals to In-School Suspension, three Out-of-School Suspensions, and ultimately, a placement at Alternative School. Upon her return as a sophomore, she has shown vast improvement and has no other referrals or issues on record. Her SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that she feels she has a moderate to high level of behavioral engagement, moderate levels of affective or emotional engagement, and low to moderate levels of cognitive engagement. With her parental and economic status, course participation and grades, and general good attendance, in contrast with her

behavioral record, and low to moderate levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should be engaged and is not.”

***Student Seven.*** This student is a sophomore in high school and a white male. He qualifies for free or reduced lunch, classifying him as economically disadvantaged, and he lives at home with his mother. He is currently taking English II, ROTC, US History, and Principles of Manufacturing. His grades have ranged from B’s to D’s with one failing grade in Biology I, he has been involved in the Jr. ROTC program, and he has earned low to average scores on state standardized tests. He has had good attendance missing minimal full days of school but does not have excuses for all absences, check-ins, and check outs. He has only had one disciplinary referral for a cell phone policy infraction. His SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that he feels he has a moderate level of behavioral engagement, moderate level of affective or emotional engagement, and moderate level of cognitive engagement. With his parent/economic status, average grades, ROTC involvement, good attendance, exceptional behavior, and moderate levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should not be engaged and is.”

***Student Eight.*** This student is a sophomore in high school and a black female. She qualifies for free or reduced lunch, classifying her as economically disadvantaged, and she lives at home with her mother and several siblings. She is currently taking Biology IA, Geometry, PE, and Cosmetology I. Her grades have ranged from B’s to D’s with mostly B’s and C’s. She has taken other courses like Intro to Human Studies and Health Science and has earned average scores on her one state standardized test on record. She had poor attendance last year missing twenty-one full days of school without

having excuses for most absences, check-ins, and check outs. Her attendance fall semester of her sophomore year has improved only missing six full days but still not having excuses for these absences. Her disciplinary referrals on file are for tardiness to school and for a cell phone policy infraction. Her SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that she feels she has a moderate/moderate-high level of behavioral engagement, moderate level of affective or emotional engagement, and moderate level of cognitive engagement. Given her parent/economic status, ethnicity, along with her average grades, improved attendance, good behavior, and moderate levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should not be engaged and is.”

***Student Nine.*** This student is a sophomore in high school and a white female. She qualifies for free or reduced lunch, classifying her as economically disadvantaged, and she lives at home with her mother who had her at a very young age. She is currently taking Geometry, Wellness, Biology I, and English II. Her grades have been mostly B’s and C’s, although she did transfer to another school during the second semester of her Freshman year and back for the beginning of her sophomore year. She has taken other courses like ROTC, Economics, Personal Finance, Theater Arts, and Visual Art. She has no scores on record for state standardized tests. Her attendance fall semester of her sophomore year only shows one full day absence, two excused check outs and two unexcused tardies. She has no disciplinary referrals. Her SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that she feels she has a moderate level of behavioral engagement, moderate/moderate-high level of affective or emotional engagement, and moderate level of cognitive engagement. Given her parent/economic status, along with her slightly above



average grades, course selection, good attendance, good behavior, and moderate levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should not be engaged and is.”

***Student Ten.*** This student is a sophomore in high school and a white female. She qualifies for free or reduced lunch, classifying her as economically disadvantaged, and she lives at home with her dad but spends some weekends with her mom. She is currently taking English II, Wellness, US History, and Cosmetology. She has been a mostly D student with two course failures from Fall semester. She has been taking core academic classes, other classes like Intro to Human Development and Choir, and has low state standardized test scores. She has had poor attendance missing 20 full days of school as a Freshman and 21 from Fall 2015. Most all absences are unexcused but most check outs are excused. She did have disciplinary issues over her freshman year and Fall 2015 that revolved around skipping class and disruptive conduct resulting in three referrals to In-School Suspension. Her SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that she feels she has a low to moderate level of behavioral engagement, moderate levels of affective or emotional engagement, and low to moderate levels of cognitive engagement. With her parental and economic status, academic history, poor attendance, behavioral record, and low to moderate levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should not be engaged and is not.”

***Student Eleven.*** This student is a sophomore in high school and a black male. He qualifies for free or reduced lunch, classifying him as economically disadvantaged. He mostly lives at home with his mom (who had him at a very young age and has also spent some time in prison this year) and several siblings or his grandmother but also spends

some weekends with his dad and step-mother. He is currently taking Media Production (which he enjoys), Understanding Music, Biology I, and English II. Over his previous time at the high school, he has been a mostly C and D student with at least two course failures that have been made up in a Credit Recovery program. He has been taking core academic classes, other classes like Wellness, Computer Apps, and Personal Finance, and has low state standardized test scores. He has had poor attendance missing 37 full days of school as a Freshman but only 6 from Fall 2015. A little more than half of his absences are unexcused but some full-day absences and check outs are excused. He has had several disciplinary issues over his freshman year and Fall 2015 that included infractions like skipping class, disruptive conduct, refusal to accept discipline, tardies, disrespect of others, profanity, cell phone infractions, out of assigned area, and insubordination resulting in several after school detentions, eight referrals to In-School Suspension, and one out-of-school suspension. His SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that he feels he has a moderate level of behavioral engagement, moderate level of affective or emotional engagement, and moderate level of cognitive engagement. With his parental/home and economic status, academic history, poor attendance, behavioral record, and moderate levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should not be engaged and is not.”

***Student Twelve.*** This student is a junior in high school and a white male. He qualifies for free or reduced lunch, classifying him as economically disadvantaged, and he lives at home with both parents (who are both on disability). He is currently taking Algebra II B, Welding II, English III, and Marketing. His previous grades range from B’s to D’s with failing grades in Machining II and Chemistry. He has taken other courses like

ROTC, Machining I, Computer Applications, Principles of Manufacturing, and Digital Arts, and has earned low to average scores on state standardized tests. He has had good attendance missing minimal full days of school but does not necessarily have excuses for all absences, check-ins, and check outs. He has had disciplinary referrals for a cell phone policy infraction, skipping school, tardiness to class, and failure to attend disciplinary action. His SESQ responses (see Appendix C) indicated that he feels he has a low to moderate level of behavioral engagement, a low level of affective or emotional engagement, and a low level of cognitive engagement. With his economic status, low to average grades, course failures, absences without excuses, moderate behavior, and low levels of reported engagement in school, this student was purposefully sampled for the category of “should not be engaged and is not.”

### **Summary.**

Research, as discussed in Chapter II, on student descriptive factors such as socioeconomic status, parent/guardian status and ethnicity as they relate to student engagement played one role in student purposeful sampling. Actual student performance in academics, attendance, and behavior was also analyzed as evidence of possible level of engagement to be factored in the sampling. Finally, students’ perceptions of their own affective, behavioral, and cognitive engagement helped inform the “is” or “is not” engaged portion of the study sample. Students participated on a voluntary basis and final participants were those who returned parent consent and student assent forms.

## Phase Two

### Mid-Term Student Data and Teacher Report Information.

At the mid-term of the quarter, the researcher again gathered individual student attendance, behavior, and academic data (see Appendix E). The academic data was in the form of mid-term progress reports pulled from the school’s electronic data system (iNow) for each of the student’s courses. Each of the students’ teachers was also asked to complete a Teacher Engagement Report Form (see Appendix E). This tool was developed in conjunction with the Student Engagement in School Questionnaire (see Appendix B) and was utilized to gather the teachers’ perspectives of student levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The mid-term data and teacher report forms are organized by student and grouped in the following four categories: should be engaged and are, should be engaged and are not, should not be engaged and are, and should not be engaged and are not (see Appendix E). The descriptive data – attendance, behavior, academics – were factored into the coding tables when examining individual student interview data during the coding process (see Appendix I).

### Student Interviews.

Interview questions were constructed for gathering qualitative data through student interviews based on major influences on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement outlined and discussed in the review of literature (see Chapter 2).

Table 2: Breakdown of Interview Questions by Influence Category

Interview/Influence Category	Interview Question
Introductory Question	1. This being your 11 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> year doing this “school thing”...how is it for you? What do you think about it? Is it important to you? Why or why not?

Table 2 cont.

<b>Interview/Influence Category</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>
Individual Characteristics	2. Tell me a little about yourself. What are you interested in? What motivates you? What do you view as being successful? Do you feel like you have control of your future? Your ability to succeed?
	3. (For students identified as low levels of engagement) What are some things that may cause you to feel unmotivated or “checked out”?
	4. What are your goals? Now and after high school. Would you describe yourself as self-driven/motivated or motivated by other people or factors?
	5. Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals? Even if it may take a while? Even if costs you time you could be doing other things?
	6. If something is/becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help? Keep trying? Get frustrated/give up? How well do you think you control your emotions?
	7. How do you feel about your ability to learn? To get better at something/change? To work harder and learn more/do better?
Family Dynamic/Background	8a. Tell me about your home situation. Family/guardian structure? Cultural background? Home environment?
Level of Parent Education/Support	8b. Level of parent/guardian education?
	9. How do you think any of those things impact you here at school?
	10. What kind of expectations do your parents/guardians have for you at school? (grades, attendance, behavior/attitude, work ethic)
	11. How involved in your school experience do you feel your parents have been? Are now? Help with work, support, resources, talk with teachers? Do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for your future goals, they would know where to go/what to do to help you?

Table 2 cont.

<b>Interview/Influence Category</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>
Peer Influence	12. What about your friends and classmates? Do you feel any pressure from them – positive and/or negative? Influence your behavior? Your mood? Your attitude toward school? Your goals? Why or why not?
Previous Academic Experience	13. Describe to me how you felt about school from elementary to middle school to high school. Did you notice any changes in yourself? If so, when and why do you think? Have you always been in this school system? If not, when and where did you move schools?
	14. Have you ever or do you now struggle with school and learning? If so, tell me about that. When do you first remember? What have others done to help you? What did you do/are you doing to try to work through that struggle/improve in that area?
Instruction, Grading, & Assessment Practices	15. Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes? Tell me about them. What do you like/not like?
	16. Do you think you are involved/interested in your classes? Do you think your teachers have done a good job explaining why you are learning/doing something? What about homework – do you do homework? Why or why not?
	17. Do class and/or report card grades motivate you? What do you think about how teachers grade? Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes? Why or why not?
	18. How do you feel when you quizzes/tests? Usually prepared or not? What about state standardized tests (EOC, ACT, Writing Assessment) – what do you think and how do you feel about those?
School Climate/Culture	19. In general, do you think the adults here are nice/care about you? Why or why not? Do you feel there are people here that work to get to know you? Help you? Notice when you do something good/are successful?
	20. How do you feel about this school as a whole? Do you feel like you have a place? Do you feel safe? Do you like coming here? Why or why not?
Final Question	21. Research and data suggest that a) you should be engaged in school and are, b) you should be engaged in school but you are not, c) you shouldn't necessarily be engaged and you are not, or d) you shouldn't necessarily be engaged but you are...why do you think that is?

These questions sought to collect unique student data from each of the four categories – should be engaged and are, should be engaged and are not, should not be engaged and are, should not be engaged and are not – in the form of the students' perceptions of influences on their engagement. Interviews were conducted during the middle of the nine week period within a week to two weeks of collecting student mid-term data as students returned consent and assent forms. This allowed students time and experience in their classes without the possible skewing of interview responses that may come with the rush and stress of testing and ending a grading period. Teacher report forms were also collected in the same one to two week window of mid-term data collection. Only one student interview occurred slightly later than others due to returning consent and assent forms late.

For each student interview, wording and delivery of questions varied slightly as needed based on students' comprehension of the questions, individual contexts, and the interviewers response to displays of body language and facial expressions (see Appendix H). Interviews were recorded, then transcribed, and member checks were conducted with students initially on printed transcriptions after reading and approving individual transcriptions.

### **Summary.**

The following are the coding tables used for summarizing results of individual transcriptions (see Appendix I) as well as a composite group analysis table for each of the 4 groupings of students. These tables note initial code trends and identify axial codes grouped by various categories as they emerged. These tables also include codes and trends incorporated from the initial descriptive data collected for each student, the mid-

term data collected, and the information gathered from the Teacher Report Forms (see Appendix E).

*Student One.*

Table 3: Student 1, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
Other	positive reinforcement/recognition	3
Assessment	assess for gauge of learning/performance	1
	assess for information and intervention	1
	confidence on assessment if prepared	1
Classes	completes homework	1
	instructional differences	2
	involved/interested in classes	2
	knows what's going on in classes	1
	understands purpose/relevance of material	2
course assessments	less confident when doesn't feel like knows the material	1
	teachers relay info for preparedness	1
cultural influence	no particular cultural influence	1
different learning styles	visual learner	1
Family	both parents at home	1
	close family	2
	family communication	1
	family support	1
Grading	involved/aware of performance	1
	positive perception of course grading	2
	tests and quizzes are main	1
has goals	long term goals	5
	set goals as a means	5
	short term goals	1
	tangible goal	1
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	1
high parent expectations	accountable to parents	2



Table 3 cont.

	good attitude	1
	good behavior	1
<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
Individual	control of emotions	1
	determined	1
	more likely to ask for help from s/o comfortable with	1
	persistence	4
	pushes through frustration/difficulty	1
	resiliency/grit	2
	self-aware	2
	self-motivated	3
	sense of control/autonomy	1
	taking on responsibility	1
	wants positive reputation/notoriety	1
	willing to try something new	1
	work ethic	2
negative peer behavior	some students act out in reaction to emotion	1
opinion of school	school is important	1
Parents	communication w/teachers	1
	high parent expectations	1
	parent ability to help	1
	parent discipline evident in student behavior	1
	parent encouragement/guidance	1
	parental involvement	2
	parental motivation	4
	parental support	4
	parents - HS education	1
peer/friends	friend changes	1
	negative peer behavior	2
	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	1
	positive friend influence/support	5
positive friend influence/support	peers with goals	1
positive opinion of classes/teachers	positive interactions w/teachers	1
previous school/academic experiences	like early grade levels	4

Table 3 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
	transition to HS struggles	1
school climate/culture	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
	neg peer behavior as it affects school climate	3
	positive environment	1
	school promotion of activities	1
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	2
	caring adults in school	1
	courtesy	1
	teacher support	2
school/academic	grades as goal/motivator	5
	involved in activities	3
	positive opinion of classes/teachers	3
	school support	1
self-aware	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	2
social aspect of HS	HS social problems	4
	transition to HS issues	3
standardized assessments	negative perception of standardized tests	1
	teachers can't fully prepare students for stand tests	1
Other	consistently good grades, academic performance	
	involved in activities	
	good attendance	
	overall good behavior	
	teachers perceive good to high levels of engagement	

*Student Two.*

Table 4: Student 2, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
assessment	confidence on assessment if prepared	1
classes	completes homework	1
	involved/interested in classes	1
	knows what's going on in classes	1
course assessments	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"	1
	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	1
	likes course quizzes/tests	1
cultural influence	no particular cultural influence	1
different learning styles	doesn't like busy work	1
	doesn't like just lecture	1
	group work	2
	prefers active learning	1
	visual learner	1
family	both parents at home	1
grading	involved/aware of performance	3
	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing	1
	understands grading practices	1
has goals	long term goals	5
	set goals as a means	3
	short term goals	1
	tangible goal	1
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	1
individual	control of emotions	1
	determined	3
	enjoys being busy/involved	3
	focus	1
	persistence	3
	pushes through frustration/difficulty	1
	resiliency/grit	1

Table 4 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
	self-aware	6
	self-motivated	1
	sense of control/autonomy	1
	sets high standards/expectations for self	2
	taking on responsibility	1
	time management	1
	wants positive reputation/notoriety	1
	willing to ask for help	1
	work ethic	3
likes course quizzes/tests	easier to focus on	1
negative peer behavior	frustrated with others don't try	1
opinion of school	likes school (HS)	2
parents	communication w/teachers	1
	high parent expectations	2
	parent ability to help	1
	parent work ethic	1
	parent(s)/guardian taught good habits	1
	parental involvement	1
	parental motivation	1
	parental support	1
	parents - post-sec training/education	1
peer/friends	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	1
	positive friend influence/support	2
	social aspect of HS	1
previous school/academic experiences	consistency in schools attended	1
	history of liking school	1
	like early grade levels	1
	no perception of previous struggles	1
	set goals early	1
pushes through frustration/difficulty	push through struggle in math	1
school climate/culture	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
	likes coming to this school	1

Table 4 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	2
	caring adults in school	1
	teacher support	1
school/academic	grades as goal/motivator	4
	positive opinion of classes/teachers	1
	school support	1
set goals early	student became more serious in middle school	1
standardized assessments	gets nervous about standardized tests	1
	time limit on them is stressful	1
other	not economically disadvantaged	
	takes advanced level courses	
	consistently good grades, academic performance	
	involved in various activities	
	good attendance	
	good behavior	
	teachers perceive high levels of engagement in classes	

*Student Three.*

Table 5: Student 3, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

Parent code	Code	#
Other	positive reinforcement/recognition	1
Assessment	confidence on assessment if prepared	1
Classes	completes homework	1
	does not like monotony in class	2
	gets feedback from teachers	1
	involved/interested in classes	1
	knows what's going on in classes	1
	likes to learn application of content	1

Table 5 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
	understands purpose/relevance of material	1
course assessments	assessments are applications of learning	1
	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	2
	need to study outside of class to optimize learning	1
cultural influence	religion	1
different learning styles	prefers active learning	1
enjoys being busy/involved	enjoys being part of a team/similar group	1
	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in	2
family	both parents at home	1
	family is "well off" economically/as a whole	1
	family is busy/involved	1
grades should be weighted proportionately	doesn't like when one grade has large effect	1
grading	grades should be weighted proportionately	1
	involved/aware of performance	1
	positive perception of course grading	1
has goals	altruistic motives/goals	1
	long term goals	4
	set goals as a means	3
	short term goals	1
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	2
home	things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress	1
individual	ability to improve/adapt	1
	control of emotions	1
	determined	3
	focus	1
	likes to learn new things	1

Table 5 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	3
	motivated/inspired by others	1
	persistence	3
	positive mindset	4
	pushes through frustration/difficulty	3
	resiliency/grit	2
	self-aware	1
	self-motivated	2
	self-regulation	2
	sense of control/autonomy	1
	sets high standards/expectations for self	5
	taking on responsibility	1
	time management	1
	work ethic	5
likes to learn new things	being an active learner helps understanding & confidence	1
opinion of school	neutral opinion of school	1
	values school as an opportunity	3
Parents	high parent expectations	1
	parent ability to help	1
	parental involvement	1
	parental support	2
	parents - post-sec training/education	1
peer/friends	positive friend influence/support	2
positive friend influence/support	peers with goals	2
previous school/academic experiences	consistency in schools attended	1
	elementary as good foundation	1
	learns easily	1
Religion	religion as a motivator	1
school climate/culture	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
	likes coming to this school	2
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	2

Table 5 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	caring adults in school	1
	teacher support	1
school/academic	different learning styles	1
	grades as goal/motivator	3
	school support	1
set goals early	gained confidence and drive in MS	1
	student became more serious in middle school	1
sets high standards/expectations for self	pride in doing best	1
	struggle of workload	2
standardized assessments	thinks standardized assessments are easy	1
thinks standardized assessments are easy	thinks assessments should have various levels	2
view of success	big picture of success is independence/self-sufficiency	1
other	not economically disadvantaged	
	involved in activities (band)	
	takes advanced courses	
	consistently good grades, academic performance	
	good attendance	
	good behavior	
	teachers perceive high levels of engagement in classes	

***Student Four.***

Table 6: Student 4, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

Parent code	Code	#
Other	positive reinforcement/recognition	1
assessment	assess for gauge of learning/performance	1
	assess for information and intervention	1
	confidence on assessment if prepared	1



Table 6 cont.

changed schools/systems	adjusting to being new in MS socially	2
<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
classes	completes homework	1
	does not like monotony in class	2
	doesn't like/see point in excessive work/HW	1
	gets feedback from teachers	1
	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important	1
	involved/interested in classes	1
	knows what's going on in classes	2
	makes it difficult when teachers are disorganized	1
	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"	2
	understands purpose/relevance of material	1
course assessments	course tests cause stress, feel pressure	1
	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	1
	need to study outside of class to optimize learning	1
cultural influence	Religion	1
different learning styles	prefers active learning	1
elementary as good foundation	active, hands-on learning experiences	1
enjoys being busy/involved	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in	4
Family	both parents at home	1
Grading	involved/aware of performance	2
	positive perception of course grading	1
	understands grading practices	1
has goals	long term goals	5
	set goals as a means	4
	short term goals	2
	tangible goal	2
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	2
high parent expectations	good work ethic	1
Individual	ability to improve/adapt	1

Table 6 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
	determined	3
	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested	1
	likes to learn new things	2
	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	1
	motivated/inspired by others	2
	persistence	2
	resiliency/grit	1
	self-aware	2
	self-motivated	1
	sense of control/autonomy	1
	sets high standards/expectations for self	3
	taking on responsibility	1
	time management	1
	willing to ask for help	1
	work ethic	4
likes to learn new things	learning/figuring things out keeps down stress	1
motivated/inspired by others	desire to make proud/impress parents	1
opinion of school	likes school (HS)	2
	school is important	1
	values school as an opportunity	1
Parents	communication w/teachers	1
	high parent expectations	2
	parent ability to help	1
	parent work ethic	2
	parental involvement	4
	parental motivation	1
	parental support	1
	parents - post-sec training/education	1
peer/friends	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	1
	own stress feeds off stress of those around	1
	positive friend influence/support	3
positive friend influence/support	peers with goals	2

Table 6 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
previous school/academic experiences	changed schools/systems	1
	elementary as good foundation	1
	history of liking school	1
	learns easily	1
	like early grade levels	1
pushes through frustration/difficulty	if something he/she really wants/is interested in	2
school climate/culture	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
	positive environment	1
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	1
	caring adults in school	2
	Courtesy	1
	teacher support	2
school/academic	different learning styles	1
	grades as goal/motivator	2
	school support	1
self-aware	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	1
self-regulation	finding balance	1
sets high standards/expectations for self	pride in doing best	1
	struggle of mtg high goals/expectations	6
	struggle of workload	12
standardized assessments	feels more prepared b/c of adv courses	1
	higher value on ACT/SAT than state tests	1
	negative perception of standardized tests	1
taking on responsibility	more independent	2
transition to HS struggles	advanced courses, increased workload/expectations	2
view of success	feeling sense of accomplishment	2
work ethic	drive fueled by interest/enjoyment level	1

Table 6 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
Other	not economically disadvantaged	
	involved in activities	
	takes advanced level courses	
	consistently good grades, academic performance	
	yet student perceives low cognitive engagement	
	good attendance	
	good behavior	
	teachers report high levels of engagement in class	

*Student Five.*

Table 7: Student 5, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
Other	positive reinforcement/recognition	1
academic transition to HS struggles	previous struggle in science	1
	realization of having to work more	1
accountable to parents	has controlling/pushy parent(s)	3
Assessment	confidence on assessment if prepared	1
Classes	completes homework	1
	gets feedback from teachers	1
	involved/interested in classes	1
	knows what's going on in classes	1
	peer review/feedback	1
	understands purpose/relevance of material	1
cultural influence	religion	1
different learning styles	prefers active learning	1
enjoys being busy/involved	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in	1
family	both parents at home	1
	close family	1

Table 7 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	family is "well off" economically/as a whole	1
	family support	2
grading	grades show level of mastery/understanding	1
	involved/aware of performance	1
	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing	1
has goals	long term goals	3
	set goals as a means	2
	short term goals	1
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	1
Home	things going on at home can cause distraction	1
individual	control of emotions	1
	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested	1
	motivated/inspired by others	2
	not very involved/a part of school activities	1
	persistence	1
	personal struggle w/mental or physical issue	2
	positive mindset	1
	pushes through frustration/difficulty	2
	taking on responsibility	1
	willing to ask for help	3
involved in activities	gets tiring after long time	1
learns easily	if pays attention and works	1
likes course quizzes/tests	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	1
motivated/inspired by others	somewhat lazy and not self-motivated	1
negative perception of standardized tests	can't gauge intelligence/work ethic on single test	1
opinion of school	likes school (HS)	3
	school is important	1
	values school as an opportunity	1

Table 7 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
Parents	high parent expectations	1
	parent ability to help	1
	parental involvement	2
	parents - post-sec training/education	1
peer/friends	functions/makes decisions independently	3
previous school/academic experiences	awkward middle school stage	2
	consistency in schools attended	1
	history of liking school	1
	learns easily	1
school climate/culture	like early grade levels	1
	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
school support	likes coming to this school	1
	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	1
	caring adults in school	1
school/academic	teacher support	2
	grades as goal/motivator	2
	positive opinion of classes/teachers	1
sets high standards/expectations for self	school support	1
	struggle of mtg high goals/expectations	2
standardized assessments	negative perception of standardized tests	1
	view of success	being content
work ethic	feeling sense of accomplishment	1
	drive fueled by interest level	1
	goal to work harder and do better	3
Other	not economically disadvantaged	
	involved in band	
	takes advanced level courses	
	consistently good grades, academic performance	
	good attendance	
	good behavior	

Table 7 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	yet student perceives low to moderate levels of engagement	
	mostly high teacher perceptions of engagement	
	some low to moderate ratings from AP English teacher	

*Student Six.*

Table 8: Student 6, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

Parent code	Code	#
other	positive reinforcement/recognition	1
causes for feeling unmotivated & disengaged from school	being "talked down to"	1
	not getting the proper feedback, guidance, support	2
classes	doesn't like asking for help in front of class	1
	engaged in class/task if interested or good at it	1
	hard to be engaged if not interested	1
	has improved at completely homework	1
	knows what's going on in classes	1
	perceives doesn't get constructive feedback from teachers	1
	understands purpose/relevance of material	1
course assessments	course tests cause stress, feel pressure	2
	doesn't feel he/she is a good test taker	1
cultural influence	no particular cultural influence	1
different learning styles	group work	1
Family	both parents at home	1
	changes in dynamics, structure	3
	defensive of family	1
family problems, conflict	feelings of not being wanted or shame from parents	1
grading	involved/aware of performance	1

Table 8 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	neg infl - perception of strict, punitive grading	1
	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing	1
has goals	long term goals	3
	not confident about being able to achieve goals	1
	set goals as a means	3
	short term goals	1
	tangible goal	1
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	1
high parent expectations	good attitude	1
	good behavior	1
	good work ethic	1
Home	family problems, conflict	3
	things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress	3
Individual	bottles emotions up, does not always control well	2
	causes for feeling unmotivated & disengaged from school	1
	determined	1
	motivated/inspired by others	1
	persistence	1
	pushes through frustration/difficulty	1
	self-aware	1
	self-motivated	1
	willing to ask for help	1
	work ethic	2
motivated/inspired by others	learn from others' mistakes	1
negative perception of standardized tests	can't gauge intelligence/work ethic on single test	1
opinion of school	values school as an opportunity	1
parental involvement	early on but not as student has gotten older	1
Parents	communication w/teachers	1
	parent ability to help	1
	parental support	2



Table 8 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
	parents - HS education	1
peer/friends	friend changes	1
	friends motivate	2
	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	1
	strong peer/friend ties at school	1
previous academic struggle(s)	felt isolated	1
	had modifications	1
previous school/academic experiences	awkward middle school stage	1
	consistency in schools attended	1
	previous academic struggle(s)	1
	previous behavioral problems	1
	transition to HS struggles	1
school climate/culture	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
	likes coming to this school	1
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	1
	caring adults in school	2
	feels teachers are selective in who they help	1
	teacher support	1
school/academic	different learning styles	1
	grades as goal/motivator	1
	school support	2
self-regulation	trying to do better and stay out of trouble	1
set goals early	gained confidence and drive in MS	1
time management	previous struggles w/time mngmt & completing wk	1
transition to HS struggles	academic failures early on	1
view of success	feeling sense of accomplishment	1
work ethic	drive fueled by interest/enjoyment level	1
	goal to work harder and do better	3
other	not economically disadvantaged	
	not involved	
	average grades, academic performance w/2 failing grades	

Table 8 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	average to good attendance	
	previously poor behavior but has improved this year	
	most teachers reported moderate levels of engagement in class	
	Art teacher reported moderate to high levels of engagement	
	student stated she was interested in art and realized she was good at it	

*Student Seven.*

Table 9: Student 7, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

Parent code	Code	#
big picture of success is independence/self-sufficiency	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	1
Classes	does not like monotony in class	1
	engaged in class/task if interested or good at it	1
	hard to be engaged if not interested/don't find important	2
	involved/interested in classes	1
	knows what's going on in classes	1
	neg perception of class if not fun/doesn't understand	1
	understands purpose/relevance of material	1
course assessments	course tests cause stress, feel pressure	1
	doesn't feel he/she is a good test taker	1
different learning styles	hands-on, physically active	3
	prefers active learning	1
enjoys being busy/involved	enjoys being part of a team/similar group	1
	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in	2
Family	changes in dynamics, structure	1
	economically disadvantaged	1

Table 9 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	only mom at home	1
	pos influence/support of military grandfather	1
family problems, conflict	unreasonable/inappropriate expectations	1
Grading	involved/aware of performance	1
	neg infl - perception of strict, punitive grading	1
	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing	1
has goals	altruistic motives/goals	6
	long term goals	1
	set goals as a means	3
	short term goals	1
	tangible goal	4
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	1
high parent expectations	good work ethic	1
home	family problems, conflict	1
individual	control of emotions	1
	determined	3
	enjoys being busy/involved	1
	Focus	1
	motivated/inspired by others	2
	positive mindset	5
	resiliency/grit	3
	self-motivated	2
	self-regulation	1
	sense of control/autonomy	2
	taking on responsibility	1
lack of parental support/involvement	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient	2
	is discouraging	1
negative perception of standardized tests	can't gauge intelligence/work ethic on single test	1
	hard to focus, too long	1
opinion of school	values school as an opportunity	1

Table 9 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
parents	lack of parental support/involvement	4
	parents - HS education	1
peer/friends	friends motivate	2
	has small group of good friends	1
	negative peer behavior	1
	positive friend influence/support	2
	strong peer/friend ties at school	1
positive friend influence/support	peers with goals	1
previous academic struggle(s)	struggle with focus, attention	1
previous school/academic experiences	changed schools/systems	1
	did not like school early on	1
	previous academic struggle(s)	1
	transition to HS made more motivated, serious	2
school climate/culture	likes coming to this school	1
school support	feels teachers are selective in who they help	1
school/academic	grades as goal/motivator	2
	positive opinion of classes/teachers	1
	school support	1
standardized assessments	neg perception of standardized tests	1
	teachers can't fully prepare students for stand tests	1
taking on responsibility	more independent	3
teacher support	has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected/supported	2
transition to HS struggles	academic failures/low grades early on	1
work ethic	drive fueled by interest/enjoyment level	2
	goal to work harder and do better	7
	likes a challenge	1
other	economically disadvantaged	
	involved in football, ROTC	
	mostly average grades and academic performance w/a few low grades	
	good grades in ROTC and Principles of Manufacturing	

Table 9 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	good attendance but missing time not always excused	
	good behavior	
	teachers report moderate to good levels of engagement in class	
	one teacher noted he usually tries hard but sometimes gets frustrated	
	and has a hard time focusing	

*Student Eight.*

Table 10: Student 8, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

Parent code	Code	#
other	positive reinforcement/recognition	1
assessment	confidence on assessment if prepared	1
classes	engaged in class/task if interested or good at it	1
	gets feedback from teachers	1
	involved/interested in classes	1
	neg perception of class if not fun/doesn't understand	1
	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"	1
course assessments	course tests cause stress, feel pressure	1
	doesn't feel he/she is a good test taker	1
cultural influence	race/ethnicity	1
	Religion	1
different learning styles	group work	1
enjoys being busy/involved	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in	2
family	changes in dynamics, structure	1
	family support	1
	has a lot of responsibility at home	1
	mom had at young age	1
	only mom at home	1

Table 10 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
grading	doesn't always understand grading practices	1
	involved/aware of performance	1
has goals	altruistic motives/goals	1
	long term goals	1
	set goals as a means	4
	short term goals	1
	willing to work	1
high parent expectations	good behavior	1
	good grades	1
Home	can't always stay after when needs help b/c of ride	1
	family problems, conflict	1
	not wanting to be at home motivates to come to school	1
Individual	change/transition is difficult	1
	control of emotions	1
	determined	1
	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested	1
	more likely to ask for help from s/o comfortable with	1
	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	1
	motivated/inspired by others	1
	persistence	1
	resiliency/grit	1
	self-aware	1
	self-motivated	2
	self-regulation	3
	taking on responsibility	1
	wants positive reputation/notoriety	1
	willing to try something new	1
	work ethic	1
opinion of school	likes school (HS)	1
	school is important	1
	wants more schoolwide activities	2

Table 10 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
Parents	parent encouragement/guidance	1
	parent(s)/guardian taught good habits	1
	parental involvement	2
	parents - HS education	1
peer/friends	friends motivate	1
	functions/makes decisions independently	1
	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	1
	positive friend influence/support	1
	social aspect of HS	1
positive friend influence/support	peers with goals	1
previous school/academic experiences	changed schools/systems	1
	did not like school early on	2
	previous academic struggle(s)	1
	previous behavioral problems	1
	transition to HS made more motivated, serious	2
school climate/culture	feels safe	1
	likes coming to this school	1
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	1
	teacher support	2
school/academic	feels like some teachers/people in bldg misjudge	2
	grades as goal/motivator	1
self-aware	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	2
self-regulation	finding balance	1
	trying to do better and stay out of trouble	1
social aspect of HS	HS social problems	1
standardized assessments	thinks standardized assessments are easy	1
taking on responsibility	more independent	1
teacher support	has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected/supported	1

Table 10 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
view of success	big picture of success is independence/self-sufficiency	1
	feeling sense of accomplishment	1
work ethic	drive fueled by interest/enjoyment level	1
other	economically disadvantaged; minority	
	not involved in activities	
	mostly average grades and academic performance w/a couple low grades	
	good grades this year in Biology and PE	
	poor attendance previous year but is improved this year	
	reports issues with rides to school	
	teachers mostly report moderate to good levels of engagement	
	Geometry teacher reported lower levels - student admits struggling in math	

*Student Nine.*

Table 11: Student 9, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
Other	positive reinforcement/recognition	1
Classes	content to do most of work & get passing grade	1
	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important	1
	knows what's going on in classes	1
	understands purpose/relevance of material	1
course assessments	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	1
different learning styles	group work	2



Table 11 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
enjoys being busy/involved	enjoys being part of a team/similar group	1
Family	family is busy/involved	1
	independent/"sticks to self" at home	2
	mom had at young age	1
	only mom at home	1
Grading	needs to be partially based on effort	1
	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing	1
has goals	altruistic motives/goals	1
	set goals as a means	1
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	1
high parent expectations	good behavior	1
	good grades	1
Individual	ability to improve/adapt	1
	change/transition is difficult	1
	control of emotions	1
	likes to learn new things	1
	mature, level-headed	2
	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	1
	motivated/inspired by others	1
	music and art as source of motivation/interest	1
	persistence	1
	resiliency/grit	1
	self-motivated	1
lack of parental support/involvement	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient	1
negative perception of standardized tests	hard to focus, too long	1
opinion of school	likes school (HS)	1
parents	parent did not complete HS	1
peer/friends	has small group of good friends	1
	positive friend influence/support	4
	social aspect of HS	1

Table 11 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
	strong peer/friend ties at school	3
positive opinion of classes/teachers	positive interactions w/teachers	1
previous school/academic experiences	changed schools/systems	1
	history of liking school	1
	learns easily	1
	no perception of previous struggles	1
	things got more difficult in MS	1
	was picked on when younger	1
pushes through frustration/difficulty	if something he/she really wants/is interested in	1
school climate/culture	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
	likes coming to this school	1
	positive environment	1
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	1
	caring adults in school	2
school/academic	school support	1
self-aware	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	1
social aspect of HS	HS social problems	1
standardized assessments	negative perception of standardized tests	1
	teachers can't fully prepare students for stand tests	1
transition to HS struggles	realization of having to work more	1
view of success	being content	2
work ethic	likes a challenge	1
other	economically disadvantaged	
	overall average grades	
	was involved in ROTC	
	overall good attendance but missing time is unexcused	
	good behavior	
	teachers report moderate to good/high levels of engagement	

Table 11 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	English teachers notes she participates when interested and	
	is very intelligent and respectful	

*Student Ten.*

Table 12: Student 10, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

Parent code	Code	#
causes for feeling unmotivated & disengaged from school	being "talked down to"	1
	feels like no one believe in him/her	1
changed schools/systems	moved/changed schools a lot	1
Classes	doesn't like asking for help/do things in front of class	3
	likes class(es) that have perceived use/application	1
	neg perception of class if doesn't like/doesn't understand	1
	not very aware of/involved in what's going on in class	2
	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"	1
course assessments	doesn't feel he/she is a good test taker	1
	doesn't usually prepare/feel prepared	2
different learning styles	hands-on, physically active	1
doesn't do homework	distracted/forgets	1
	doesn't understand	1
family problems, conflict	feelings of not being wanted or shame from parents	2
	negative/discouraging comments from parent(s)	3
family/home	changes in dynamics, structure	1
	only one parent at home	1
grading	involved/aware of performance	1
	neg infl - perception of strict, punitive grading	1

Table 12 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
has goals	not confident about being able to achieve goals	1
	set goals as a means	1
	willing to sacrifice	2
	willing to work	1
home	family problems, conflict	1
	things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress	3
individual	bottles emotions up, does not always control well	1
	doesn't know if or what interested in	2
	easily frustrated and likely to give up	2
	music and/or art as source of motivation/interest	1
	negative mindset	6
	no real sense of control of life or future	4
	no real/tangible goals	1
	not very involved/a part of school/other activities	1
	won't really ask for help	1
lack of parental support/involvement	is discouraging	1
motivated/inspired by others	somewhat lazy and not self-motivated	1
negative mindset	feelings of depression	1
	low self-confidence	2
negative peer behavior	feels more pressure & judging in HS	3
negative peer/friend pressure/influence	very affected by friend/peer issues	3
opinion of school	school is hard	1
parents	lack of parental support/involvement	2
	parent(s) did not complete HS	1
	parent(s) unable/don't know what to do to help	1
peer/friends	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	3
	positive friend influence/support	1
previous academic struggle(s)	perceived problem with learning	3
previous school/academic experiences	changed schools/systems	1

Table 12 cont.

	like early grade levels	2
resiliency/grit	trying to push through	1
school climate/culture	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
	neg peer behavior as it affects school climate	1
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	2
	caring adults in school	3
	teacher support	1
school/academic	grades as goal/motivator	1
	school support	3
social aspect of HS	HS social problems	3
	transition to HS issues	2
	trying to distance self from neg people/situations/infl	1
standardized assessments	negative perception of standardized tests	1
view of success	doing what you have to get by	1
	no clear picture/idea for success	2
Other	low academic grades w/course failures	
	poor attendance	
	behavioral issues w/skipping and peer conflict	
	low to moderate levels of engagement in classes	
	is respectful to staff	
	English teacher has gotten very involved & she is working more for her	

*Student Eleven.*

Table 13: Student 11, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
Other	positive reinforcement/recognition	1
Classes	completes homework	1
	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important	2
	likes class(es) that have perceived use/application	1
	satisfaction/motivation in completing work/doing it well	1
	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"	1
cultural influence	race/ethnicity	1
	religion	1
different learning styles	hands-on, physically active	1
doesn't usually prepare/feel prepared	crams for short-term retention	1
family/home	defensive/protective of family	1
	family as source of motivation	2
	family support	1
	lives with guardian other than parent(s)	1
Grading	involved/aware of performance	1
	positive perception of course grading	1
	prefers tangible, in hand feedback	1
has goals	altruistic motives/goals	1
	set goals as a means	1
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	2
has small group of good friends	friends are very important, like family	1
high parent expectations	good behavior	1
Individual	bottles emotions up, does not always control well	2
	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	1
	motivated/inspired by others	1

Table 13 cont.

Parent code	Code	#
	music and/or art as source of motivation/interest	1
	no real/tangible goals	1
	not very involved/a part of school/other activities	1
	persistence	1
	positive mindset	1
	sense of control/autonomy	1
	wants positive reputation/notoriety	1
	willing to ask for help	3
lack of parental support/involvement	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient	2
negative perception of standardized tests	hard to focus, too long	1
not very aware of/involved in what's going on in class	doesn't always pay good attention in all classes	1
opinion of school	likes school (HS)	1
	school is important	1
	values school/learning as an opportunity	4
Parents	parent(s) did not complete HS	2
	parent/guardian ability to help	1
peer/friends	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	1
	very guarded about friends/being hurt by friends	2
previous school/academic experiences	consistency in schools attended	1
	like early grade levels	1
	no perception of previous struggles	1
	transition to HS struggles	1
pushes through frustration/difficulty	if something he/she really wants/is interested in	1
school climate/culture	feeling of belonging	1
	feels safe	1
	likes coming to this school	1
	positive environment	1
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	1
	caring adults in school	1

Table 13 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
school/academic	grades as goal/motivator	2
	school support	2
self-aware	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	1
self-regulation	finding balance	1
standardized assessments	neg perception of standardized tests	1
view of success	no clear picture/idea for success	1
work ethic	goal to work harder and do better	3
Other	economically disadvantaged; minority	
	lives between grandparents & mother	
	mother had him at young age; has been in & out of prison	
	low course grades w/some failures	
	poor attendance	
	several office referrals previous year	
	moderate levels of engagement in class on avg	
	is polite and respectful to staff	

*Student Twelve.*

Table 14: Student 12, Initial and Axial Codes, Preliminary Categories

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
other	positive reinforcement/recognition	1
bottles emotions up, does not always control well	may take emotions/anger out on others	1
causes for feeling unmotivated & disengaged from school	depression, difficult situations	1
	not being involved or "in the flow" of things	1
Classes	content to do most of work & get passing grade	1
	doesn't do homework	1
	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important	3



Table 14 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
Classes	knows what's going on in classes	1
	likes class(es) that have perceived use/application	1
	neg perception of class if doesn't like/doesn't understand	1
	not very aware of/involved in what's going on in class	1
	shuts down if disagrees with/doesn't like teacher	1
course assessments	doesn't usually prepare/feel prepared	1
cultural influence	no particular cultural influence	1
different learning styles	hands-on, physically active	2
	prefers active learning	1
difficulties in math starting in MS	feels had 2 ineffective/indifferent teachers	1
doesn't do homework	distracted/forgets	1
family/home	both parents at home	1
	close family	1
	family support	1
	independent/"sticks to self" at home or isn't home much	1
Grading	does not keep up with grades/performance	2
	positive perception of course grading	1
has goals	short term goals	1
	willing to sacrifice	1
	willing to work	2
high parent expectations	good behavior	1
	good grades	1
	good work ethic	1
Individual	change/transition is difficult	1
	determined	3
	easily frustrated and likely to give up	1
	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested	3
	music and/or art as source of motivation/interest	1

Table 14 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
	not very involved/a part of school/other activities	1
	self-aware	1
	self-motivated	1
	sense of control/autonomy	3
	won't really ask for help	2
lack of parental support/involvement	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient	2
negative peer behavior	impacts class performance/behavior	1
negative peer/friend pressure/influence	views self as less patient, nice now (w/peers)	1
opinion of school	changed/became less relevant after not invl/motiv by ROTC	1
	doesn't like having to get up to come to HS	2
	feels like HS is redundant & pointless	3
	neutral opinion of school	1
	values/views school/learning as means/opportunity	2
parental involvement	early on but not as student has gotten older	1
parents	parent(s) did not complete HS	1
	parent(s) unable/don't know what to do to help	1
peer/friends	functions/makes decisions independently	2
	has small group of good friends	1
	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	1
	positive friend influence/support	1
positive friend influence/support	supportive, loyal friends	1
previous academic struggle(s)	difficulties in math starting in MS	1
	perceived problem with learning	1
previous school/academic experiences	changed schools/systems	2
	like early grade levels	1

Table 14 cont.

<b>Parent code</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>#</b>
	previous academic struggle(s)	1
	things got more difficult/opinion changed in MS	1
school climate/culture	feels safe	1
	neg peer behavior as it affects school climate	1
	no sense of belonging	2
school support	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	1
	caring adults in school	2
	courtesy	1
	teacher support	1
	teachers do not engage w/student/try to get to know	1
school/academic	school support	1
standardized assessments	gets nervous about/lots of pressure on standardized tests	1
	negative perception of standardized tests	1
teacher support	has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected/supported	3
view of success	doing what you have to get by	1
work ethic	goal to work harder and do better	2
Other	economically disadvantaged	
	typically low grades, low engagement in most classes	
	works harder, more engaged in Welding	
	good overall attendance	
	history of behavior disengagement - skipping, tardies, not attending disciplinary assignment	
	respectful to staff	
	gets along with peers	

### **Phase Three**

#### **End of Term Student Data and Teacher Report Information.**

At the end of the quarter, the researcher gathered a final listing of individual student attendance, behavior, and academic data (see Appendix G). Attendance trends like number of absences, any skipped classes, excused or unexcused absences, check outs, and tardies were noted. Behavioral data was tracked through any discipline referrals to the office that students received during this nine week period. The academic data was in the form of comprehensive progress reports pulled from the school electronic data system for each of the student's teachers. Each of the students' teachers was again asked to complete a Teacher Engagement Report Form (see Appendix E).

#### **Sample Final Questionnaire.**

As a follow-up to the mid-term student interview, the researcher administered a short answer questionnaire through a Google Form (see Appendix F) and the end of the nine week period. Participants were asked to respond to a series of shorter, follow-up questions regarding their current perceptions of school and factors influencing their engagement. Students were offered a choice of typing their answers or electronically submitting an audio or video file of their answers. Eleven of twelve students participated in completing this questionnaire, and all chose to submit responses through the Google Form platform.

#### **Summary.**

The various sets of descriptive data—attendance, behavior, academics—were collected to examine in comparison and in contrast with the end-of-term short answer questionnaire (see Appendix F), and the final teacher report forms (see Appendix G) to

again see if and how student perceptions of their engagement and influences on engagement align with their actual performance and teacher perspectives.

***Group 1: Should Be Engaged and Are***

Table 15: Phase Three Final Analysis – Group 1

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Positive perception of classes and teachers</li> <li>-Has goals</li> <li>-Negative perception of peer behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-All A's</li> <li>-on Yearbook staff</li> </ul>	Good to high levels of engagement in classes
Student 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Likes school</li> <li>-Values school as an opportunity</li> <li>-Workload/ expectations can be stressful</li> <li>-Notes affect of negative peer behavior – “drama”</li> <li>-Likes to be challenged</li> <li>-Likes learning</li> <li>-Positive perception of teachers – competency and support</li> <li>-Enjoys being around peers with similar interests and goals</li> <li>-Learning/academic experience improved in high school</li> <li>-Has short-term goals, long-term goals, and goals that are tangible</li> <li>-Positive perception of this school</li> <li>-Positive school environment – support and courtesy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good attendance – missed 5 days for quarter but were excused</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-All A's and 1 B</li> <li>-3 of 4 classes are Honors/Advanced level</li> </ul>	High levels of engagement in classes

Table 15 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Positive friend influence and support</li> <li>-Parental support and motivation</li> <li>-Involved in activities</li> <li>-Would promote more school involvement opportunities and higher levels of involvement for peers</li> <li>-Would like more respect among all students</li> </ul>		
Student 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Focus on school and academics</li> <li>-Views school as an opportunity</li> <li>-Ability to see big picture</li> <li>-Willing to persevere in order to accomplish goals</li> <li>-Stress to meet rigor, workload, and expectations of advanced level courses</li> <li>-Involved/interested in classes</li> <li>-Aware of course performance</li> <li>-Grades as goal/motivator</li> <li>-Feels rushed to finish material in classes due to end-of-term state testing</li> <li>-Positive friend influence and support</li> <li>-Has high standards for self and self-confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-All A's</li> <li>-All Honors/Advanced level courses</li> </ul>	Very high levels of engagement in classes

Table 15 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Resilient in negative situations</li> <li>-Perception of negative peer behavior</li> <li>-Positive teacher interactions and support</li> <li>-Has specific teachers that have connected/ supported</li> <li>-Belief that if others were pushed/held to higher standards, they could achieve more</li> </ul>		
Summary/Themes (Includes All Descriptive Data and Teacher Reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Positive view of classes and teachers</li> <li>-Motivated by grades</li> <li>-Has specific goals – short-term, long-term</li> <li>-Self-aware</li> <li>-Determined</li> <li>-Views school as an opportunity</li> <li>-Positive friend influence/support</li> <li>-Teacher/adult support</li> <li>-Benefit of being involved in something</li> <li><i>-Negative perception of peer behavior</i></li> <li><i>-Workload of classes and meeting high expectations, set by self and in classes, can be stressful</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-High grades</li> <li>-Mostly Honors/ Advanced level courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-High levels of engagement in classes</li> <li>-Class grades tend to coincide with reported levels of engagement in class</li> </ul>

\*items in italics represent areas that negatively influence or are a potentially negative influence on students' levels of engagement

***Group 2: Should Be Engaged and Are Not***

Table 16: Phase Three Final Analysis – Group 2

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-High level of stress from workload and expectations from self and advanced courses</li> <li>-Positive overall perception of classes</li> <li>-Stress of workload/homework</li> <li>-Stress of finding balance with workload, activities, and friends</li> <li>-Determined and persevering</li> <li>-Has goals</li> <li>-Notes not having “clear direction yet” (Appendix F, Student 4)</li> <li>-Teacher support</li> <li>-Positive interactions with teachers/adults</li> <li>-Sometimes feels “isolated within the school environment” (Appendix F, Student 4)</li> <li>-Likes/enjoys school activities/events</li> <li>-Would like more school involvement opportunities and higher levels of involvement for peers</li> <li>-Would like more respect among all students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-All A’s</li> <li>-All Honors/Advanced level courses</li> </ul>	Very high levels of engagement in classes



Table 16 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Overall positive perception of school</li> <li>-Positive perception of classes</li> <li>-Recognizes need to work harder</li> <li>-Goals are attainable with hard work</li> <li>-Positive perception of teachers</li> <li>-Overall positive perception with peers</li> <li>-Feels safe at school</li> <li>-Feels school building itself could be cleaner</li> <li>-Has high personal standards that determine views and attitude</li> <li>-Wants larger selection in course offerings</li> <li>-Wants more accessibility to extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-High A in Alg II and 1 B in English</li> <li>- grades reported at time of collection</li> <li>-1 Advanced level course</li> <li>-in Band</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Very high levels of engagement in Alg II class</li> <li>-Good to high levels reported in band</li> <li>-low to moderate levels reported in AP English III</li> </ul>
Student 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Less workload now than 1<sup>st</sup> semester</li> <li>-Positive perception of classes</li> <li>-“Bad or rough days” affect her effort at school (Appendix F, Student 6)</li> <li>-Has goals – short-term, long-term</li> <li>-Positive perception of teachers</li> <li>-Teacher support</li> <li>-Made friends</li> <li>changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Overall good attendance – 1 unex absence and 2 unex tardies</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-A’s in Art and Psychology; B in Biology; failing grade in English II</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good to high levels of engagement in Art except for “Persists on more challenging tasks”</li> <li>-Moderate to good levels of engagement in Biology and Psychology</li> <li>-Low to moderate levels of engagement in English – low in participation,</li> </ul>

Table 16 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Better, more positive friend influence</li> <li>-Feels safe</li> <li>-Thinks length of school day is too long and affects student engagement</li> </ul>		<p>persisting on challenging tasks, effort, and being self-motivated</p>
Summary/Themes (Includes All Descriptive Data and Teacher Reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>High level of stress from workload and meeting expectations of self and advanced courses (length of school day)</i></li> <li>-<i>Stress of finding balance with workload, activities and friends (1 student very involved)</i></li> <li>-Has goals, <i>but may not be clearly defined</i></li> <li>-Recognizes need to work harder</li> <li>-<i>Stress and/or other outside issues affect attitude and/or effort</i></li> <li>-<i>Negative peer/friend influence and issues</i></li> <li>-Overall positive perception of school</li> <li>-Positive school environment</li> <li>-Teacher support</li> <li>*1 student not involved in any activities</li> <li>*1 student only in band:</li> <li>-<i>Would like more accessibility to extra-curricular activities</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-Mostly good grades</li> <li>-Lower grades in more challenging classes and/or class perceived as less interesting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mostly good to high levels of engagement perceived by teachers in classes</li> <li>-Class grades tend to coincide with reported levels of engagement in class</li> <li>except: one student had lower levels reported for his AP English course</li> <li>-One student had higher levels in classes she perceived as more interesting and/or in which she felt she had more ability while levels were low in her other classes (Appendix H, Student #6, lines 252-256)</li> </ul>

Table 16 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Summary/Themes (Includes All Descriptive Data and Teacher Reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Wants larger selection in course offerings</li> <li>-Peers need to be more respectful to each other and, in general, more involved in school activities</li> </ul>		

\*items in italics represent areas that negatively influence or are a potentially negative influence on students' levels of engagement

### ***Group 3: Should Not Be Engaged and Are***

Table 17: Phase Three Final Analysis – Group 3

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“School is okay” (Appendix F, Student 7)</li> <li>-Just getting through rest of year</li> <li>-Positive perception of classes</li> <li>-Class goals: keeping up with work and getting a C or better</li> <li>-Not always “in the mood” for school but keeps working (Appendix F, Student 7)</li> <li>-Has goals – short-term, long-term</li> <li>-Goals as means</li> <li>-Interested in welding</li> <li>-“Teachers are okay” (Appendix F, Student 7)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Economically disadvantaged</li> <li>-Average to good grades</li> <li>-Best grades (100 at final) in Principles of Manufacturing – said was interested in Welding (Appendix F, Student 7)</li> <li>-Lowest grade in English (D) – missing assignments, 2 low test grades</li> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Average to good levels of engagement reported by English and US History teachers w/1 low report on “is self-motivated” and high in attendance, participation, respectfulness, and effort in history</li> <li>-low to good levels in ROTC: high in getting along with peers, attendance, and respectful; low in participation, effort, and self-motivation</li> <li>-high levels of engagement</li> </ul>

Table 17 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Feels school environment could be better</li> <li>-Feels he needs to be dedicated and try his hardest at school</li> <li>-Wants more fun, interesting, school involvement activities</li> </ul>		<p>reported in Principles of Manufacturing class</p> <p>*self-reported area of interest (Appendix F, Student 7)</p>
Student 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Likes school overall</li> <li>-Feels like some teachers could handle situations in class better and not make “students feel uncomfortable” (Appendix F, Student 8)</li> <li>-Would like more accessibility to class information, work, and performance other than electronically</li> <li>-Overall good perception of classes and teachers</li> <li>-Effort in school depends on mood but tries to keep working</li> <li>-Has goals – short-term, long-term, goals are tangible</li> <li>-Feels teachers are in a rush and do not have time to make sure students understand due to end-of-term state testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Economically disadvantaged</li> <li>-Fair attendance – 7 unex absences, 6 tardies early, 2 days showing skipped class(es)</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-Grades: 1 D (Cosm), 1 C (Geometry), and 2 As (Biology &amp; PE)</li> <li>-Missing work in math and 2 low grades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good levels of engagement reported for Biology and PE</li> <li>-Low to moderate levels reported in Geometry – good in getting along with peers and respectfulness to staff</li> </ul>

Table 17 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Positive perception of peers</li> <li>-Good school environment – safe, fun</li> <li>-Family support/ motivation</li> <li>-Friend support/ motivation</li> <li>-Would like incentives for reaching goals, something to look forward to/work toward leading up to ultimate goal of graduation</li> </ul>		
Student 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Overall positive view of school</li> <li>-Positive attitude</li> <li>-Generally good perception of classes</li> <li>-Would like more friends in her classes</li> <li>-Enjoys learning if it is interesting and useful</li> <li>-Works hard regardless</li> <li>-Goals to “make it through high school” and “find a career that fits me and is worth doing” (Appendix F, Student 9)</li> <li>-Likes most of teachers; again, works/learns regardless</li> <li>-Sticks to small group of close friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Economically disadvantaged</li> <li>-Generally good attendance – 3 unexcused absences, 5 unexcused tardies</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-Grades: 3 Cs (English II – reflects several missing assignments, Wellness – 3 zeros, and Geometry – 3 missing assignments) and 1 A (Biology)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good to high levels of engagement reported in all classes</li> </ul>

Table 17 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 9	<p>-Positive perception of school environment</p> <p>-Positive friend influence/support/motivation</p> <p>-“I would set up small rally like things for people with similar interests to go to throughout the course of the year; it could help others, who need friends, find people they enjoy being around. And I would probably tell others to find a group of friends that makes them happy and keep them motivated; because, even if the relationships don't last past high school they still would be effected, hopefully positively, by their presence in life.”</p> <p>(Appendix F, Student 9)</p>		
Summary/Themes (Includes All Descriptive Data and Teacher Reports)	<p>-Generally positive perceptions of school, school environment, classes, and peers</p> <p>-Has goals – to graduate, long-term, tangible, purpose - “find a career that fits me and is worth doing”</p>	<p>-Economically disadvantaged</p> <p>-Mostly good attendance</p> <p>-Good behavior</p> <p>-Average to good grades</p>	<p>-Class grades tend to coincide with reported levels of engagement in class</p>

Table 17 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Summary/Themes (Includes All Descriptive Data and Teacher Reports)	(Appendix F, Student 9) -Knows what he/she is interested in -Works hard regardless of view of teacher or interest level <i>-Effort in school depends on mood</i> but keeps working -Determined, good work ethic -Enjoys learning <i>if it is interesting and useful</i> -friend support/ motivation -Students need to be connected to a group with similar interests, for positive affect, and motivation *see quote for Student 9 -Benefit of being involved in something *see quote for Student 9 <i>-Wants more fun, interesting, school involvement activities</i>		

\*items in italics represent areas that negatively influence or are a potentially negative influence on students' levels of engagement

**Group 4: Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not**

Table 18: Phase Three Final Analysis – Group 4

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Dislikes school because of trouble with focus/getting distracted leading to low grades</li> <li>-Does not mind the teachers or the work</li> <li>-On rare occasions she likes coming to school and does get her work completed</li> <li>-Is interested in some of her classes and does not like others at all</li> <li>-Perception of learning struggles</li> <li>-Stress and many problems with friends and/or family affect her level of effort at school</li> <li>-Goal to graduate and “make something better of myself” (Appendix F, Student 10)</li> <li>-Interested in and likes cosmetology</li> <li>-Good teacher support but does not like some of them on a personal level, but states she “always treats them with respect” because of their efforts to help (Appendix F, Student 10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Economically disadvantaged</li> <li>-Skipped 1 or more classes on 6 different days, 5 unexcused absences, 3 excused absences, 6 tardies, and 2 check outs</li> <li>-No behavior referrals</li> <li>-a C in Wellness, and failing grades in Eng, US History, and Cosmetology reflecting several missing assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Low to moderate levels of engagement reported for English with high level for “gets along with peers” and low for attendance, persisting on challenging tasks, effort, and self-motivation</li> <li>-Moderate to good levels of engagement reported in Wellness with a low score for participation</li> <li>-Very low levels reported in US History with a moderate score for respectfulness to staff</li> </ul>



Table 18 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 10	<p>-Negative perception of peers – “very judging” (Appendix F, Student 10)</p> <p>-Thinks school is dirty</p> <p>-School environment and the way she is treated (judging) affect her feelings and attitude toward school</p>		
Student 11	<p>*student did not complete the questionnaire</p>	<p>-Economically disadvantaged</p> <p>-5 absences (4 unexcused), 5 excused check outs, and 1 skipped class</p> <p>-Suspended 3 days for Insubordination</p> <p>-Cs in Biology, Media Production, and Understanding Music reflecting few missing assignments a few low quiz/test grades</p> <p>-Very low failing grade in English – 10 missing assignments</p>	<p>-Moderate to good levels of engagement reported in Biology with a low score for “seems interested in school”</p> <p>-Low levels reported in English with good scores for “gets along with peers” and respectfulness to staff</p>
Student 12	<p>-Perceives recent work at school as repetitive and boring and that “it’s all important to review to pass tests and all” (Appendix F, Student 12)</p> <p>-Does not always view class content/activities as useful and,</p>	<p>-Economically disadvantaged</p> <p>-Self-reported low levels of engagement</p> <p>-Good attendance</p> <p>-Good behavior</p> <p>-3 failing grades in English III (68%), Alg IIB (56%), and Marketing</p>	<p>-Very low levels of engagement reported in Marketing but with good scores for “gets along with peers” and good attendance</p> <p>-Low to good scores reported for Algebra with</p>

Table 18 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Student 12	<p>therefore, does not pay good attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Future goal of military</li> <li>-Perceives teachers as “nice” but “don’t care if you’re happy or bored”</li> </ul> <p>(Appendix F, Student 12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Experiences some negative peer behavior (drama) somewhat regularly</li> <li>-Feels physical school environment could be improved</li> <li>-Does not see the need or importance in learning beyond “the basics” because he won’t need it in the future</li> </ul> <p>(Appendix F, Student 12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Would like upgrades to welding equipment because “that is a valuable skill”</li> </ul> <p>(Appendix F, Student 12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Values learning and skills that are applicable and will get students jobs</li> <li>-Would like more options in skill-based course offerings (i.e., auto-mechanics)</li> </ul>	<p>(22%) reflecting many zeros and low grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-94% in Welding II</li> </ul>	<p>higher scores being for getting along with peers, good attendance, and respectfulness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Welding and English report good to high levels except for low scores in English for appropriate effort and self-motivation</li> </ul>

Table 18 cont.

	<b>End-of-Term Questionnaire</b>	<b>Final Descriptive Data</b>	<b>Final Teacher Reports</b>
Summary/Themes (Includes All Descriptive Data and Teacher Reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>Stress and/or other outside issues affect attitude and/or effort</i></li> <li>-<i>School environment (climate or physical) and peer behavior (judging) affect feelings and attitude toward school</i></li> <li>-<i>Perception of learning struggles – comprehension/focus</i></li> <li>-Motivated to work and/or pay attention in class if perceived as interesting</li> <li>-Interests include hands-on learning/ activities</li> <li>-General like of teachers, <i>but feel some do not care about/work to engage students</i></li> <li>-<i>Perceives much of HS academic classwork as redundant, not interesting, not important past the basics, and geared toward passing tests</i></li> <li>-Values learning and skills that are applicable and will get students jobs</li> <li>-Goal to graduate</li> <li>-Long-term goals include military and cosmetology school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Economically disadvantaged</li> <li>-2 students with poor attendance, a few disciplinary issues (skipping, suspension) and low or failing grades</li> <li>-1 student with good attendance and behavior with 3 failing grades but a high final average for Welding II</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Majority of class grades tend to coincide with reported levels of engagement in class</li> <li>-Moderate to good scores for “gets along with peers” and “is respectful to staff”</li> <li>-Mostly low scores in “seems interested in school”, “is self-motivated” (2 of 3 students)</li> <li>-Low to moderate scores in other areas</li> </ul>

\*items in italics represent areas that negatively influence or are a potentially negative influence on students’ levels of engagement

Comprehensive, final analysis of major themes from all collected data will follow in Chapter V with discussion of findings, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### **Discussion of Findings**

As previously discussed in Chapter III, the intended result of this study was to construct a hierarchy of influences that positively or negatively impact students' behavioral, emotional, and/or cognitive engagement. The resulting data analysis (see Chapter III and Appendix J) produced theories of how students view various personal and external factors affecting levels of engagement regarding positive, negative, and potentially negative influences on these levels and the relationships among these factors.

#### **Comparison and Contrast of the Four Engagement Groups.**

This section will discuss the comparison and contrast of major themes from each of the engagement category Groups 1-4 (see Appendix J) to better extrapolate primary themes as they relate to groups of students who, for example, should or should not be engaged and are, or students who, whether they should or should not be, are not engaged emotionally, behaviorally, and/or cognitively in their high school learning environments. These findings were derived from student interview transcriptions (See Appendix H), a compiled analysis of all student data (See Appendix I), and the final analysis of emerging themes (see Appendix J).

#### ***Group 1: Should Be Engaged and Are.***

Group 1 contains three students who should be engaged in school and are (Appendix J, pgs. 414-415), by definition based on research, descriptive data, and self-report. Two of the three Group 1 students are not economically disadvantaged, and all of

them have both parents at home and reported parents that are very involved in their lives, have high expectations for them, and provide a strong source of motivation and accountability. One student discussed specific motivation from her parents stating:

“Like my dad, he sends my brother and I text messages every morning saying ‘I’m proud of you’ and stuff like that. And he rewards me for my good grades...so my parents motivate me...” (Appendix H, Student 1, lines 15-17).

These Group 1 students are involved in one or more structured, demanding activities such as band, athletics, dance, the Yearbook staff, and National Honor Society. They reported enjoying being involved and voiced that their interests and involvements serve as motivation in addition to the already high standards and expectations they have set for themselves. The parental influences and high expectations have driven specific goal-setting for the short-term and long-term, goals that are tangible, and show an obvious means to attain the futures these students have envisioned for themselves.

In addition, Group 1 students have a history of liking school, especially elementary, and perceive to learn easily. They expressed that middle school was the time they became more academically serious, gained confidence, and began setting goals and paths for themselves. Again, they recounted high levels of parental involvement, support, communication with teachers, modeling of good work ethic, and motivation. One female student discussed the modeling and accountability with her mom stating, “...my mom has always taught me to like finish my homework, finish this...Make sure that I’m doing the right thing” (Appendix H, Student 2, lines 66-67). This group showed a high level of self-awareness of interests, motivators, abilities, weaknesses, and confidence in their abilities to learn and/or succeed. Two of the three students are enrolled in all honors or Advanced

Placement courses but did note that sometimes the workload of these types of courses coupled with their activity involvement could get stressful. Despite high expectations, course workload, and outside activities, these Group 1 students exhibited the ability to self-regulate with time management, focus, finding personal balance, and controlling their emotions appropriately. They maintained a positive mindset and showed a resiliency to the difficulties of the expectations, workload, and social aspects of high school. They expressed a high level of determination to achieve and work through difficult or frustrating situations. They also described a sense of having control and personal autonomy, independence, self-motivation, and a very strong work ethic. The Group 1 students felt they had friend groups of like-minded students with high standards and similar goals who were a positive and helpful source of influence and support.

These factors and traits carried over into student perceptions of various aspects of academic culture. Group 1 students viewed school as important and as an opportunity for setting and achieving goals. They maintained positive perceptions of their classes and teachers and expressed a high level of awareness, involvement, and interest in their individual classes. They recounted being taught and understanding the purpose and relevance of various content; they had a desire to know and liked to learn the reasons and explanations behind new learning as well as any application for the content. These Group 1 students recognized and discussed the need and preference for differentiating instruction and different learning styles specifically referencing group work, being visual learners, and active engagement in tasks in class. A strong theme emerged from their sentiments: being an active learner helped understanding and confidence. In addition, as was found true for all groups, grades served as a motivator in school and, particularly for

this group, as a main goal. Assessment performance, whether course assessments or state standardized assessments, did not seem to be a source of concern for these students as they all expressed feeling adequately or more than adequately prepared for them. The sentiment emerged that the function of assessment was to collect information on student learning/performance and to identify areas in which a student may need help. These students in Group 1 did, however, express a negative perception of state standardized tests and recognized that they were stressful; furthermore, they felt that teachers were often under constraints which prevented them from being able to fully prepare all students. These students had a very positive perception of this school and school environment overall and said they felt safe and knew they had a place or places to foster a sense of belonging. They acknowledged a strong support system of caring adults in the building who often interacted with them and a good sense of overall school support. Evidence of these factors and influences also showed in their consistently good attendance, behavior at school, and high academic performance.

***Group 2: Should Be Engaged and Are Not.***

In comparison and contrast with the Group 1 students are the Group 2 students (Appendix J, pgs. 416-417) who research and descriptive data showed should be engaged but other descriptive data and self-report show evidence that they are not. All students in Group 2 live at home with both parents and none are economically disadvantaged. Two of these Group 2 students were very similar in description to the students mentioned above in the first grouping. They were enrolled in advanced level courses, had very high expectations for self and from parents and teachers, and recognized specific goals and views of success. Both of these Group 2 students had a good sense of self-awareness in



interests, motivators, abilities, when to ask for help, and one student admitted he knew he struggled with laziness. They are both involved in activities, but one student felt a certain tiredness from having been so highly involved in band for so long. They shared a positive perception and liking of school in general and of learning new things. These two Group 2 students felt they were very involved in classes and aware of what was being taught and their performance levels in class. Both stated to be driven by grades and that while assessments could be a little stressful sometimes, they felt prepared for them overall. They also recognized assessment as a tool for information about learning and performance.

These two Group 2 students reported a history of liking school, especially the elementary grades where learning was more active, and they perceived to learn easily. They felt their parents had been very supportive and involved throughout their school experiences and that they had modeled good habits and work ethic for them. One student of these Group 2 students noted that she started becoming more self-sufficient in high school and that her parents' familiarity with her teachers and confidence in her ability level were reasons that they were not as directly involved as when she was younger. Both of these students reported that their parents had college degrees. They also described friend groups of similar ability levels, standards, and goals that were a positive source of influence and support.

For one of these two Group 2 students, however, the difference from the first group seemed to appear after several references to the extreme stress and struggle at times of keeping up with the workload from the advanced level courses and meeting the

expectations placed on her both from herself and others. When asked the first question about her impression of school in general, her first response was:

“...I guess for me it’s been a little...bit tougher just cause of the honors and AP kinda path, it’s been a lot of hard work. And a little bit more stressful especially with high school that I had anticipated...” (Appendix H, Student 4, lines 3-5).

This theme was prevalent throughout the interview referring many times to stress and workload (Appendix H, Student 4, lines 4-5, 10-12, 20-22, 31-33, 35-36, 48-49, 80-81, 137-139, 155-156, 159-160, 181-182, 186-188, 191-192, 258-261). In response to the question about goals for now and after high school, she stated that “...right now, there’s just to graduate without completely losing my head with stress” (Appendix H, Student 4, line 48-49). Overall, she seemed to struggle to find balance at times between workload, activities and friends and described a low resiliency to these stressors when workloads were high or multiple stressors such as upcoming quizzes or tests were present at one time. While trying to be more independent, she often struggled with being overwhelmed by all of the demands school and her personal interests had placed on her. This seemed to cause an ebb and flow in her sense of engagement depending on her stress levels and workload at any given time as indicated in her response to the final question about why she self-reported as not engaged:

“I think that was a rough day anyway, that might be why, but as far as...I do, there are definitely times where I do feel very engaged and, but there are also...there are just highs and lows, I guess, and...but there are definitely times when...it doesn’t work...”

(Interviewer) So just the stress? As that comes and goes, it plays a greater impact?

Yeah, that's it...and I don't get engaged very easily if I'm learning something that I have no interest in...I take notes and write it down, but I can't get engaged at all, because of that I have no idea what's going on, I just know what to do, but I don't know why I'm doing it" (Appendix H, Student 4, lines 328-342).

The second of these Group 2 students also portrayed a positive home environment with a close family and good support system but described a somewhat controlling and over-bearing parent. This student detailed long-term hearing issues and a struggle with OCD. He previously received special services and recounted that his father had been very involved throughout his academic life and could often be very controlling and "pushy" about things. When asked about his sense of control over his future and ability to be successful, he replied, "Somewhat because I gotta a dad that's very controlling. He's very picky..." (Appendix H, Student 5, line 18). He admitted struggling with laziness, not being very self-motivated, feeling unmotivated toward tasks he was disinterested in, and not being very self-sufficient with responses like:

"more motivated by other people like when I see somebody else that's doing their best and they're trying to work hard and that makes me want to do that, but typically I'm kind of a lazy person, so I'm not necessarily self-motivated," "...if it's something I'm really interested in, then I'm determined about I'll keep trying, but if it's something I don't really feel like matters too much or I'm not really interested then I just might let it go..." and "I don't feel really like I'm as part of school stuff as I should be" (Appendix H, Student 5 lines 34-36, 48-50, 25).

He also said that he felt through elementary and middle school that learning and school work had been fairly easy for him and that he knew he needed to do better at

working harder and becoming more independent. When asked about any perceived changes in himself through his school journey, he responded, "...when I started realizing that around sophomore year that things aren't handed to you, like you have to work for what you want...I started to realize that I can't just want it, I have to work for it" (Appendix H, Student 5, lines 130-134).

The third student in Group 2 shared similar demographics in that she lives at home with both parents and is not economically disadvantaged. Her differences from the other two in this group and the first group begin in parent and home descriptors. She recounted that her parents graduated high school, but, since her mom became pregnant with her older brother at a young age, neither attended any post-secondary training nor college, and she went straight to work. While she said her family was close and her parents were supportive and able to help, they had not been very involved as she has gotten older, and their expectations centered more on attendance and behavior. She exhibited lack of certainty or clarity about goals and lack of any real confidence about reaching them. She had previous academic issues and failures and several behavioral problems resulting in an alternative school placement. She expressed that some family issues and conflicts surfaced during middle school, and she started to have academic and social struggles. After small group settings and classwork modifications resulting from a previously held IEP, she felt isolated and had not developed a good work ethic because she could get by doing minimal work and did not set high expectations for herself. During this time this Group 2 student began to have some peer and social issues. She stated that while she felt she had close friends, they did not always provide positive support and influence, and she often found herself in distracting and negative social

situations or making poor choices. She also experienced painful situations with two close family members during this time that she said caused emotional stress and affected her ability to pay attention and engage in school. There had been family conflict throughout the last few years, and most recently her parents have experienced serious marital problems. She stated this greatly impacted her attitude and effort levels and, when coupled with her social and behavioral problems the year before, caused her to feel guilt and shame with her parents. She discussed having anger problems and that she often bottled emotions up and did not always deal with them appropriately. In high school, she did not always understand the grading practices and viewed some grading as strict and somewhat punitive instead of offering partial or effort credit. She exhibited a negative mindset regarding assessments and her ability to take tests stating she felt pressure and was affected by the distraction of those around her. She also felt uncomfortable asking for help in front of others and was more likely to sit silently instead of attempting to get help when needed. Her perceived level of involvement in class hinged on her feeling comfortable in that class and in her ability level as well as her enjoying and being interested in what they were doing (Appendix H, Student 6, lines 252-256). She felt teachers were selective in whom they helped, and she often did not get much feedback or support when she was struggling.

All in Group 2 exhibited satisfactory attendance, good behavior except for one student, and mostly average or above average grades. Lower grades were earned in more challenging classes and/or a class perceived as less interesting. Their teachers reported good to high levels of engagement with one student in Group 2 having a lower level reported in his Advanced Placement course and one student having higher levels in

classes she perceived as more interesting and/or in which she felt she had more ability while levels in her other classes were low.

***Group 3: Should Not Be Engaged and Are.***

Group 3, consisting of three students who should not be engaged but are (Appendix J, pgs. 418-419), share very similar demographic information: economically disadvantaged, at home with only a mother, parent(s) of two Group 3 students did not complete high school, and the mother of one student did graduate from high school but did not receive any post-secondary training. Students of Group 3 experienced changes in family dynamics and structure, changed schools and/or moved at various points in their school histories, and said they did not necessarily like school at first but liked it more now. They all reported high levels of independence, at first by circumstance and now somewhat by choice. While all expressed a lack of parental involvement, two students did feel they were generally supported at home. Two students of Group 3 discussed grandparents who were previously highly involved and influential in their lives regarding habits and expectations and attitude. These life experiences and circumstances seemed to produce an emerging theme as they talked about independence, maturity, a sense of self-awareness and control and autonomy as well as a resiliency, adaptability, balance, and a positive mindset similar to those in the first grouping that was helping them to set goals for themselves and be an active participant in their own futures. One student in Group 3 felt he was engaged because of his ability to handle change and adaptability stating "...it's about how you react to yourself and how you control yourself in the situations you're in" (Appendix H, Student 7, lines 501-502). Discussions of success and futures involved wanting to do better for one's self, be content, and feel a sense of

accomplishment. The goals were not necessarily high goals but were specific and practical, and students exhibited a strong willingness to work for that contentment and goal attainment. One student stated in the final questionnaire that her goal was to “find a career that fits me and is worth doing” (Appendix F, Student 9) Two of the Group 3 students discussed some previous struggles in school with academics, focus, behavior, and being picked on. The transition to high school seemed to be a more positive experience and opportunity for these students, and two reported becoming more motivated and serious upon starting high school.

With regard to academic culture, Group 3, similar to the Group 1, had generally positive perceptions of school, the school environment, classes, and their peers. They felt school was important and viewed it as an opportunity. Group 3 students perceived to enjoy and be engaged in learning if it was interesting and useful and/or if the student perceived that he or she was good at a particular task or topic. There was a general level of interest, involvement, and understanding of what went on in their classes, but they noted it was difficult to be engaged if they were not interested or did not find something to be important. One Group 3 student had a negative perception of classes when he felt like the information was not fun or he did not feel like he understood the material. Group 3 students, again, like the Group 1, recognized and valued different instructional and learning styles such as group work, hands-on activities, active/kinesthetic learning, and classes that were not monotonous. They were mostly motivated by grades and getting good grades but felt stress and pressure regarding assessments, and two Group 3 students had negative perceptions on state standardized tests. They had difficulty focusing on them, felt that they were too long, and believed that one test could not measure a

student's intelligence or character traits like work ethic. Their more recent course grades tended to coincide with their teacher reported levels of engagement in class which were generally good to average.

Overall, Group 3 students perceived a good level of teacher support and mentioned specific teachers or another adult in the building that they connected with or felt supported by. They reported positive and caring interactions with adults in the building, feeling safe, and a sense of belonging. One Group 3 student did feel like some teachers who may not know her well misjudge her quietness or make pre-judgments about her based on some of her friends. The students also made observations about social problems they witnessed or experienced at the high school level and the potential for affect by negative peer behavior. All Group 3 students, however, showed strong self-awareness and were confident in who they wanted to be.

The Group 3 students, while exhibiting maturity and high levels of independence, noted that others also motivated them, and they described positive friend groups and strong ties to peers at school. The sentiment overall revolved around having a small group of good friends who were a positive source of motivation. One Group 3 student, when asked about how his friend group may influence his attitude about school, stated that his friends and attitude make him "want to be able to connect to the things that are important" (Appendix H, Student 7, lines 203-204). All Group 3 students expressed the desire for more fun, interesting, school-wide activities for all students to increase their involvement. One student from Group 3 was very adamant that students needed connectivity and opportunity to be involved stating:



“I would set up small rally like things for people with similar interests to go to throughout the course of the year; it could help others, who need friends, find people they enjoy being around. And I would probably tell others to find a group of friends that makes them happy and keep them motivated because, even if the relationships don't last past high school, they still would be effected, hopefully positively, by their presence in life.”(Appendix F, Student 9)

***Group 4: Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not.***

The final group of three students, Group 4 (Appendix J, pgs. 420-421), are those who research and descriptive data determined should not be engaged, and current descriptive data and self-report for these students revealed they are not. Much like the Group 3 students, these Group 4 students were economically disadvantaged, two were at home with only one parent/guardian, and they had experienced changes in family dynamic and structure and/or previously moved and changed schools/systems. All Group 4 students reported that their parent(s) did not complete high school; they felt their parent(s) were unable or did not know what to do to help, and they felt as if there was a general lack of parental support and/or involvement especially once the students became older. For some in Group 4, there was a history of behavioral/criminal issues within the family and/or for the student. One Group 4 student discussed the negativity and harsh words she often received from her father and their impact. She stated that:

“...it's just hard for me cause like no matter what I do, my dad just seems to bring me down...He chooses to yell at and take all his anger out on me...it makes it harder for me to...just do everything that I'm supposed to at school cause like

something could happen at home and then the next day, whenever I come to school, it's on my mind..." (Appendix H, Student 10, lines 97-104).

The Group 4 students had no overall sense of real or tangible goals expressing only the goal to graduate explicitly. One student planned to join the military, and another discussed the possibility of cosmetology school. The Group 4 students' views of success were limited to doing what had to be done to get by with no clear picture or idea beyond basic necessity. In response to being questioned about his view of success, one student replied, "As long as you got a roof over your head and clothes on your back and food on the table, that's all you need to be successful" (Appendix H, Student 12, lines 19-20).

They did not express a true sense of control over their lives or futures, but they did perceive a sense of independence and autonomy. Students in Group 4, however, did not have a consistent and/or significant positive adult role model or source of support. There was a lack of examples of success or setting of positive expectations by adults in these students' lives.

The emerging perception of these Group 4 students from the void of positive examples and resources was an overall negative mindset with low self-confidence, depression, low resiliency along with being significantly affected by negative situations, and stress and other issues affecting attitude and effort. Concerning emotions and coping, students in Group 4 felt they did not always control or manage them appropriately, took frustrations out on others, and were easily frustrated and likely to give up. They reported they were less likely to keep trying if something was challenging and/or not interesting and that they had difficulty engaging if they did not find a task or class important. However, they exhibited a small sentiment of determination, persistence, and confidence

if they felt something was important, of interest, or of value. Group 4 students also recognized they needed to work harder and do better, and one student recognized the need to find balance with school and outside issues. Some students detailed interests in hands-on learning and activities and valued applicable learning and skills that would help them get jobs for which one student expressed a strong willingness to work. In general, generally students in Group 4 did not necessarily know if or what they were interested in, were not involved or a part of school activities, and they felt detached.

Socially the Group 4 students described conflicting issues related to transitioning to high school. One Group 4 student said she did well and liked middle school but that the drama and conflict of social and friend problems and “judging” in high school were discouraging and distracting (Appendix F, Student 10). Negative peer behavior affected their perceptions of the school environment and climate and, in various ways, affected their feelings and attitude toward school. The Group 4 students all expressed that friends were important and that they had a small group of good friends. Some of the friends, however, were not necessarily good influences, but if they were perceived as loyal or supportive, then the students continued to be friends and spend time with them. One Group 4 student talked about his friends more like family and seemed very guarded about the idea of friends. When asked about feeling any pressure, positively or negatively, from friends, he replied:

“...I have friends, but they’re not really friends, they’re just people I talk to. I’d rather not have friends...so my feelings won’t get hurt or they can hold me back and just like keep me in trouble...I figure I should not have friends, only family” (Appendix H, Student 11, lines 131-134).

This mentality coincides with some of the behavioral problems he previously experienced at school that pressured him to be loyal to a friend yet insubordinate to an adult in the building. Without strong family support and positive adult examples, these students in Group 4 have been left to themselves to find sources of influence, positive or negative, and tend to lean toward negative behaviors without having positive, more responsible ones modeled for them.

Academically, these Group 4 students liked elementary grades but did express perception of struggles with comprehension or focus and said schoolwork became more difficult in high school. Currently, the students in Group 4 viewed school as an opportunity but did not like having to get up to come to school. One student specifically discussed feeling that much of the high school coursework was redundant, not interesting, not important to pass the basics, and was more geared toward passing tests. In response to being asked about his general impression of school and its importance, he replied:

“I mean, it’s kinda pointless after, you know, eighth grade cause it’s just the same stuff different problems...I get how getting a diploma’s good and all and you need it for life, but at the same time, I don’t really see a point in going to school for extra years if they’re just gonna reteach everything you already learned”

(Appendix H, Student 12, lines 5-10).

The Group 4 students were more motivated to work and/or pay attention if the classwork was considered interesting. Classwork of preference and deemed as interesting consisted of hands-on, active learning and activities. Students did not necessarily feel very involved in or aware of what went on in all their classes and did not always understand the “why” or application of the content. There was a general enjoyment of

classes with a perceived use or application, or valuable skills, and a negative perception of the classes if they did not like them or did not understand the content or tasks. The Group 4 students had difficulty engaging if they were not interested or did not find the learning important. In general, they did not do homework as they were distracted and forgot or did not understand it. They did not usually prepare and/or feel prepared for assessments, but they considered the importance of keeping up with grades and being aware of course performance, and grades were noted as a motivator and a goal in some instances. Largely, Group 4 students perceived a positive adult interaction in the building and teacher support with one student noting a specific teacher that he had connected with and from whom he had received support. One student in Group 4 noted feeling that teachers, in general, did not try to engage with and/or get to know students.

A majority of these Group 4 students' grades coincided with teacher reported levels of engagement in class. One student had low grades in all classes other than welding, in which he had expressed great interest and value, and he had an "A" for the course grade and high levels of reported engagement. All students in Group 4 did have moderate to good scores for "gets along with peers" and "is respectful to staff" with mostly low scores in "seems interested in school" and "is self-motivated" (Appendix F, Students 10-12).

## **Conclusions and Implications**

### **Conclusions.**

The over-arching questions of this study sought to find the most significant influences affecting levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in high school students and the perceptions of students regarding their particular levels of

engagement and these outside influences. Influences included were those in the categories of individual characteristics, sociocultural factors, educational capital, and academic culture. Students were interviewed regarding their particular levels and influences in groupings of should be engaged and are, should be engaged and are not, should not be engaged and are, and should not be engaged and are not. Those results were discussed in the previous section. The findings produced emerging themes that drove the final conclusions of groupings of themes into four overarching categories for student engagement based on goal-setting, building grit or resiliency, group participation and belongingness, and adult support and guidance (see Figure 3, p. 174). These groupings will be further discussed in following sections.

***Factors of Most Positive or Negative Influence.***

From the comparison and contrast, factors of the most significance in positively or negatively influencing student engagement began to emerge. In looking at patterns and reoccurring themes, the following results were found.

Table 19 - Listing of Major Positive and Negative Factors by Influence Category

	<b>Factors Positively Influencing Engagement</b>	<b>Factors Negatively Influencing Engagement</b>
Individual Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Having specific goals (goal setting): short-term, long-term, tangible goals, purpose, altruistic motives/goals, goal(s) as means</li> <li>-Sets high/specific expectations/standards for self</li> <li>-Self-awareness; confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed</li> <li>-Sense of control/autonomy; independence, self-sufficiency, self-motivated, able to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No overall sense of real/tangible goals; may not be clearly defined or marked by lack of confidence</li> <li>-No clear picture/idea of success, low expectations, only doing what has to be done to get by</li> <li>-Perceived lack of control of life or future; motivated by others</li> <li>-Low self-confidence, perception of learning struggles, focus</li> <li>-Does not self-regulate well;</li> </ul>

Table 19 cont.

	<b>Factors Positively Influencing Engagement</b>	<b>Factors Negatively Influencing Engagement</b>
Sociocultural Factors	<p>through difficulty but know when to ask for help; taking on responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good work ethic; willing to work, sacrifice; drive fueled by interest and/or enjoyment level</li> <li>-Ability to self-regulate: control of emotions, time management, focus, adaptability, finding balance</li> <li>-Positive mindset</li> <li>-Resilience, determination, persistence, ability to push through frustration and/or difficulty</li> <li>-Values learning and skills that are applicable and will help to achieve future goals</li> <li>-Being involved in/motivated by activities/groups of interest and enjoyment; being part of a team/similar group</li> <li>-Positive reinforcement/recognition-Not economically disadvantaged</li> <li>-Family supportive and involved; ideally, both parents at home</li> <li>-Being more independent, self-sufficient, responsibility at home</li> <li>-Strong peer/friends ties; small group of good friends</li> <li>-Positive friend influence/support/ motivation</li> <li>-Friends and/or peer groups with goals</li> <li>-Being involved/connected in something; being part of a team/similar group</li> </ul>	<p>bottles up emotion and does not control/cope appropriately, struggle with time management and completing work, easily frustrated and likely to give up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Negative mindset</li> <li>-Difficult to be engaged if something is hard, not interested, doesn't find important</li> <li>-Struggle/high level of stress from meeting high goals/self-expectations</li> <li>-Stress of finding balance with workload, activities, and friends</li> <li>-Stress and/or other outside issues affect attitude and/or effort</li> <li>-Not knowing if or what interested in</li> <li>-Is not involved or a part of school or other activities; feeling detached-Economically disadvantaged</li> <li>-Family problems, conflict; change in family dynamics/structure</li> <li>-Feelings of shame with parent(s), or of not being wanted/supported</li> <li>-Negative comments from parents</li> <li>-Things going on at home can cause emotional stress and/or distraction</li> <li>-Overly controlling/pushy parent(s)</li> <li>-Negative perception of or effect from peer behavior/influence; social issues – especially in transition to high school; impact on behavior and school performance</li> </ul>
Educational Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Parent/guardian guidance/encouragement/awareness, especially early on</li> <li>-Parental support, motivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Parents did not complete high school</li> <li>-Parent(s) unable/do not know what to do to help</li> </ul>

Table 19 cont.

	<b>Factors Positively Influencing Engagement</b>	<b>Factors Negatively Influencing Engagement</b>
Educational Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Parent(s) have some type of post-secondary training/education</li> <li>-Parent ability to help – problems, information, resources, goal planning</li> <li>-Parents modeled good habits/work ethic</li> <li>-High parent expectations; accountable to parents</li> <li>-Becoming more independent and self-sufficient/motivated</li> <li>-History of liking school; especially early grades, elementary school as a good foundation</li> <li>-Became more serious/started setting goals in middle school</li> <li>-Transition to high school prompting more motivation, seriousness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of parental support/involvement</li> <li>-Having to be independent, self-sufficient with no real guidance or accountability</li> <li>-Poor attendance</li> <li>-Perception of/previous learning struggles – comprehension, focus, difficulty transitioning to higher grade levels, feelings of isolation, low work ethic, academic failures</li> <li>-Difficulty with social adjustments, negative peer issues, behavioral problems</li> </ul>
Academic Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Views school as an opportunity, important</li> <li>-Aware/involved/interested in classes</li> <li>-Understands purpose/relevance of material</li> <li>-Wants to know/likes to learn the “why” and application of content</li> <li>-Learning/figuring things out keeps down stress</li> <li>-Prefers different instructional/ learning styles: active learning, hands-on, group work, visual learning</li> <li>-Is an active learner – helps understanding and confidence; enjoys/engaged in learning if it is interesting, useful, and/or student perceives to be good at the task/topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Perception that high school academic work is redundant, not interesting, not important past “the basics,” and/or geared toward passing tests</li> <li>-Wants larger selection in course offerings</li> <li>-Class perceived as not fun and/or student having trouble not understanding/comprehending content or task</li> <li>-Teacher not relaying relevance or application of content/tasks</li> <li>-Monotony in class, busy work, just lecture</li> <li>-High level of workload and stress associated with high expectations in classes (esp advanced level)</li> <li>-Not very aware/involved in what is going on in class; does not do home-work or prepare and/or feel prepared for assessments</li> </ul>



Table 19 cont.

Academic Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Likes classes with perceived use/ application/beneficial skill(s)</li> <li>-Involved/aware of course performance</li> </ul>	
	<b>Factors Positively Influencing Engagement</b>	<b>Factors Negatively Influencing Engagement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gets information/feedback from teachers</li> <li>-Grades as a goal/motivator</li> <li>-Confidence on assessments when prepared</li> <li>-Understanding purpose and function of assessment</li> <li>-Assessments are formative</li> <li>-Positive perception of school and overall environment; feels safe, sense of belonging</li> <li>-Teacher/adult support; caring adults in school</li> <li>-Has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected with/supported</li> <li>-Involved in activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assessments when they cause negative stress/pressure; perception of not being a good test taker or that teachers cannot fully prepare students</li> <li>-Perception of not getting the proper feedback, guidance, support</li> <li>-Grades viewed as unfair/punitive</li> <li>-School environment (climate or physical) and negative peer behavior affecting feelings and attitudes toward school</li> <li>-Being “talked down to”</li> <li>-Feeling that some teachers may be quick to misjudge and/or are selective in who they help</li> <li>-Wanting more fun, interesting, school-wide involvement activities; more accessibility to extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>

Based on the majors themes and factors listed above for positively and negatively influencing students’ engagement, the researcher then constructed the following figure to show the four major emerging themes that summarize and group factors to support and promote student engagement—goals, grit, group, and guidance—as well as depict the multi-dimensional construct involving the previously detailed categories of influence.

As discussed in Chapter III, some influences are interconnected with one or more types of engagement creating a “dynamic interrelatedness” (Fredricks et. al., 2004). The

conclusion of this study produced a holistic framework for understanding and discussing implications for better engaging students in their own learning in a more meaningful and positive manner and helped in creating an action plan for meeting academic and engagement needs of all students.

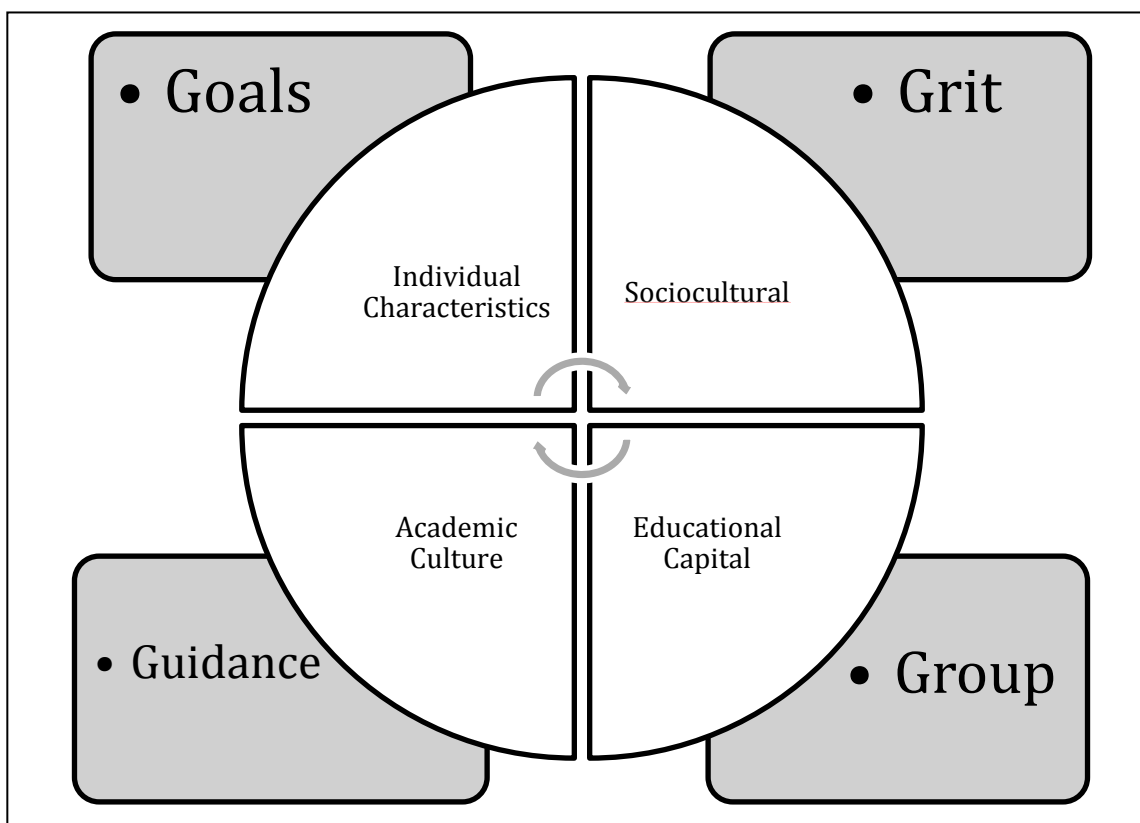


Figure 3: Infrastructure for Engagement

Further discussion of each of these four keys to engagement and their relationships to each other as well as the four categories of influence will take place in the following section.

### Implications.

The emerging themes and conclusions show an interwoven and/or reciprocating relationship with influences of students' engagement. The reality is students have a multi-dimensional composition of engagement and the following table displays those interdependent relationships and outlines the implications for positively impacting student engagement through goals, grit, guidance, and group with individual factors, sociocultural factors, educational capital, and academic culture.

Table 20: Dynamic Interrelatedness Chart

	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Grit</b>	<b>Guidance</b>	<b>Group</b>
Individual Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Goal-setting: specific/attainable, purpose</li> <li>-Positive mindset: set standards and expectations for self; engage with confidence</li> <li>-Willingness to work, sacrifice to achieve goals</li> <li>-Identify/pursue areas of interest, strength, or enjoyment to be involved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Work ethic: willing to work to meet standards, expectations, work through difficulty/stress</li> <li>-Self-regulation: manage time and emotions, focus, find balance, adaptability</li> <li>-Resiliency, determination, persistence</li> <li>-Self-motivated, sense of autonomy, responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Guide/support in the goal-setting process</li> <li>-Foster a positive mindset; set high expectations for students; guide/support working through areas of difficulty</li> <li>-Model and guide in appropriate self-regulation of emotions and workload</li> <li>-Foster resiliency</li> <li>-Provide opportunities for students to be involved/engaged in areas of interest/value/ability</li> <li>-Positive reinforcement/recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Positive friend/support group with like-minded interests/standards/ goals</li> <li>-Peer groups/activities to help find positive influence, balance, encouragement and belonging</li> <li>-Groups based on interest and/or similar motivators</li> <li>-Opportunities for involvement</li> <li>-Opportunities for positive reinforcement/recognition</li> </ul>
Sociocultural Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Family support, resources, and involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gaining independence, self-sufficiency,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Resources for involvement,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong/positive friend/peer ties, influence,</li> </ul>

Table 20 cont.

	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Grit</b>	<b>Guidance</b>	<b>Group</b>
Sociocultural factors	-Family/parent modeling success and positive habits/ behaviors -Friends/peers with similar goals	responsibility with guidance/ accountability -Family/parent modeling/ fostering grit, resiliency, self-regulation - Working through/ learning from life experiences	goal planning/ attainment -Family support and involvement -Guidance and accountability as students gain more autonomy -Facilitate working through difficult family or peer-related situations	support, motivation -Being involved/ connected in something; being part of a similar team or group
Educational Capital	-Parent/guardian guidance, encouragement, awareness of options/resources -Parent support/ motivation -High parent expectations -Parent example	-Gaining independence, self-sufficiency, responsibility with guidance/ accountability -Parent/guardian modeling/ fostering grit, resiliency, self-regulation -Working through/learning from previous struggles	-Parent support/ motivation -Parent(s) model good habits, work ethic -Parent(s) help with problems, information, resources -Accountable to parent(s) -School make information more accessible -Guide students in school transitions	-Early modeling of appropriate peer interactions -Early involvement in school/activities (early - prior to high school)
Academic Culture	-School as an opportunity -Find interests, purpose, relevance -Learn application of content -Be an active learner; work toward mastery -Seek out skills of interest, value	-School as an opportunity to work and achieve goals -Involved, aware, interested in classes -Be an active learner; work toward mastery, complete assignments -Work through new learning,	-Helps students see school as an opportunity; show relevance -Adults in building as a source of support and connection; positive interaction -Provide relevant and engaging instruction	-Group work -Peer evaluation/ feedback -Positive school climate, peer interactions -Sense of belonging; connectivity -Opportunities for/ accessibility to activities for student interests and involvement;

Table 20 cont.

	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Grit</b>	<b>Guidance</b>	<b>Group</b>
Academic Culture	to develop into long-term goals -Set smaller, course specific achievement goals	content/tasks that are not of interest, areas of difficulty -Accept/learn from formative feedback -Assessments as opportunities for information on mastery -Work through, develop skills for handling any negative peer/social situations	-Instruction that is of interest, value; applicable -Provide variety in instructional methods/differentiated learning; active, hands-on, visuals -Provide students with appropriate assessment; meaningful and formative feedback/grading -Provide safe, positive school climate; culture of high expectations for all students	small and large scale

At the individual student level, goal-setting is important and should work toward being specific, attainable, and help to find or drive purpose for students and their learning (Pintrich, 2003). Having specific goals and interests can be a strong motivator when working toward a goal (Pintrich, 2003). Adult guidance should be involved in the process of goal-setting to help guide and support through the conceptualization of goals and providing information about options and steps to achieve those goals (Usher & Kober, 2012c). Students need a certain amount of grit and resiliency to work toward those goals, especially when they are larger, long-term goals or when they encountered areas of struggle or difficulty (Dweck, 2008; Perkins-Gough, 2013). Having positive friend and support groups with similar interests and goals is also recommended to help motivate

students to persist through struggles and to motivate through involvement and sense of belonging (Elias et al., 1997; Usher & Kober, 2012a, 2012c). Grit comes into play again when establishing work ethic and self-regulation skills to balance schoolwork, activities, and emotional burdens during this often stressful high school and adolescent time (Blackwell et al., 2007; Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Perkins-Gough, 2013). Guidance and groups, again, can be influential in these areas by serving as support—modeling for and coaching students through situations, positive reinforcement, and fostering a positive mindset of confidence and determination (Dweck, 2008; Usher and Kober, 2012b). Another key area is students being able to develop a sense of autonomy and self-motivation as well as managing increased responsibility and independence (Usher & Kober, 2012a). Adult guidance and groups serve as a safe structure and accountability as the interests, work ethic, and sense of self-control drive students toward their goals (Blackwell et al., 2007; Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Elias et al., 1997).

Recommendations for sociocultural factors include ensuring students have the proper adult support – whether at home or through a significant connection at school – to find and utilize resources and be actively involved in student goal planning (Usher & Kober, 2012c). The students also need positive family/parent modeling of success and positive habits and behaviors (Usher & Kober, 2012d). If students do not have this model at home, they need strong group involvement and connections with other responsible, influential adults. Gaining independence and self-sufficiency at home can be a positive and helpful step, but students also need guidance and accountability to continue down the path of autonomy to make positive choices and learn appropriate behaviors and coping skills (Blackwell et al., 2007; Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Usher & Kober, 2012b). Adult

influence and intervention in teaching and modeling resiliency for students are other parts to that equation. Making sure students have accessibility to the proper resources is important when trying to facilitate healthy individual growth and working through personal, difficult situations (Blackwell et al., 2007; Duckworth & Gross, 2014). Having a positively group of peers and friends who influence, support, and help students feel connected can minimize negative peer and social situations and serve as additional support in helping students mature and engage (Elias et al., 1997; Usher & Kober, 2012b, 2012d).

In the area of educational capital, a sense of parental support, encouragement, involvement when needed, and expectations are optimal (Usher & Kober, 2012d). Again, students need that connection and positive example at home as well as at school (Usher & Kober, 2012d). As adolescents work toward independence and self-sufficiency, the experience is negative when it is done out of necessity and not with guidance and the confidence of structure and support (Blackwell et al., 2007). Unfortunately, not all students shared experiences of supportive home environments or parents who know how to help or who have the resources or ability to help (Jensen, 2013). Having another adult, whether a teacher, counselor, coach, or club sponsor, who can assist in navigating school struggles, social/peer issues, and hold them accountable for behavior and goal-setting is a positive factor in overall student engagement (Blackwell et al., 2007; Usher & Kober, 2012b). In previous school experiences, students need to receive modeling of appropriate peer interactions and to start developing interests and involvement with groups and activities (Blackwell et al., 2007; Elias et al., 1997; Usher & Kober, 2012d). Schools also

need to better facilitate transitions to high school and help students navigate academic and social struggles (Blackwell et al., 2007; National Research Council, 2004).

Academic culture also plays a large factor in the areas of goals, grit, group, and guidance for overall student engagement. Individually, students need to be able to see school as important and an opportunity to achieve their short and long-term goals (Stiggins, 2005; Usher & Kober, 2012a). They need to be able to cultivate their interests, develop their purpose, and find relevance in their learning to work toward their goals (Pintrich, 2003; Willis, 2010). When teachers and other staff help students understand the relevance and application of their learning, students can connect and be more active learners (Garner, 2007; Usher & Kober, 2012b). Relevant and engaging instruction of interest and value that helps develop students' skills performed through a variety of instructional methods—hands-on, visuals, partner/group work—helps students to be more involved and aware in their classes (Garner, 2007; Usher & Kober, 2012a). Grit is important when students experience difficulty in new learning, content or important tasks that are not of interest, and struggle in time management or focus (Perkins-Gough, 2013). Again, adult guidance and groups can be a support during these times to help students persist and become more resilient. Adults can be a source of support and intervention, and group work can help manage focus, task comprehension and completion, and it can provide peer feedback (Stiggins, 2005; Usher & Kober, 2012c). Furthermore, teachers must help students self-reflect for improvement after they provide students with meaningful and formative feedback and grading (Marzano, 2010; Stiggins, 2005). Students should view assessments as opportunities to receive information on mastery and learn to accept constructive criticism (Marzano, 2010; Stiggins, 2005; Usher & Kober,



2012d). Adult support and positive peer groups in high school can also help students develop skills to work through negative peer and social situations (Elias et al., 1997; Usher & Kober, 2012e). Through a safe and positive school climate, students can have a sense of belonging and find opportunities and accessibility to a variety of activities of interest and involvement (Elias et al., 1997; Usher & Kober, 2012d, 2012e).

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

The limitations as included in Chapter I will be described in this section as well as any recommendation for future research deriving from these gaps and study limitations. The first limitation identifies that the purposeful sample for the study consisted of only twelve students from one high school. While the findings on major influences on levels of student engagement do reflect the culture and dynamics of a particular demographic of area and high school, they may not lend to wide levels of traditional generalizability and transferability. Patton (2002) instead suggests the idea of extrapolation for which “modest speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions” (p. 584) and “for possible transferability and adaptation in new settings” (p. 41). A more comprehensive study consisting of participants across multiple high schools could be conducted to produce results that may be more transferable and generalizable; however, through Patton’s (2002) concept of extrapolation, findings can be generalized and hold more strongly when the range of persons, settings, treatments, outcomes and times are specified as has been done for this study (Magana).

Secondly, the study only sampled from tenth and eleventh grade students due to the nine-week time period. Future research could span more of the school year and incorporate all grades of students. Ninth grade and senior students were excluded because

of concerns that ninth grade students did not have enough high school experience and senior students, during the third nine weeks, would already be too focused on graduation to lend genuine engagement results.

Thirdly, the data collection for this study, as was previously noted, was conducted the first half of the spring semester. The reason for this was to collect data on students far enough into the year to have experience and exposure to the influences being studied but not yet at the end of the semester when state testing occurs and classes are wrapping up major activities. A longer study period may account and allow for the fluctuations in school activities, breaks, testing, and other course-of-the-school-year variables that may impact students' perceptions of factors of their levels of engagement.

Finally, other factors that could be more specifically studied as they pertain to understanding students' levels of engagement are (1) unique racial and ethnic factors, especially within various demographic locations, and how they may positive or negatively influence levels of student engagement, (2) a more thorough and detailed study on the specific influences high stakes/state standardized testing may have on levels of student engagement, and (3) how, in the academic culture category of factors and teacher self-efficacy may affect classroom instruction and, in turn, students' levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

### **Summary**

In this study the researcher examined a wide scope of influences in order to research a more holistic view of the many, often interrelated, factors that contribute to the complete picture of student engagement – behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Individual characteristics, sociocultural factors, educational capital, and academic culture

were the categories of influence from which the framework of understanding was constructed to better understand and support major positive influences on, students' perceptions of, and the interdependence of relationships of factors impacting high school students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement in their own learning experiences (see Figure 2, p. 78). As the study was conducted, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement levels were initially gauged through 33 Leikert scale items in the Student Engagement in School Questionnaire (see Appendix B). Then each of these types of engagement were integrated throughout the study of major influences and students' perceptions through the types of student descriptive data collected (see Appendices C, E, and G), the Student Interview Questions utilized (see Appendix D), items rated on the Teacher Report Forms (see Appendices E and G), as well as the students' responses to questions on the Student Final Questionnaire (see Appendix F).

The resulting implications reveal a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interrelatedness existing between the many personal, family, peer, and academic factors and emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement for high school students (see Figure 2, p. 78). As research supports, many of these influences can have lasting impressions on students, such as family dynamics or previous learning struggles, and many influences can be more temporary or situational depending on circumstances impacting the students, such as peer issues or grades (see Table 19, pgs. 170-173; Table 20, p. 175-177). From this study data emerged to find that students' abilities to set clear and attainable goals, develop resiliency or grit, to be guided and supported by one or more positive adult connections, and to be connected and motivated through involvement in positive peer groups and activities significantly influence higher

levels of high school students' overall engagement (see Figure 3, p. 174; Table 20, p. 175-177).

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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

**Descriptive Data and Information**

Category	This High School	State Avg (when applicable/accessible)
Economic Disadvantaged %	39.7%	57.9%
Ethnic breakdown	White 81.2% Black 9.9% Hispanic 5.3% Asian 2.7%	White 64.9% Black 24.1% Hispanic 8.5% Asian 2.1% Native Amer .3%
SPED %	11.4%	14%
ELL %	1.4%	4.6%
Graduation rate	94%	87.8%
Achievement – % Prof/Adv	Alg 1 69.1% Alg 2 45.6% Bio 1 72.3% Eng 1 80.2% Eng 2 65.2% Eng 3 54.1% Chem 50.4%	Alg 1 65.6% Alg 2 54.2% Bio 1 65.2% Eng 1 71.8% Eng 2 64.8% Eng 3 41.7% Chem 44.2%
ACT	22.4	19.4
Avg GPA (Cum for 10-11)	3.106	
Course failure %	151 students/1022 total 14.77% 289 course grades/4341 6.7%	
Average Daily Attendance	94.7%	94.1%
Discipline Referral Count	80 / Rate 7.5%	6.4%
Avg yrs Teacher exp	17 years	

*\*This data was retrieved using Tennessee State Department of Education District and State Report Cards and the State Information System iNow.*

## APPENDIX B

### Student Engagement in School Questionnaire Validation and Instrument

#### Affective Engagement

Affective engagement consists of two components: liking for learning and liking for school. The former overlaps with the concept of intrinsic motivation whereas the latter overlaps with the concept of school bonding or attachment (Finn, 1989; Voelkl, 1997).

Items			Sources
01.	A1	I am very interested in learning.	
02.	A3	I think what we are learning in school is interesting.	Rao & Sachs (1999)
03.	A5	I like what I am learning in school.	
04.	A7	I enjoy learning new things in class.	Skinner & Belmont (1993)
05.	A9	I think learning is boring. (R)	
06.	A11	I like my school.	Hill & Werner (2006)
07.	A13	I am proud to be at this school.	
08.	A15	Most mornings, I look forward to going to school.	
09.	A17	I am happy to be at this school.	

#### Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement refers to students' persistence and effort in learning (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) and their involvement in extra-curricular activities in the school (Finn, 1989). Students' persistence and effort in learning can be thought of as a behavioral manifestation of high achievement motivation.

Items			Sources
01.	A2	I try hard to do well in school.	Skinner & Belmont (1993)
02.	A4	In class, I work as hard as I can.	
03.	A6	When I'm in class, I participate in class activities.	
04.	A8	I pay attention in class.	
05.	A10	When I'm in class, I just act like I'm working. (R)	
06.	A12	In school, I do just enough to get by. (R)	
07.	A14	When I'm in class, my mind wanders. (R)	
08.	A16	If I have trouble understanding a problem, I go over it again until I understand it.	Miller et al. (1996)
09.	A18	When I run into a difficult homework problem, I keep working at it until I think I've solved it.	
10.	A20	I am an active participant of school activities such as sport day and school picnic.	Modified from Pannozzo, & Voelkl (1995)
11.	A22	I volunteer to help with school activities such as sport day and parent day.	

12.	A24	I take an active role in extra-curricular activities in my school.	
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### Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement refers to the amount and types of cognitive strategies that students employ in the learning process (Walker, Greene & Mansell, 2006). Students who are cognitively engaged go beyond rote memorization of course materials and adopt elaboration strategies in connecting the present and the previously learned materials (Dowson & McInerney, 2004). They organize new information acquired in a meaningful manner that foster understanding and recall. Students who have high levels of cognitive engagement would have better understanding and retention of academic materials.

Item			Source
01.	B1	When I study, I try to understand the material better by relating it to things I already know.	Samuelstuen & Bråten (2007)
02.	B2	When I study, I figure out how the information might be useful in the real world.	
03.	B3	When learning new information, I try to put the ideas in my own words.	Greene et al. (2004)
04.	B4	When I study, I try to connect what I am learning with my own experiences.	Wolters (2004)
05.	B5	I make up my own examples to help me understand the important concepts I learn from school.	
06.	B6	When learning things for school, I try to see how they fit together with other things I already know.	Dowson & McInerney (2004)
07.	B7	When learning things for school, I often try to associate them with what I learnt in other classes about the same or similar things.	
08.	B8	I try to see the similarities and differences between things I am learning for school and things I know already.	
09.	B9	I try to understand how the things I learn in school fit together with each other.	
10.	B10	I try to match what I already know with things I am trying to learn for school.	
11.	B11	I try to think through topics and decide what I'm supposed to learn from them, rather than studying topics by just reading them over.	Elliot, McGregor & Gable (1999)
12.	B12	When studying, I try to combine different pieces of information from course material in new ways.	Greene & Miller (1996)

*\*Validation for questionnaire and questionnaire instrument used in Hart et al., 2011, sent through e-mail correspondence by Shane Jimerson on 11-5-2015*

### Student Engagement in School Questionnaire

This is a questionnaire about students' perception of their learning experience. Please answer the questions according to your own experience, thoughts, and feelings. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions. The answers you provide will be used only for research purposes and your personal information will be kept confidential.

#### Part A

**How much do you agree that the following statements accurately describe your learning experience in this semester?** Please use the scale below to indicate your opinions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Please circle the number that represents your opinions.

1. I am very interested in learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I try hard to do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think what we are learning in school is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
4. In class, I work as hard as I can.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I like what I am learning in school.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When I'm in class, I participate in class activities.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I enjoy learning new things in class.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I pay attention in class.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I think learning is boring.	1	2	3	4	5
10. When I'm in class, I just act like I'm working.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I like my school.	1	2	3	4	5
12. In school, I do just enough to get by.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am proud to be at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
14. When I'm in class, my mind wanders	1	2	3	4	5
15. Most mornings, I look forward to going to school	1	2	3	4	5
16. If I have trouble understanding a problem, I go over it again until I understand it.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am happy to be at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
18. When I run into a difficult homework problem, I keep working at it until I think I've solved it.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I am an active participant of school activities such as sport day and school picnic.	1	2	3	4	5



20. I volunteer to help with school activities such as sport day and parent day.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I take an active role in extra-curricular activities in my school.	1	2	3	4	5

**Part B**

**When learning things for school in this semester, how often do you do the following?**

Please use the scale below to indicate your answers.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

1. When I study, I try to understand the material better by relating it to things I already know.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When I study, I figure out how the information might be useful in the real world.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When learning new information, I try to put the ideas in my own words.	1	2	3	4	5
4. When I study, I try to connect what I am learning with my own experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I make up my own examples to help me understand the important concepts I learn from school.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When learning things for school, I try to see how they fit together with other things I already know.	1	2	3	4	5
7. When learning things for school, I try to associate them with what I learnt in other classes about the same or similar things.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I try to see the similarities and differences between things I am learning for school and things I know already.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I try to understand how the things I learn in school fit together with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I try to match what I already know with things I am trying to learn for school.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I try to think through topics and decide what I'm supposed to learn from them, rather than studying topics by just reading them over.	1	2	3	4	5
12. When studying, I try to combine different pieces of information from course material in new ways.	1	2	3	4	5

**Part C**

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Female  Male 

*\* Instrument as sent by S. Jimerson contained additional questionnaire parts. That document was amended to contain only the 33 student report measures from the categories of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement as described in Hart et al., 2011, and the validation document.*

*This will be entered and administered electronically to students through Google Forms.*

## APPENDIX C

**Participant Selection and Additional Descriptive Data**

Students were purposefully sampled to select a representation of students for each of the research question categories: those who should be engaged and are, those who should be engaged and are not, those who should not be engaged and are, and those who should not be engaged and are not. Students' individual survey results from the Student Engagement in School Questionnaire and their descriptive statistics were utilized to inform the purposeful sample and are detailed below using the aforementioned categories. Students were also assigned a number to preserve anonymity.

**Should Be Engaged and Are**

Student #1

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	11	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	Yes	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Both guardians at home	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2013-14 3.0 Fall 2014 3.5 Spring 2015 3.75 Fall 2015 3.25	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 – 83 Alg 1 – 90 Eng 2 – 83 Bio 1 - 69
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences – 1 day	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences – 3 days
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 1 referral	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 0

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	4	12. B (R)	1	23. C	4
2. B	5	13. A	3	24. C	5
3. A	3	14. B	3	25. C	4
4. B	5	15. A (R)	2	26. C	5
5. A	3	16. B	5	27. C	5
6. B	5	17. A	3	28. C	3
7. A	3	18. B	5	29. C	5
8. B	5	19. B	5	30. C	5
9. A (R)	1	20. B	5	31. C	4
10. B (R)	1	21. B	3	32. C	4
11. A	3	22. C	3	33. C	4

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C – Cognitive  
Student #2

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	10	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	No	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Both parents at home	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2014-15 4.2 Fall 2015 3.75 *Honors courses	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 – 96 Alg 1 – 99 Bio 1 - 91
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences – 4 days	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences – 3 days
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 0	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 0

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	5	12. B (R)	1	23. C	3
2. B	5	13. A	5	24. C	4
3. A	4	14. B	4	25. C	4
4. B	5	15. A (R)	3	26. C	4
5. A	4	16. B	4	27. C	4
6. B	5	17. A	5	28. C	4
7. A	5	18. B	4	29. C	4
8. B	5	19. B	5	30. C	4
9. A (R)	3	20. B	4	31. C	4
10. B (R)	1	21. B	5	32. C	3
11. A	5	22. C	4	33. C	3

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

Student #3

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	10	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	No	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Both parents at home	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2014-15 4.4 Fall 2015 4.625 *Honors	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 – 96 Alg 2 – 99 Bio 1 - 91
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences - 3	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 0
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 0	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 0

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	3	12. B (R)	1	23. C	3
2. B	5	13. A	4	24. C	3
3. A	4	14. B	2	25. C	3
4. B	5	15. A (R)	2	26. C	4
5. A	3	16. B	5	27. C	4
6. B	5	17. A	4	28. C	3
7. A	4	18. B	4	29. C	4
8. B	4	19. B	2	30. C	4
9. A (R)	2	20. B	4	31. C	3
10. B (R)	3	21. B	4	32. C	4
11. A	4	22. C	4	33. C	3

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

**Should Be Engaged and Are Not**

Student #4

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	11	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	No	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Both parents at home	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2013-14 4.417 Fall 2014 4.625 Spring 2015 4.625 Fall 2015 4.9 *Honors	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1- 94 Alg 2 – 99 Eng 2 – 96 Bio 1- 96
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences - 3	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 3
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 0	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 0

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	5	12. B (R)	1	23. C	1
2. B	5	13. A	2	24. C	1
3. A	3	14. B	3	25. C	1
4. B	5	15. A (R)	1	26. C	1
5. A	2	16. B	5	27. C	1
6. B	5	17. A	3	28. C	1
7. A	4	18. B	5	29. C	1
8. B	4	19. B	5	30. C	1
9. A (R)	3	20. B	5	31. C	1
10. B (R)	1	21. B	5	32. C	1
11. A	2	22. C	1	33. C	1

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

Student #5

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	11	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	No	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Both parents at home	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2013-14 3.83 Fall 2014 3.5 Spring 2015 3.75 Fall 2015 3.625 *Honors	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 - 94 Alg 1 - 94 Eng 2 - 92 Bio 1 - 88
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences - 2	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 0
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 2 (cell phone)	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 0

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	4	12. B (R)	3	23. C	3
2. B	2	13. A	4	24. C	3
3. A	2	14. B	3	25. C	3
4. B	2	15. A (R)	1	26. C	2
5. A	2	16. B	2	27. C	3
6. B	4	17. A	3	28. C	3
7. A	3	18. B	1	29. C	2
8. B	4	19. B	2	30. C	2
9. A (R)	2	20. B	1	31. C	3
10. B (R)	1	21. B	3	32. C	4
11. A	3	22. C	2	33. C	1

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

Student #6

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	10	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	No	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Both parents at home	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2014-15 2.14 Fall 2015 2.29	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 - 76 Alg 1 - 81
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences - 7	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 3
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 7 (3 suspensions, placed in Alternative School 2/15)	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 0

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	3	12. B (R)	1	23. C	4
2. B	4	13. A	1	24. C	3
3. A	3	14. B	2	25. C	4
4. B	5	15. A (R)	1	26. C	2
5. A	3	16. B	3	27. C	2
6. B	5	17. A	1	28. C	2
7. A	3	18. B	4	29. C	2
8. B	5	19. B	3	30. C	2
9. A (R)	4	20. B	1	31. C	2
10. B (R)	1	21. B	2	32. C	2
11. A	1	22. C	4	33. C	2

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive



**Should Not Be Engaged and Are**

Student #7

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	10	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	Yes	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Lives with mother	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2014-15 2.67 Fall 2015 1.75	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 – 84 Alg 1 - 71
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences – 1 (Enrolled mid-year)	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 2
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 0	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 1 (cell phone)

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	4	12. B (R)	2	23. C	3
2. B	3	13. A	2	24. C	4
3. A	3	14. B	4	25. C	3
4. B	4	15. A (R)	2	26. C	4
5. A	4	16. B	3	27. C	4
6. B	3	17. A	2	28. C	4
7. A	2	18. B	3	29. C	3
8. B	4	19. B	2	30. C	4
9. A (R)	2	20. B	3	31. C	4
10. B (R)	2	21. B	4	32. C	3
11. A	2	22. C	3	33. C	3

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

Student #8

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	10	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Black	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	Yes	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Lives with mother	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2014-2015 2.0 Fall 2015 2.25	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 – no score Alg 1 - 86
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences - 21	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 6
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 2 (1 cell phone)	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 2

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	3	12. B (R)	4	23. C	3
2. B	3	13. A	3	24. C	4
3. A	3	14. B	5	25. C	4
4. B	3	15. A (R)	5	26. C	3
5. A	3	16. B	3	27. C	3
6. B	3	17. A	3	28. C	4
7. A	3	18. B	2	29. C	3
8. B	3	19. B	4	30. C	3
9. A (R)	3	20. B	4	31. C	3
10. B (R)	4	21. B	4	32. C	3
11. A	3	22. C	4	33. C	2

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

Student #9

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	10	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	No	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Lives w/mother	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2014-2015 2.6 Fall 2015 2.86	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> None, left for 2-3 months at end of 2014-15 year
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences – was withdrawn	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 1
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> was withdrawn	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 0

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	3	12. B (R)	4	23. C	3
2. B	3	13. A	5	24. C	4
3. A	3	14. B	5	25. C	4
4. B	2	15. A (R)	4	26. C	2
5. A	3	16. B	4	27. C	3
6. B	4	17. A	5	28. C	3
7. A	3	18. B	2	29. C	3
8. B	2	19. B	2	30. C	3
9. A (R)	2	20. B	2	31. C	2
10. B (R)	4	21. B	2	32. C	4
11. A	5	22. C	3	33. C	2

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

### Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not

Student #10

#### Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	10	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	Yes	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Lives w/dad	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2014-2015 1.5 Fall 2015 .67	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng1 – 71 Alg1 - 67
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences - 20	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 21
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 4 (1 ISS)	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 3 (2 ISSs)

#### Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	4	12. B (R)	3	23. C	3
2. B	5	13. A	2	24. C	3
3. A	4	14. B	4	25. C	3
4. B	4	15. A (R)	2	26. C	2
5. A	3	16. B	4	27. C	3
6. B	2	17. A	2	28. C	3
7. A	3	18. B	3	29. C	4
8. B	3	19. B	1	30. C	4
9. A (R)	3	20. B	1	31. C	4
10. B (R)	1	21. B	1	32. C	4
11. A	3	22. C	2	33. C	4

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

Student #11

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	10	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Black	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	Yes	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Mother/Grandparents	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2014-2015 1.0 Fall 2015 1.57	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 – 78 Alg 1 - 64
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences - 37	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences – 6
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 16 (6 ISSs)	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 9 (2 ISSs, 1 Susp)

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	3	12. B (R)	2	23. C	4
2. B	4	13. A	3	24. C	3
3. A	3	14. B	4	25. C	3
4. B	5	15. A (R)	1	26. C	3
5. A	3	16. B	4	27. C	3
6. B	4	17. A	2	28. C	3
7. A	3	18. B	4	29. C	3
8. B	3	19. B	4	30. C	3
9. A (R)	2	20. B	2	31. C	3
10. B (R)	1	21. B	3	32. C	3
11. A	1	22. C	4	33. C	3

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

Student #12

## Descriptive Data

<b>Grade</b>	11	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	
<b>Econ Disadvantaged</b>	Yes	
<b>Parent/Guardian Status</b>	Lives w/both parents	
<b>Academic History</b>	<b>Previous Term GPAs</b> 2013-2014 1.83 Fall 2014 1.5 Spring 2015 2.0 Fall 2015 1.5	<b>Standardized Test Scores</b> Eng 1 – 81 Alg 1 – 71 Eng 2 – 81 Bio 1 - 79
<b>Attendance History</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> Absences - 4	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> Absences - 4
<b>Discipline Referrals</b>	<b>14-15 School Year</b> 4 (1 cell phone, 2 ISS)	<b>2015 Fall Semester</b> 1

## Individual SESQ Responses

1. A	1	12. B (R)	3	23. C	1
2. B	3	13. A	1	24. C	1
3. A	1	14. B	5	25. C	1
4. B	2	15. A (R)	1	26. C	1
5. A	1	16. B	1	27. C	1
6. B	1	17. A	1	28. C	1
7. A	1	18. B	2	29. C	1
8. B	2	19. B	1	30. C	1
9. A (R)	5	20. B	1	31. C	1
10. B (R)	5	21. B	1	32. C	3
11. A	1	22. C	1	33. C	1

(R) = Reverse answer on scale; A – Affective, B – Behavioral, C - Cognitive

## APPENDIX D

**Student Interview Questions**

1. This being your 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> year doing this “school thing”...how is it for you? What do you think about it? Is it important to you? Why or why not?
2. Tell me a little about yourself. What are you interested in? What motivates you? What do you view as being successful? Do you feel like you have control of your future? Your ability to succeed?
3. (For students identified as low levels of engagement) What are some things that may cause you to feel unmotivated or “checked out”?
4. What are your goals? Now and after high school. Would you describe yourself as self-driven/motivated or motivated by other people or factors?
5. Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals? Even if it may take awhile? Even if costs you time you could be doing other things?
6. If something is/becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help? Keep trying? Get frustrated/give up? How well do you think you control your emotions?
7. How do you feel about your ability to learn? To get better at something/change? To work harder and learn more/do better?
8. Tell me about your home situation. Family/guardian structure? Cultural background? Level of parent/guardian education? Home environment?
9. How do you think any of those things impact you here at school?
10. What kind of expectations do your parents/guardians have for you at school? (grades, attendance, behavior/attitude, work ethic)
11. How involved in your school experience do you feel your parents have been? Are now? Help with work, support, resources, talk with teachers? Do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for your future goals, they would know where to go/what to do to help you?
12. What about your friends and classmates? Do you feel any pressure from them – positive and/or negative? Influence your behavior? Your mood? Your attitude toward school? Your goals? Why or why not?
13. Describe to me how you felt about school from elementary to middle school to high school. Did you notice any changes in yourself? If so, when and why do you think? Have you always been in this school system? If not, when and where did you move schools?
14. Have you ever or do you now struggle with school and learning? If so, tell me about that. When do you first remember? What have others done to help you? What did you do/are you doing to try to work through that struggle/improve in that area?
15. Do you usually feel like you know what’s going on in your classes? Tell me about them. What do you like/not like?
16. Do you think you are involved/interested in your classes? Do you think your teachers have done a good job explaining why you are learning/doing something? What about homework – do you do homework? Why or why not?
17. Do class and/or report card grades motivate you? What do you think about how teachers grade? Do you usually know how you’re doing in your classes? Why or why not?

18. How do you feel when you quizzes/tests? Usually prepared or not? What about state standardized tests (EOC, ACT, Writing Assessment) – what do you think and how do you feel about those?
19. In general, do you think the adults here are nice/care about you? Why or why not? Do you feel there are people here that work to get to know you? Help you? Notice when you do something good/are successful?
20. How do you feel about this school as a whole? Do you feel like you have a place? Do you feel safe? Do you like coming here? Why or why not?
21. Research and data suggest that a) you should be engaged in school and are, b) you should be engaged in school but you are not, c) you shouldn't necessarily be engaged and you are not, or d) you shouldn't necessarily be engaged but you are...why do you think that is?



## APPENDIX E

**Mid-term Report and Participants' Progress Report Grades, Attendance, and Behavioral Data**

Teacher Engagement Report Form – New (TERF-N)

This survey tool is used to gather the teacher's perspective of students' levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Hart, Stewart, & Jimerson, 2011). The original TERF format (2007) originally contained 6 questions, but the work of Hart et al. (2011) produced the TERF-N (new) to ensure "expressly access teachers' impressions of all three indicators" (p. 69).

**Teacher Report Form**

**How much do you agree that the following statements can accurately describe each of the students in your class in this semester? Please use the scale below to indicate your opinions.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Student Name:					
1. Seems interested in school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Gets along with peers.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Seems to care about grades.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Has good attendance.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Participates in class discussions/activities.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Is respectful to staff.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Persists on more challenging tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	1	2	3	4	5
10. Is self-motivated.	1	2	3	4	5

**Should Be Engaged and Are**

Student #1

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 Unexcused Absence
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English III	Average = 94.86% Shows all assignments so far complete
Yearbook Staff	Average = 100%
Spanish II	Average = 94.41% Shows all assignments so far complete
Chemistry	Average = 97.79% While she does not have any zeros recorded, there are 5 assignments with grades not yet entered

\*data retrieved from school iNow data reporting system as of 2/15/16

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng3	Yrbk	Span	Chem
Seems interested in school.	5	4	5	5
Gets along with peers.	5	4	5	4
Seems to care about grades.	5	5	5	4
Has good attendance.	5	5	5	4
Participates in class discussions/activities.	5	4	4	5
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1		1	2
Is respectful to staff.	5	4	5	4
Persists on more challenging tasks.	5	4	4	4
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5	5	4	4
Is self-motivated.	4	4	5	4

Student #2

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	4 excused absences (Doctor/Dentist) 1 excused tardy
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II H	Average = 95.63% Shows all assignments so far complete
Algebra II H	Average = 86.44% Shows 1 zero, 3 missing assignments, and 2 quiz grades that include corrections
US History	Average = 97.86% Shows 1 missing daily assignment
Anatomy & Physiology (new teacher 3-4 wks into quarter)	Average = 98.26% Shows all assignments complete so far

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng2	Alg2	USH	A&P
Seems interested in school.	5	5	5	4
Gets along with peers.	5	5	5	4
Seems to care about grades.	5	5	5	4
Has good attendance.	5	5	5	4
Participates in class discussions/activities.	4	5	5	4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1	1	2
Is respectful to staff.	5	5	5	4
Persists on more challenging tasks.	5	4	5	4
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5	4	5	4
Is self-motivated.	5	5	5	4

\*A&amp;P teacher had only had about 2 weeks with student at time of completion

Student #3

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 excused check out
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
Precal H	Average = 95.72% Shows 2 assignments w/no grade entries & 1 quiz grades that include corrections
Chemistry I H	Average = 95.98% Shows several assignments entries without grades yet
AP US History	Average = 98.76% Shows all assignments complete so far
Symphonic Band H	Average = No grade entries by teacher at this point

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	PreC	Chem	USH	Band
Seems interested in school.	5	5	5	5
Gets along with peers.	5	5	5	5
Seems to care about grades.	5	5	5	5
Has good attendance.	5	5	5	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	5	5	5	5
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1	1	1
Is respectful to staff.	5	5	5	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	5	5	5	5
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5	5	5	5
Is self-motivated.	5	5	5	5

**Should Be Engaged and Are Not**

Student #4

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	2 excused absences (Parent Note/Call)
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
AP English III	Average = 96.80% Shows all assignments so far complete
AP Cal AB	Average = 94.50% Shows all assignments complete so far and 1 instance of test corrections done
Chemistry I H	Average = 98.16% Shows several assignments not yet entered by teacher
AP Macroeconomics	Average = 98.95% Shows all assignments complete so far

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Cal	Chem	Econ
Seems interested in school.	5	5	5	5
Gets along with peers.	4	5	5	5
Seems to care about grades.	5	5	5	5
Has good attendance.	5	5	5	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	4	5	5	5
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1	1	1
Is respectful to staff.	5	5	5	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	5	5	5	5
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5	5	5	5
Is self-motivated.	5	5	5	5

Additional Comments:

Chem – GREAT STUDENT!!!!!!!

Econ – M\_\_\_\_\_ is awesome!!

Student #5

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 excused Check Out and back in
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
AP English III	Average = 86.10% Shows all assignments so far complete
Algebra II	Average = 99.40% Shows all assignments complete so far and 1 instance of test corrections done
Chinese	Average = No grade entries by teacher at this time
Symphonic Band	Average = No grade entries by teacher at this time

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Alg	Chin	Band
Seems interested in school.	3	5	5	4
Gets along with peers.	4	5	5	4
Seems to care about grades.	3	5	5	4
Has good attendance.	5	5	5	4
Participates in class discussions/activities.	4	5	5	4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1	1	1
Is respectful to staff.	5	5	5	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	3	5	5	5
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	5	5	4
Is self-motivated.	3	5	5	4

Student #6

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 unexcused absence, 2 excused absences (Doctor/Dentist), 2 unexcused tardies, 1 unexcused check out
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 64.79% 1 zero, 1 missing assignment, 2 low quiz grades, 1 notation of test corrections
Biology I	Average = 90.20% Shows all assignments complete so far and grades include 1 low quiz and 1 low test
Psychology	Average = 93.63% Shows all assignments complete so far with 3 average to low test grades
Visual Art I	Average = 93.49% Shows all assignments complete so far

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Biol	Psyc	Art
Seems interested in school.	3	3	3	5
Gets along with peers.	4	4	4	3
Seems to care about grades.	3	4	4	5
Has good attendance.	4	4	4	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	2	3	3	4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	3		1
Is respectful to staff.	4	3	4	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	3	3	3
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	3	4	3	2
Is self-motivated.	3	4	3	4

**Should Not Be Engaged and Are**

Student #7

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 excused absence (Parent Note/Call)
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 80.68% Reflects 1 zero, 1 low quiz grade, and lost points on classwork/homework
ROTC	Average = 94.83% Shows all assignments complete so far
US History	Average = 86.47% Shows all assignments complete so far and 2 low quiz/test grades
Principles of Manufacturing	Average = 100% Shows all assignments complete except 1 due to absence

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	ROTC	USH	PMan
Seems interested in school.	4	3	5	4
Gets along with peers.	4	4	5	5
Seems to care about grades.	4	3	5	5
Has good attendance.	4	4	5	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	4	3	5	5
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	2	1	1
Is respectful to staff.	4	4	5	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	3	5	4
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	4	3	5	5
Is self-motivated.	3	3	5	5

## Additional Comments:

Eng – 90% of the time Tyler tries hard and is cooperative/respectful. 10% of the time I notice he is easily frustrated and has a hard time focusing.

Student #8



## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	4 unexcused absences. 4 unexcused tardies
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
Geometry	Average = 83.33% Shows one test grade missing/not completed and 2 low homework grades
Biology A	Average = 92.54% Shows all assignments complete so far
PE I	Average = 98.13% Only reflects 3 weeks of dressing out
Cosmetology I	Average = 73.13% Shows 1 missing lab grade due to absence, 2 zeros, 2 grades not yet entered

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Geom	Bio	PE	Cosm
Seems interested in school.	2	3	4	3
Gets along with peers.	4	3	4	3
Seems to care about grades.	2	4	4	3
Has good attendance.	2	3	4	2
Participates in class discussions/activities.	1	4	5	3
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	2	2	3	3
Is respectful to staff.	4	4	4	4
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	3	3	3
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	4	5	3
Is self-motivated.	2	4	4	2

Student #9

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	3 unexcused absences, 5 unexcused tardies
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 73.73% Shows 3 missing assignments but average to good grades otherwise
Geometry	Average = 79.02% Shows 10 assignment entries w/1 missing
Biology	Average = 95.40% Shows all assignments complete so far
Lifetime Wellness	Average = 81.85% Shows 3 missing assignments, 1 50% grade but good grades otherwise

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Geom	Bio	Well
Seems interested in school.	3	5	3	4
Gets along with peers.	3	5	4	
Seems to care about grades.	3	5	4	3
Has good attendance.	4	4	4	4
Participates in class discussions/activities.	4	4	3	4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1	3	2
Is respectful to staff.	5	5	4	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	4	5	3	3
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	4	5	3	3
Is self-motivated.	3	5	3	3

## Additional Comments:

Eng – 5. When she's interested in the topic; A\_\_\_\_\_ is very interesting – very intelligent & bookish, sweet & respectful. But she seems to be on the outside looking in most of the time.

Geom – 4. Tardy – late to school often

Well – 7. Always; 9. And 10. Some days

**Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not**

Student #10

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	Skipped 1 or more classes on 5 different days, 2 unexcused absences, 1 excused abs, 3 excused check outs, 3 unexcused tardies
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 56.07% Shows 6 missing assignments, otherwise, grades average to good
Lifetime Wellness	Average = 82.89% Reflects 3 missing assignments and 1 50% quiz grade
US History	Average = 53.50% Shows several assignments not yet entered by teacher; 4 grades that are entered are very low
Cosmetology I	Average = 69.03% Shows 6 missing assignments, otherwise, grades are mostly all good

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Well	USH	Cosm
Seems interested in school.	5	3	2	2
Gets along with peers.	5	4	3	3
Seems to care about grades.	5	3	1	2
Has good attendance.	3	3-4	1	2
Participates in class discussions/activities.	4	4	1	2
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	3		3
Is respectful to staff.	5	3-4	4	3
Persists on more challenging tasks.	5		1	3
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5	3-4	1	2
Is self-motivated.	5	3	1	2

Additional Comments:

Eng – O\_\_\_\_\_ is working hard for me. My only concern is her attendance.

Student #11

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	3 unexcused absences, 1 excused absence, 3 excused check outs, 1 skipped class
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 54.58% Shows 4 missing assignments due to absences, 4 grades not yet entered by teacher, other grades – average to good
Biology I	Average = 74.10% Reflects 3 zeros and average/below average quiz/test grades
Media Production	Average = No entries by teacher at this time
Understanding Music	Average = No entries by teacher at this time

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Bio	MPro	UMus
Seems interested in school.	4	4	3	3
Gets along with peers.	4	4	4	3
Seems to care about grades.	2	3	3	2
Has good attendance.	1	3	4	3
Participates in class discussions/activities.	2	4	3	3
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	3	1	3
Is respectful to staff.	5	4	5	2
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	3	3	3
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	4	3	3
Is self-motivated.	2	4	3	2

## Additional Comments:

Eng – M\_\_\_\_\_ is well behaved and polite, but he has missed at least 1 day a week since the beginning of the semester & is currently failing English due to missing work. I'm not sure how much is absorbing when he is here as work demonstrates little understanding.

Student #12

## Mid-Term Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 excused absence (Doctor/Dentist) and 1 excused check out
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English III	Average = 73.92% Reflects 2 zeros, 5 assignments not yet entered by teacher, 2 low to avg test grades
Algebra II B	Average = 64.80% Teacher only has 5 assignment entries so far w/student only showing grades for 2
Marketing/Management	Average = 57.35% Reflects 2 zeros and 5 assignments without grade entries at this time (out of 11 assignments entered so far)
Welding II	Average = 93.87% Shows all assignments complete so far with only 1 low grade

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Alg	Mktg	Weld
Seems interested in school.	2	2	1	4
Gets along with peers.	3	4	4	5
Seems to care about grades.	4	2	1	4
Has good attendance.	5	4	4	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	4	2	1	4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	2		1
Is respectful to staff.	4	4	3	4
Persists on more challenging tasks.	1	2	1	4
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	2	1	4
Is self-motivated.	1	2	1	3

Additional Comments:

Mktg – 7. Causes no trouble but disregards my efforts of encouragement/instruction

## APPENDIX F

**End-of-Term Short Answer Questionnaire**

Participants were administered the following short answer questionnaire at the end of the nine week term. It was given electronically through student Gmail and Google Forms. Participants were given the choice of typing their short answers or videoing and electronically submitting their short answers.

1. How do you currently feel about school?
  - a. Your classes?
  - b. Your learning/effort?
  - c. Your goals/future?
  - d. Your teachers?
  - e. Your peers?
  - f. Your school environment?
  
2. What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes?  
List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able.
  
3. If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do?  
What would you tell others to do?  
How might things be different?

## Should Be Engaged and Are

Student #1

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	
a. Your classes?	I like them and my teachers!
b. Your learning/effort?	My effort to learn is good.
c. Your goals/future?	To become a teacher.
d. Your teachers?	LOVE THEM!
e. Your peers?	I don't really like some of them.
f. Your school environment?	Great!
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?	Have the students be nicer, and more respectful to teachers and others around them!

## Student #2

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	School is fun and enjoyable. Personally, I like to come to school and better my education although it can be stressful with a lot of work and drama. Despite that, school is awesome.
a. Your classes?	I like my classes a lot. I like to be challenged and I enjoy learning. The teachers are excellent and I love being around people that have the same motivation to learn as I do.
b. Your learning/effort?	My learning has taken a turn for the better since I got into high school, especially sophomore year.
c. Your goals/future?	I feel like my future is well planned. My goals, such as getting into NHS and getting information from colleges, are approaching and becoming realities.
d. Your teachers?	My teachers know what they are doing and I respect them. I know that they are truly taking the time to better my education. It is also extremely helpful when teachers stay after school or come in early.
e. Your peers?	It's tough to find a group in high school with people that want the same things as you. My friends are people that I will have by my side for a long time, no doubt. However, the people I don't really associate with are harder to say the same thing about. I wish more people in the high school would be more cautious with their decisions.
f. Your school environment?	I feel safe at school, and I would highly recommend Tullahoma to anyone. All around, it is a very good school with everything I need right in front of me to achieve my goals.
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	My friends and parents motivate me and help me keep a good head on my shoulders. The teachers that expect more out of their students and push them harder to help them meet the needs of their future, the courses offered, the politeness of the majority of the people, and my involvement all help me enjoy school.



<p>If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?</p>	<p>I would make more time to get even more involved. I would ask more questions in class. I would tell others to do the same and tell them not to get involved with things like drugs and alcohol. Things would be different and there would be so much more respect among all the students.</p>
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## Student #3

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	I have remained relatively steady on how I feel about school. Coming up on break focus on school has increased. I still see school as a wonderful opportunity that we have, regardless of whether or not I enjoy the day by day.
a. Your classes?	The rigor of my classes has recently been increased by upcoming deadlines. The majority of my classes are engaging, however lack of proper scheduling has caused unnecessary rushing.
b. Your learning/effort?	To assure that I finish the quarter strongly I have had to be more careful with my grades. Most of my classes are in periods of review if not finishing up lessons.
c. Your goals/future?	Not much has changed regarding my overall goals since the interview.
d. Your teachers?	As I previously stated teachers have been rushing to finish lessons. This rush has caused a somewhat lack in the depth of our learning. If there was more planning involved in schedules maybe this could be prevented.
e. Your peers?	My friends continue to motivate me academically. Some with higher grades pull me towards them while others with lower grades motivate me with their confidence.
f. Your school environment?	Most of the people that I am around are of higher morals and/or academic level than many in the school. In the times that I am around people that could potentially have negative effects on me I usually do my best to prevent those from happening.
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	Everybody that I have been around has effected me in one way or another. Whether teaching me how to act or what to do or teaching me what not to do. There are several major teachers/people that have changed my attitudes, simply by showing me that I have the capability to reach high standards.
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more	It would be nice if from an early age more people were pushed towards a higher standard of education. Every person has

<p>interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?</p>	<p>the ability to learn at a somewhat high level, and I think that the school experience would be better if more people would be pushed to the best of their abilities.</p>
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### Should Be Engaged and Are Not

Student #4

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	I am currently a little bit overwhelmed by school, due to the increased stress of midterms. However, most of that stress is outside of class- in general, the school day goes well.
a. Your classes?	Other than homework, most of my classes are not too bad right now. Because of midterms, all my classes have been moving at a pretty fast pace. Even though this makes them a little bit harder, they also move more quickly. Overall, everything is positive.
b. Your learning/effort?	Outside of class, it has been a little bit difficult to keep up with studying and homework. This is mainly because my extracurricular activities have taken more time, leaving me to work on homework pretty late into the night. My level of effort has definitely been put to the test, but I would say that I am still learning and making progress in all my classes.
c. Your goals/future?	I feel relatively positive about my goals and future, even though I do not have a completely clear direction yet.
d. Your teachers?	All of my teachers have been very helpful and encouraging, and class has been interesting most days.
e. Your peers?	My friends have all been very supportive over the last few weeks of stress, and they make classes more enjoyable.
f. Your school environment?	At times, I can feel very isolated within the school environment (walking in the hallways especially), but I always feel very comfortable and happy with the atmosphere of school spirit type events, like pep rallies or football games.
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	I personally put too much stress onto myself, and (very) late nights of homework and studying definitely take a toll on my mood the next day. I also think that I've overwhelmed my schedule with too many activities this last quarter, and it's been really hard to maintain a balance.

	<p>I've also put a fair amount of social stress upon myself - no drama, but just trying to comfort a few friends that have been upset has definitely (though not in a negative way!) taken time that leaves me scrambling to finish homework at midnight. (I thought I'd mention this, as I forgot to in our interview and I thought it might be relevant) In general, this quarter has made it hard to balance school and friends.</p>
<p>If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?</p>	<p>Although I'm responsible for most of my stress, I think that if my out of class experiences were less demanding (homework), then I would enjoy the school day better. Sometimes (not always) it feels as if my teachers forget that we all have other classes, too. I also wish that we did more things as a school family, apart from sports events or homecoming weeks. And it would be nice if people would take the "15 words" thing more seriously- it can make such a difference in your day if someone just smiles at you in the hall or says hello! Interactions in the hallways should be more positive, rather than neutral. Even though a lot of the teachers have taken initiative with this, I wish that more students would too.</p>

## Student #5

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	Overall, fairly happy
a. Your classes?	I enjoy all of my classes
b. Your learning/effort?	I enjoy what I am learning but I feel that I need to work harder
c. Your goals/future?	I feel that, with hard work, I can reach my goals
d. Your teachers?	I enjoy all of my teachers
e. Your peers?	I get along with almost everyone
f. Your school environment?	I feel safe but I wish the school was slightly cleaner
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	Personal and moral views
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?	I would widen the variety of courses we can take in the school and make extracurricular activities easier to sign up for

## Student #6

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	I don't have as much homework in my classes now, then i did in the 1st semester.
a. Your classes?	They are good classes. I have several friends in all of my classes.
b. Your learning/effort?	I try to put all my effort into my classwork. Sometimes when I am having bad or rough days i don't try as hard.
c. Your goals/future?	I want to graduate high, college, get a good paying job, and stable with my financials before I start with a family.
d. Your teachers?	I like all of my teachers. If you don't understand something with your work they will explain it more or work one on one with you.
e. Your peers?	I have starting making better decisions with my friend making. I have good friends now that won't get me into any trouble.
f. Your school environment?	I feel good when I come to school because I know people can't get in unless eing let in through the attendance office.
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	I am having things going on outside of school that has messed with my emotions. I have been easier to become angry and/or upset real fast. I am having to put that off to the side while I am at school, so that i can focus on my school work and grades.
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?	I would change how much school time we had to do. I think that if we didn't have so long for a school that everyone would like school better and be more engaged into it. I think school should be from 9:00am to 2:00pm.

### Should Not Be Engaged and Are

Student #7

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	School is okay at the moment, I'm doing well in my classes and just letting the year ride it's self out as the days go by.
a. Your classes?	My classes are good. I don't have a grade lower then a C and I'm keeping on top of my work.
b. Your learning/effort?	I pay attention in class. Some days I'm not in the mood but I get my work done and go onto the next task.
c. Your goals/future?	I'm doing my best to get welding scholarships or mechanic schools to go to after high school but as well as help myself on task and focused.
d. Your teachers?	My teachers or okay in my opinion. Not really much of any problem with them this semester.
e. Your peers?	Same as always, friends being friends.
f. Your school environment?	It could be better but I'm fine with it.
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	Trying your hardest in school and being dedicated to you school work. I think it's important for people to know that.
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?	More school activities, try to get better food at lunch (haha), anything to make it more fun and interesting like the student classes doing the football thing at powder puff.



## Student #8

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	i enjoy school and i feel that maybe some teacher should learn how to cope with situations and try to help other than coming on strong and making students feel uncomfortable in class
a. Your classes?	i feel that the school should not turn towards all class information and work being on electronics. some students like me learn and keep more focused on things by writing or having the information in front of me other than having to look at a screen and teachers should make sure that everyone is comfortable with the information and understands. overall i enjoy my class
b. Your learning/effort?	my effort in school is honestly depends on my mood but even if im not in the best of moods i will still try to get what needs to be done, done.
c. Your goals/future?	my future goals are to be in the medical filled dealing with labor and delivery or prenatal care. growing up with a big family and watching my mom go through pregnancy and explain the process of it caught my attention at a young age and has stuck with me ever since.
d. Your teachers?	my teachers are pretty good in some case i wish that they had more time to make sure that students full understand the information but with Tennessee testing they can always do that
e. Your peers?	my peers are great i feel comfortable around and very little do they cause problems
f. Your school environment?	the environment of this school is good i can walk in school and know that im going to be safe and have a good time
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	family, friends, myself, and my strive to graduate would be contributing to my feelings and attitude about these things.
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you	if i could make a change in my school experience it would be to encourage other by offering a trip at the end of the semesters for those who have worked hard

<p>do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?</p>	<p>and earned there credits. being a teen we like to have thing to work and look forward to. yes graduating and getting diploma is a treat but having something else to look froward to through the years for getting to that point it would be great to have some else to look forward to that you would'nt have to wait till senior year</p>
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## Student #9

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	Although school has it's ups and downs, I still enjoy it; i may not always want to be here, but at the end of the day i look forward to coming back.
a. Your classes?	For the most part, I don't dislike my classes. They are decently okay and the only problem I have in them is a lack of friends/ people I speak to.
b. Your learning/effort?	I enjoy some of the learning, not all of it. Some of it seems rather tedious and useless, but I still listen and attempt to learn the required information.
c. Your goals/future?	My main goal at the moment is to make it through high school, and as for future goals, I want to find a career that fits me and is worth doing.
d. Your teachers?	I like most of my teachers although not all of them suite my fancy. However I still learn what is required in each of my classes, so I can't complain.
e. Your peers?	I don't normally intermingle with many of my peers unless they seem to fit into my little clique. I tend to stick to my own little group more times than not.
f. Your school environment?	Overall it's great, I have amazing friends and classes I can't complain about with teachers who are good at what they do.
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	The majority of my reasons would be the people I'm around. They give me my reason to strive and continue trying/caring when I'm here.
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?	If I could make changes I would set up small rally like things for people with similar interests to go to throughout the course of the year; it could help others, who need friends, find people they enjoy being around. And I would probably tell others to find a group of friends that makes them happy and keep them motivated; because, even if the relationships don't last past high school they still would be effected , hopefully positively, by their presence in life.

### Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not

Student #10

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	Like any other teenager I dislike school, not because of the teachers or work, but simply because I have a lot of trouble concentrating on what I am supposed to be doing. Also, I get distracted very easily and it takes me away from doing my class work which is mainly why my grades always seem to get lower instead of higher. Yes, there are some days I like coming to school and I do what i'm assigned when I get it. That's very rare for me though.
a. Your classes?	I am interested in some of my classes, but others I do not like at all.
b. Your learning/effort?	I don't learn things very well, It takes me a few tries to realize what i'm doing. Honestly, this year I haven't shown a lot of effort mainly because i have been stressed and having many problems with friends and family.
c. Your goals/future?	My goal is to graduate high school on time and make something better of myself. In the future I would like to go to college to be a cosmetologist, I have always liked doing hair and learning new styles to do is fun for me.
d. Your teachers?	There are some teachers I dislike, but I always treat them with respect. Because, they take a lot of time to make sure everyone understands everything and every teacher I have helps when my grades start to fall and make me want to work very hard to become something in the future.
e. Your peers?	very judging.
f. Your school environment?	I think my school environment is very unsanitary
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	The way I get treated and the environment
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more	If I could make changes in my school experience, I would make sure nobody got

<p>important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?</p>	<p>judged. or bullied. I think that is mainly why most students don't care about coming to school or passing classes. I mean, That's how I am. I don't really dislike school but the people that are so judging and bullies. I would tell others to just be themselves and stop judging everybody by there clothes, shoes, etc. Things might be different because more people would enjoy coming to school rather than hating it.</p>
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## Student #11

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	*This student did not complete the questionnaire.
a. Your classes?	
b. Your learning/effort?	
c. Your goals/future?	
d. Your teachers?	
e. Your peers?	
f. Your school environment?	
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?	

## Student #12

How do you feel about school? (Discuss anything that may be new, may have changed, or is something in addition to what was previously discussed in the interview)	I currently feel like these last two weeks have been nothing but reviewing and boredom. I know it's all important to review to pass tests and all, but it just gets boring really quick.
a. Your classes?	My classes currently are Algebra 2, Welding 2, English 3 (I believe), and Marketing.
b. Your learning/effort?	All my classes teach a lot, and some of it I just don't see useful. So I really don't pay much attention at all.
c. Your goals/future?	I was to be a U.S. Marine, but the Army wants to talk to me about joining them.
d. Your teachers?	They're all nice, but some don't care if you're happy or bored. (They have literally said that).
e. Your peers?	Everyone seems to be calming down, not much drama last week.
f. Your school environment?	It NEEDS to be repaired instead of us spending money on those flat-screen TVs. The building is literally falling apart.
What do you think is contributing to and/or affecting those feelings and attitudes? (List anything that applies and explain as you are willing and able)	It's just that I feel like I know the basics and to me, that's all I need to know because I won't be a teacher or a scientist so I really won't need some of the stuff I've learned.
If you could make changes in your school experience so that it would become more important to you or you would feel more interested and engaged, what would you do? What would you tell others to do? How might things be different?	I feel like we need to repair the school, get new equipment down in the welding/machine shop, because that is a valuable skill. Those types of classes are better for students to learn, no one is going to be a teacher right out of high school. They need to learn skills that will get them jobs, not how to find the distance of a shadow and tree. We could use an auto-mechanic shop, that would be even better since almost everyone is driving or learning to drive. The automotive industry is always looking for workers, and it will teach them to fix their own cars, or trucks.

## APPENDIX G

**Final Teacher Reports (TERF-N) and Participant Data**

All teachers of the participants again completed the TERF-N at the end of the nine week period. A final round of participant course grade, attendance, and behavioral data was collected and documented. Attendance data reflects full quarter.

**Should Be Engaged and Are**

Student #1

End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 Unexcused Absence
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English III	Average = 94.86% Shows all assignments complete w/a mid-term exam score of 74
Yearbook Staff	Average = 100%
Spanish II	Average = 94.41% Shows all assignments complete
Chemistry	Average = 97.79% While she does not have any zeros recorded, there are 10 assignments with grades not yet entered by teacher.

\*data retrieved from school iNow data reporting system as of 3/11/16

Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng3	Yrbk	Span	Chem
Seems interested in school.	5	4	5	
Gets along with peers.	5	3	5	
Seems to care about grades.	5	5	5	
Has good attendance.	5	5	5	
Participates in class discussions/activities.	5	4	5	
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1		1	
Is respectful to staff.	4	4	5	



Persists on more challenging tasks.	4	4	5	
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5	4	5	
Is self-motivated.	4	5	5	

Additional Comments:

Spanish – Great student.

\*Chemistry teacher out for surgery.

Student #2

## End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	5 excused absences (Doctor, Parent) 1 excused tardy
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II H	Average = 95.63% Shows all assignments complete
Algebra II H	Average = 86.44% Shows 1 zero, 4 assignments w/no grades recorded, 1 missing grade from absence, and 2 quiz grades that include corrections
US History	Average = 97.86% Shows 1 zero on a daily assignment
Anatomy & Physiology (new teacher 3-4 wks into quarter)	Average = 98.26% Shows all assignments complete

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng2	Alg2	USH	A&P
Seems interested in school.	5	5	5	4
Gets along with peers.	5	5	5	4
Seems to care about grades.	5	5	5	4
Has good attendance.	5	4	5	4
Participates in class discussions/activities.	5	3	5	4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1	1	
Is respectful to staff.	5	5	5	4
Persists on more challenging tasks.	5	4	5	4
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5	4	5	4
Is self-motivated.	5	5	5	4

Student #3

## End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 excused check out
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
Precal H	Average = 95.72% Shows 4 assignments w/no grade entries, 1 missing grade due to absence, & 2 quiz grades that include corrections
Chemistry I H	Average = 95.98% Shows several assignments entries still without grades yet
AP US History	Average = 98.76% Shows 2 assignments with grades not yet entered
Symphonic Band H	Average = No grade entries by teacher at this point

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	PreC	Chem	USH	Band
Seems interested in school.	5		5	5
Gets along with peers.	5		5	5
Seems to care about grades.	5		5	5
Has good attendance.	5		5	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	5		5	5
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1		1	1
Is respectful to staff.	5		5	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	5		5	5
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5		5	5
Is self-motivated.	5		5	5

\*Chemistry teacher did not return form.

**Should Be Engaged and Are Not**

Student #4

End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	2 excused absences (Parent Note/Call), 2 excused check outs
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
AP English III	Average = 96.80% Shows all assignments complete
AP Cal AB	Average = 94.50% Shows all assignments complete, 1 grade not yet entered, and 1 instance of test corrections done
Chemistry I H	Average = 98.16% Shows several assignments still not yet entered by teacher
AP Macroeconomics	Average = 98.95% Shows all assignments complete

Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Cal	Chem	Econ
Seems interested in school.	5	5		5
Gets along with peers.	5	5		5
Seems to care about grades.	5	5		5
Has good attendance.	5	5		5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	5	5		5
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1		1
Is respectful to staff.	5	5		5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	5	5		5
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	5	5		5
Is self-motivated.	5	5		5

Additional Comments:

Chemistry teacher did not return form.

Econ – I love M\_\_\_\_\_!! Terrific, wonderful person!

Student #5

## End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 excused Check Out and back in, 1 excused absence (Parent)
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
AP English III	Average = 86.10% Shows all assignments complete, good grades on daily scores, average to good grades on compositions and tests
Algebra II	Average = 99.40% Shows all assignments complete with 2 missing/not yet entered assignments, and 1 instance of test corrections done
Chinese	Average = No grade entries at time of retrieval
Symphonic Band	Average = No grade entries at time of retrieval

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Alg	Chin	Band
Seems interested in school.	3	5		4
Gets along with peers.	5	5		3
Seems to care about grades.	3	5		4
Has good attendance.	5	5		5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	2	5		4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1		1
Is respectful to staff.	5	5		5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	5		5
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	5		4
Is self-motivated.	2	5		4

\*Chinese teacher did not return final form.

Student #6

## End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 unexcused absence, 2 excused absences (Doctor/Dentist), 2 unexcused tardies, 1 unexcused check out, 5 exc check outs
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 64.79% 2 zeros, 5 missing/not yet entered assignments, 2 low quiz grades, 1 notation of test corrections, very low Unit 2 Test
Biology I	Average = 90.20% Shows all assignments complete and several low to average quiz/tests grades
Psychology	Average = 93.51% Shows 2 assignments w/out grade entries with 4 average to low quiz/test grades
Visual Art I	Average = 93.49% Reflects 2 zeros and a late assignment; otherwise, very good grades

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Biol	Psyc	Art
Seems interested in school.	3	3	3	3
Gets along with peers.	4	4	4	4
Seems to care about grades.	3	4	4	5
Has good attendance.	3	4	4	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	2	3	3	4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	4	1	2
Is respectful to staff.	3	3	4	4
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	3	3	2
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	4	3	4
Is self-motivated.	2	3	3	3

\*Based on her lack of disciplinary record, it appears the Biology teacher may have not read question 6 and the scale correctly.

### Should Not Be Engaged and Are

Student #7

End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	1 excused absence (Parent Note/Call), 1 excused check out
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 71.80% Reflects 3 zeros, 1 missing assignment due to absence, 2 low quiz grades, low Unit 2 Test, and lost points on daily grades
ROTC	Average = 88.40% Shows 2 assignments w/out grade entries, 75 on End of Quarter Exam, and average quiz grades
US History	Average = 86.80% Shows most assignments complete with 1 zero and 2 low quiz/test grades
Principles of Manufacturing	Average = 99.70% Shows all assignments complete except 2 due to absence

Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	ROTC	USH	PMan
Seems interested in school.	4	3	3	4
Gets along with peers.	3	4	4	5
Seems to care about grades.	4	3	3	5
Has good attendance.	4	4	5	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	4	2	5	5
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	2		1
Is respectful to staff.	4	4	5	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	3	3	3	5
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	3	2	5	5
Is self-motivated.	3	2	2	5

Student #8

## End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	7 unexcused absences, 6 unexcused tardies, 2 days where classes show skipped
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
Geometry	Average = 83.33% Shows 3 test grade missing/not completed, 1 homework assignment w/no grade entered, and 2 low homework grades
Biology A	Average = 92.54% Shows all assignments complete
PE I	Average = 98.13% Reflects 9 weeks of dressing out and no grade for Week 9
Cosmetology I	Average = 73.13% Shows 1 missing lab grade due to absence, 6 zeros, 2 grades not yet entered

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Geom	Bio	PE	Cosm
Seems interested in school.	2	4	4	
Gets along with peers.	4	3	4	
Seems to care about grades.	2	4	4	
Has good attendance.	2	4	4	
Participates in class discussions/activities.	2	4	3	
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	3	3	3	
Is respectful to staff.	4	4	4	
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	3	3	
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	4	4	
Is self-motivated.	2	4	4	

\*Cosmetology was out on extended leave and could not complete final form.



Student #9

## End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	3 unexcused absences, 5 unexcused tardies
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 73.73% Shows 6 missing assignments and 3 assignment entries without grades but average to good grades otherwise
Geometry	Average = 79.02% Shows 3 missing assignments with average to good grades otherwise
Biology	Average = 95.40% Shows all assignments complete
Lifetime Wellness	Average = 81.85% Shows 2 zeros, 1 assignment w/no grade entry, 1 50% grade but good grades otherwise

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Geom	Bio	Well
Seems interested in school.	4	5	3	4
Gets along with peers.	3	5	4	4
Seems to care about grades.	3	5	4	4
Has good attendance.	4	5	4	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	3	5	3	4
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	1	3	1
Is respectful to staff.	5	5	4	5
Persists on more challenging tasks.	4	5	3	4
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	4	5	3	4
Is self-motivated.	4	5	3	4

### Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not

Student #10

End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	Skipped 1 or more classes on 6 different days, 5 unexcused absences, 3 excused abs, 4 excused check outs, 5 unexcused tardies, 1 excused tardy, 2 unexcused check outs
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 40.91% Shows 12 missing assignments, otherwise, grades average to good
Lifetime Wellness	Average = 83.28% Reflects 1 missing assignment, 2 assignments w/out grade entries, 1 50% quiz grade, and several other avg grades
US History	Average = 35.67% Shows 19 zeros and several assignments not yet entered by teacher; 4 grades that are entered are very low
Cosmetology I	Average = 50.63% Shows 12 missing assignments, otherwise, grades are mostly good with 1 very low test grade

Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Well	USH	Cosm
Seems interested in school.	3	3	1	
Gets along with peers.	5	3	2	
Seems to care about grades.	4	3-4	1	
Has good attendance.	1	3	1	
Participates in class discussions/activities.	3	2	1	
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	3		
Is respectful to staff.	5	4	3	
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	3	1	
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	3	1	
Is self-motivated.	2	3-4	1	

Additional Comments:

Eng – Quiet! O\_\_\_\_ does not always turn in her work.

Cosmetology teacher out on extended leave and could not return final form.

Student #11

## End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	4 unexcused absences, 1 excused absence, 5 excused check outs, 1 unexcused tardy, 1 skipped class
<b>Discipline</b>	Suspended 3 days for Insubordination
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English II	Average = 37.57% Shows 10 missing assignments, 5 grades not yet entered by teacher, other grades – mostly average
Biology I	Average = 85.98% Reflects 1 zero and average/below average quiz/test grades (more average at beginning of quarter and then declining)
Media Production	Average = 87.41% Reflects 1 zero and 1 major assignment w/no grade entry
Understanding Music	Average = 82.50% 2 low grades early on but then grades consistently high for last few weeks

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Bio	MPro	UMus
Seems interested in school.	2	2		
Gets along with peers.	4	3		
Seems to care about grades.	2	3		
Has good attendance.	2	3		
Participates in class discussions/activities.	2	4		
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	4		
Is respectful to staff.	4	3		
Persists on more challenging tasks.	2	3		
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	3		
Is self-motivated.	2	3		

\*The Media Production and Music teachers did not return their final forms.

Student #12

## End of Quarter Data

<b>Attendance</b>	2 excused absence (Doctor/Parent), 1 excused check out/back in, and 1 excused check out
<b>Discipline</b>	No entries
<b>Academic Progress Reports</b>	
English III	Average = 68.18% Reflects 7 zeros, 2 assignments not yet entered by teacher, 4 low to avg test grades
Algebra II B	Average = 56.16% Reflects 5 zeros, 1 assignment w/no grade entry, and 2 low to average grades
Marketing/Management	Average = 21.67% Reflects 12 zeros and 3 assignments without grade entries at this time, grades he does have are low
Welding II	Average = 93.92% Shows 1 missing assignment due to absence, average to good grades otherwise

## Teacher Report Forms

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

	Eng	Alg	Mktg	Weld
Seems interested in school.	4	2	1	3
Gets along with peers.	4	4	4	4
Seems to care about grades.	4	2	1	4
Has good attendance.	5	4	4	5
Participates in class discussions/activities.	5	2	1	5
Is referred for out-of-class disciplinary procedures.	1	2	1	2
Is respectful to staff.	5	4	1-2	4
Persists on more challenging tasks.	4	3	1	3
Demonstrates appropriate effort for task	2	3	1	4
Is self-motivated.	1	2	1	4

Additional Comments:

Eng – Interested in graduating. Motivated by grades.

## APPENDIX H

**Transcriptions**

## Student #1 Interview Transcription

Interviewer: This is your twelfth year of this school thing, school journey...what do you think about it? And is it important to you in general?

5 Student: I mean it's important for me because I want to be a kindergarten teacher, so basically I have to go through school to be a kindergarten teacher.

I: How has this school thing been for you? In general, what do you think about it?

10 S: I mean good and bad. I mean I've had my bad moments but my good ones too...um...What do I think about it? I mean I like school. Like when I...elementary school and middle school, I liked it until, you know, you got to high school and you found those people that you don't like but...I mean I like school but the one big thing for me is because I want to get through school so I can become a teacher.

I: So tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you interested in?

S: I work all the time (laughs). That's what I do. Umm, I'm a lifeguard at DW, so, umm...

15 I: What motivates you? What kinds of things interest and motivate you?

S: Well, my parents motivate me. Like my dad, he sends my brother and I text messages every morning saying "I'm proud of you" and stuff like that. And he rewards me for my good grades. Umm, so my parents motivate me and then the right people, you know? The right friends...they motivate me.

20 I: So what do you view as being successful?

S: Having good grades, going somewhere in life...umm...and basically, I mean, if you graduate high school and get good grades and good GPA, that's pretty much what I think. And you go somewhere after. I mean, don't just go through high school because you have to and be like "Oh, college" and not doing that, you know?

25 I: Do you feel like you have control over your future then after high school and your ability to be successful?

30 S: I mean, yes, I have full control over it. I mean, it's...I'm not trying to say this in a bad way but it's my life, you know, I mean, I do but...I mean my dad asks me all the time "What do you want to do after college?," you know? And after high school, and I'm like, "I wanna go to college" and then, you know, get my education degree and then go further into that.

I: So your goals, you've already said go to college and be a kindergarten teacher, so would you describe yourself as self-driven and self-motivated and/or motivated by other people or other factors?

35 S: Self-motivated. I mean, well, maybe both because my parents do have a lot to say, you know, that motivates me so they motivate me, but myself too, because, you know, I really wanna be what I wanna be and, you know, you have to get somewhere in life.

I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward those goals?

S: Mhmm.

40 I: Even if it takes some time?

S: Yes.

I: Even if it costs you time you could be doing other things?

S: Mmhmm.

I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?

45 S: With other people than my parents, I mean, not as hard but harder than I can just like go to my dad and be like “I need help,” you know? If I went to like a teacher that I really didn’t know, then yeah, it would be kinda hard, you know?

I: How likely are you to keep trying or get frustrated and give up?

50 S: I mean, yes, I get frustrated, but I hardly ever give up. I mean, there may be a couple things, but that’s like not the simplest things, you know?

I: So you think you would say you have pretty good control then of your emotions when it comes to stuff like that?

S: Mmhmm.

I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?

55 S: Umm, I mean learning for me is not the easiest but it is pretty easy like certain things like some teachers, you know, they have different methods like I know like my Chemistry teacher, she like, Mrs. M\_\_\_, you know, she kinda does different things than what I’m used to. Like learning, I mean if I see something like if I see a picture, you know, I’m good, you know, learning that, but I mean some things are harder than others, but I mean I can learn it.

60 I: So what about your ability to get better at something or change?

S: Hmm, ...I just try and try until I get it.

I: Alright, so same type question: your ability to work harder and learn more or do better?

65 S: Hmm, I don’t know.

I: They’re all similarly related.

S: I mean if I wanna basically try, I mean I try on everything and I really don’t give up but...my ability of trying something new would be, you know, try it and if you don’t like it, don’t do it again, but if you do then keep going or if you don’t, I mean, keep going until you know you definitely don’t like it.

70 I: Do you think you have the ability to learn more? Push yourself and do better?

S: Yes. I feel like over my years in high school, I haven’t taken honors but I make straight A’s or A’s and B’s and I feel like I could’ve went to honors, but that’s just too much stress on me, but sometimes I do wish, you know, that I went ‘cause I feel like at the end of my senior year - I have, I think I have like a 3.7, in between a 3.5 and 3.7 GPA – so I mean if I got honors I think I woulda made a 4.0, but I mean I’m hoping, hopefully I make a 4.0. There’s a possible chance that I won’t, you know?

75 I: Tell me about your home situation a little bit. What’s your family/guardian structure? You live at home with both parents?

80 S: Yes, but I live with my aunt and uncle. But I’ve lived with them ever since I was in kindergarten, so basically I call my aunt and uncle my mom and dad. And both parents, they always motivate me and my brother. Umm, like anything we do, they’re always there to support us, I mean, they tell us to get involved and everything and “don’t come home and sit on the couch,” you know, “go outside and do something” so...

85 I: Any particular cultural influences in your family?

S: Nnhnn. (No)

I: What is the level of education for your parents? Do you know?

S: Umm, I don't think my parents went to college. I'm not for sure though.

I: But definitely high school?

90 S: Yes.

I: Ok. Umm, how would you describe your home environment? Which you kind of already had. You said they are supportive and they make you guys go outside and do stuff...

95 S: They don't want us, you know, to just sit around and like if we have a problem, they want us to talk about it, you know? Like I wanna do something and they want me to come and tell them what I'm doing, you know? Not like, I don't drink or do any of that but if I was going to, he would want me to tell him instead of going behind his back and doing it and getting in trouble, you know? I mean he'd probably tell me, "No, don't do that" and probably still get in trouble but, you know, I don't think I would do that. But he  
100 just wants me, you know, ... We have a really close relationship with all of us, I mean there's... we all have our ups and downs, but every family does, you know? But, umm, I mean I would say it's pretty good and great actually because, I mean, we all support each other. We all know everything about each other. There's no secrets really in our family.

I: So how do you think all of that impacts you or has impacted you in school and  
105 now up to this point?

S: Well, me personally, it's impacted me because, you know, I wanna get up in the morning and I wanna go to school. I have my parents and my brother and my friends to support me and to go through school and do better, and, um, in English class wrote an  
110 essay about, uh, community service and what I put is like one for discipline, you know those parents that don't care and don't know what their kid does or anything, we can see it in class and stuff, but the parents, you know, they are always there for them, do stuff, and they interact with each other, those kids come into class, they're respectful to their teachers, so you know where they actually come from. Well, not totally where they come from because some people act out just to act out or they're mad or something, so, um, so  
115 I think it's motivated me to get through school and get good grades which I want to personally get good grades because I wanna go somewhere in life. I don't wanna just, you know, just get through high school because you have to. I mean, yes, at this point I'm almost a senior. I wanna just get through high school, so I can start my career.

I: You've talked about this a little bit, so basically this is a "do you have anything to  
120 add?" type question, but what kind of expectations do your parents have for you at school as far as grades, attendance, behavior, attitude?

S: It's all high. Like they want me to, you know, have good grades... I mean if I slip  
125 up every now and then they don't really get mad at me because I've always gotten good grades. Um, but attitude, they want me to be respectful to the teacher, you know, don't cuss 'em out or throw something like other kids do which I feel if I was their parent, I would slap them in the face (laughs) and be like "Are you really doing that to your teacher?" But you know they don't want me doing that or, you know, they want me to be respectful and turn in my homework, do stuff, I mean, they don't want me to be failing and, you know, having to go through all this stuff to get my grade back up.

I: How involved in your school experience along the way do you feel your parents  
130 have been?

S: Good. I mean they're always...

I: Ok, so kind of compared with how involved are they now at this point in your...



- S: They're still involved. I come home every day and my dad's like "How was school?," you know, "What'd you learn? Do you have any homework?" Stuff like that.
- 135 I: So they're pretty involved in helping with work, support, resources, talking with your teachers?
- S: Mmhhh. Which now that I'm a junior, you know, my dad doesn't really...sometimes he'll come, you know, to parent-teacher conferences but, I mean, we
- 140 have iNow now, so he can look at my grades, see how I'm doing. If I was struggling, he'd come in, you know, talk to my teachers, and he still does sometimes just to meet them, just see how I am in class, you know? Stuff like that. They're very involved.
- I: So if you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for those future goals that they would know where to go and what to do to help you or try
- 145 and help you?
- S: Yes.
- I: Those friends and classmates we were talking about earlier...what about them as far as influences on school? Do you feel any pressure – positive and/or negative – from them?
- 150 S: I mean some friends, yes, negative, but over my high school career I have seen, you know, friends come and go all the time. I mean, that one friend you have and you get really close to, they're not going to be there after high school and you know really, I really don't have a lot of friends cause, I mean, I do have a boyfriend, so I mean, he motivates me, you know, to do good. He wants to, he has a career so I motivate him too,
- 155 so I mean, we motivate each other, but with friends, I mean I only have a couple but they do motivate me which we really don't talk about school, you know, but it's always like if I have a problem, they're always there to help me. If I'm like sitting there crying, they're like "Ashley, what's wrong?," you know. So I mean, they're always there to bring my spirits up.
- 160 I: They may have some influence over behavior, mood,...? You said not really your attitude toward school. You said you guys don't really talk about that.
- S: Yeah, I mean, I don't know if kids' friends...do they talk about..? I really don't think they do. I mean, maybe some.
- I: Sometimes indirectly influence your attitude toward school...
- 165 S: Which, yeah, if I was failing, you know, my friends would be like "Ashley, what are you doing? You're not like that." You know? They would tell me that, but I'm not failing, so I'm, I mean, I haven't experienced that, you know?
- I: Do they have any impact on your goals or any influence over your goals?
- S: I mean, most of my friends know I wanna be a teacher and I want to, you know,
- 170 be someone in life and do something, umm, so I mean, they're like, "Awesome, Ashley, that's good. You're on the right path." So, I mean, ...
- I: Describe to me how you felt about school along your journey from elementary to middle to high school.
- S: Elementary, you know, kindergarten, you're like "First Day! Woo!" in school,
- 175 you know, very happy, love nap time – we need that now. Um, elementary school, I loved my teachers, I loved school, I loved, you know, I was always involved. I did pretty much every sport you could name, even boys' sports, I mean, I did some of them. Uh, middle school, I was still in to school, you know, and I wanted...I did stuff. I was Student of the Month like almost all the time, well, not all the time but I was a ton of times. Um,

- 180 then we got to high school, you know, I had some rough patches as a Freshman, I mean, and then Sophomore year and then it died down this year, so, I mean, I really don't see that one person, you know, that picked on me and stuff, so I mean, I don't really see her anymore, so, I mean, ... From elementary school to middle school, it was good, and then high school – it was still good, I mean, I liked all my teachers, I got along with everyone
- 185 except one person which, I mean, you can't get along with everyone, so... um, so high, middle school and elementary school were pretty good and then high school, you know, it's still good, but there was rough patches. But that didn't bring me down, you know? I mean, yeah, for a moment, but I wasn't like, "I'm gonna go..."
- I: Did you notice any changes in yourself as far as how you felt about school?
- 190 Because you talked a little bit about how you felt in elementary and middle and then when you got to high school it went to more of the social.
- S: Um, yeah, I mean, elementary and middle school, you know, I was very motivated. I was like "Yeah, I like school!," you know? Which high school, I still like school, it's just the people, you know. Cause the people around me, you know, they
- 195 always being negative charges and it's just like "Ahh."
- I: Have you ever struggled with school or learning? I'm gonna say you've probably somewhat answered that already, but I'm gonna ask all the questions.
- S: Yes and no. I mean, some classes, like Freshman year, you know, that's your first year of high school, and it's really not, like eighth grade, you know, they kind of baby
- 200 you, you know? And they're just like push you through to high school and, I mean, I have struggled but I know my parents and me, myself, you know, I would get that grade up or learn it, go after school, ask a teacher, you know?
- I: Were there people here that tried to help you through that too?
- S: Mmhmm.
- 205 I: As far as what you did to try to work through that area of struggle or to improve, you worked with your parents, ...?
- S: ...teachers, and I studied a lot and, you know, ...
- I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes? Tell me about them. What ...
- 210 S: Like what the teacher is teaching? I mean, yes, if the teacher is teaching it, you know? Some teachers, you know, they do different ways, so they just write it on the board and like read it to you, so that's not really, you know, teaching to me, but, I mean, I pick it up, I mean, it's just a matter of when I pick it up, but I mean, I pick it up pretty quickly on some things, but some things, you know, I always struggle on, but, I mean, if
- 215 they're teaching it, I mean, if they're, you know, helping a little bit, I pick it up as it goes.
- I: So what do you like or not like about your classes?
- S: I mean, I like my teachers, I like some of the students, I mean, I think the things I don't like are probably the students because, you know, I really don't like people (laughs). And, I mean, students are just, you know, some, they wanna act out, some just,
- 220 you know, wanna be rude and I'm just like "We don't need that in here," you know? So I mean, I like my teachers and stuff. It's just the people.
- I: So do you think you are involved and/or interested in your classes?
- S: Yes.
- I: Do you think your teachers have done or are currently do a good job explaining
- 225 why you are learning or why you are doing something in class?

- S: Yes, they do. I mean, it takes a couple steps before they actually get to the reason, you know? But, I mean, yeah, they teach it pretty good. I mean, I understand it, so...and I do teach other people in some of my classes, because the teacher's like "Oh, she can teach it better than I can, so Ashley, why don't you help me?"
- 230 I: And you usually understand what the purpose is?
- S: Mmhmm.
- I: What about homework? You do your homework pretty regularly?
- S: I mean if we have homework. Some classes, you know, we do it in class, but I always get my homework turned in.
- 235 I: Do class and report card grades motivate you?
- S: Yes. Report cards, when I get straight A's, like I just got straight A's last quarter, well, last time we got report cards, and, I mean, I was really motivated, and I mean, this quarter, well this nine weeks, I still have straight A's, so I mean, that motivates me. Keep getting straight A's.
- 240 I: What do you think about how teachers grade?
- S: I mean, I think they're pretty good. I mean, that's what they think they should be, so I mean, and some, like tests, tests and quizzes in most of my classes are the main thing, so, I mean, how they grade them are pretty good. I mean, that should be the main reason, I mean, you want the teacher to teach you and then take a test and see how you're
- 245 doing. So I mean, if you fail that test then you don't know what you're doing, so you need help with it, so I mean,...
- I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?
- S: Mmhmm. From iNow, I mean, I'll always check my grades pretty much every day. And if, well, when the teacher, you know, puts the grades in.
- 250 I: How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests?
- S: If I know the, if I know what I'm doing on the test, then I feel great, you know, I feel confident about it. But like if I'm iffy on it, I mean, I still wanna like have that motivation "Yeah, I can do it," you know? Just, umm, I mean I feel pretty good about taking tests just if I don't know all the material, you know? I like study it a little bit more.
- 255 I: Are you usually prepared for tests and quizzes or...?
- S: I mean, yeah, she or all my teachers give us like ahead of time, you know, say "study for this test," you know, it's on our board so I'm always ready.
- I: What do you think about state standardized tests.
- S: I don't like them (laughs).
- 260 I: The rest of that question was: What about state standardized tests? How do you think/what do you feel about them?
- S: I feel like some things, I mean, I know teachers, you know, can't know what's on them, but I feel like sometimes they should because they don't like, I mean, teachers, they try to cover everything but some things there's like one or two questions, you know,
- 265 that those questions are very important and you don't know what it's about, I mean, you have some way of knowing, you know. You have a little bit of information about it, but you don't know the whole thing, so you can't get that answer right, so, I mean, I don't like 'em (laughs).
- I: Alright, shifting gears a little bit. In general, do you think that the adults here are nice and care about you?
- 270 S: Yes.

I: Why or why not? What kind of experiences or what's your perception of that?

S: I mean, all teachers, you know, how Ms. Rose says, "Keep a smile on your face," you know, "Say thank you, say your 15 nice words," you know? All teachers do that, you know? When I walk down through the hall I always get a smile from a teacher or a "Hi. How are you doing?," you know? "How's your day been?," you know? They talk to you, and that's just me when I walk down the hallway, they always, you know, ask me questions, so I mean, I like all the teachers here, I mean, I really don't have a problem with any, I mean, they're really..which I don't have every teacher, I don't know how other teachers do stuff, but I mean, ones that I've had are very nice.

I: Do you feel like they work to get to know you?

S: Yes.

I: And help you if you need it?

S: Yes.

I: Do you feel like there's people here that notice when you do something good or when you're successful at something?

S: Mhmm.

I: How do you feel about this school as a whole?

S: I mean, the people, it's like half and half, you know.

I: The people, the environment, the activities...

S: The environment is good, the activities are great, I mean, we're very involved in our school and, I mean, there's always an activity pretty much every week – "Hey, go to the games" and stuff like that. The people, I mean, it half and half, you know. Some students are not...are disrespectful and stuff and some students are like "Hey, why are you doing that?," you know? So it's half and half with the people, I mean, some are good, some are bad.

I: Do you feel like you have a place here?

S: Yeah (sounds uncertain)

I: Or maybe places. I mean things that you...

S: I mean, yes and no. I mean, those clubs that you know I get involved in and stuff like that, and then, I mean, I don't really have a "no." Yeah.

I: Do you feel safe?

S: Yes.

I: Do you like coming here?

S: Sometimes no (laughs). Yes, I mean, ...

I: Why/why not?

S: Just because of the people sometimes and then I don't really like waking up this early (laughs) so...

I: So if I look at different data points for you and statistically speaking, umm, your previous grades, attendance, your parental status, those types of things, and you know, I just look at you as numbers, research says you should be engaged in school and your survey from some of your answers and (student laughs) you are. Maybe not the most engaged ever, but overall, so...we've talked about some of my questions as to why or why not, but just generally speaking from you, why do you think? What are some of the biggies? Why do you think you are engaged in school?

S: Umm, I mean, my parents, like I've said, they're a big part of my life, I mean, my grades, who I am. I mean, that's the biggest thing. But school, I mean, I've already said,

320 you know, I wanna get through high school to become a teacher and do stuff, you know, be, uh, interactive with my community and stuff like that, and, I don't know. I mean, I wouldn't wanna be just, you know, graded by numbers, you know? I wouldn't be...that's just, you know, "Ashley's just numbers, you know?" I want me to be like, you know, and be like when people see me and hear my name "Oh, I know of her," you know? She's does this and that and this and that, that's what I would want be, you know, ...

## Student #2 – Interview Transcription

I: As a sophomore, this is your eleventh year technically of doing the whole school thing...how is it for you? What do you think about it? Is it...

S: I like school. Um, I mean I guess because I enjoy doing things that keep me busy, so, yeah.

5 I: Is it important to you? Why or why not?

S: Um, I want to go somewhere with my education , so...

I: Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you interested in?

S: Cheerleading, dance, um, the medical side of education...hmm...history...

I: What motivates you?

10 S: Um, ....

I: Or what are some things that motivate you? That drive you?

S: Um, I guess that drive that like I have standards for myself and I know that I have to meet them in order to like get to college and things like that, so...

I: What do you view as being successful?

15 S: Mmm, high grades, um, good reputation... things like that, yeah.

I: Do you feel like you have control of your future and your ability to be successful?

S: Yes, um, I feel like I can change it or do whatever with my life...yeah...

I: What are your goals, now and after high school?

20 S: Now, I want to keep around a 4.0 GPA, um, remain in Honors classes and after high school, I plan to go to UTK (University of Tennessee Knoxville), four-year university.

I: And you mentioned medical...

S: Radiology.

25 I: Would you describe yourself as self-driven/self-motivated or motivated by other people or factors?

S: Both, more or less. Um, yeah, my friends motivate me a lot, more than I would say I motivate myself, but, yeah...

I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals?

S: Yes.

30 I: Even if it may take awhile.

S: Mmhmm.

I: Or if it cost you time you could be doing other things?

S: Hmm, I wouldn't stop working at them, but, time management comes into play there, so...

35 I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?

S: I'll ask for help.

I: How likely are you to keep trying or get frustrated and give up?

S: Mmm, I'll try harder then...

40 I: When you're faced with a difficult task, how well do you think you control your emotions in those situations?

S: Mmm, I think it just comes down to being focused and trying to get over the problem, so...

I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?

- 45 S: Um, I'm a visual learner, so a lot comes from like charts and things like that, so I can see...
- I: What about your ability to get better at something or change?
- S: Um, like with math and things like that, I have to work through a bunch of problems and things like that to understand.
- I: Your ability to work harder at something in order to learn more and do better? So
- 50 similar question but a little different.
- S: Um, I would continue working at things that give me trouble.
- I: Let's talk a little bit about home background. What's your family structure?
- S: Me, my mom, and my dad.
- I: Any kind of cultural background information?
- 55 S: Not really, no.
- I: And what is the level of your parents' education?
- S: Um, my mom went to beauty school and my dad went to Shelbyville Tech, so..
- I: And any kind of home environment descriptors that stand out to you?
- S: No, not really.
- 60 I: How would you...so think like "busy," "supportive," "positive," "negative," those are some things when we talk about home environment.
- S: Um, we're all very busy, but my parents are probably the biggest motivators in my life, biggest support group.
- I: How do you think any of those things – family, home stuff – impact you here at
- 65 school? And you kind of touched on that, but...
- S: A lot. Um, my mom has always taught me to like finish my homework, finish this, you know? Make sure that I'm doing the right thing.
- I: Anything else? Any other...
- S: No.
- 70 I: What kind of expectations do your parents have for you at school as far as grades, attendance, behavior, your work ethic?
- S: High expectations, I would say. Um, my mom expects like nothing less than my best from me, so...
- I: How involved in your school experience do you feel like your parents have been
- 75 and are now?
- S: They're very involved with me and my activities, I would say.
- I: Helping you with work, support, talking with teachers...how involved?
- S: Um, they haven't gone to parent-teacher conferences since I've been at the high school, but every other time they've been with teachers and things like that.
- 80 I: Do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for those future goals, they would know where to go and what to do to help you?
- S: Mhmm.
- I: What about your friends and classmates? So like your friends like then your bigger peer group...do you feel any pressure from them school-wise, positive and/or
- 85 negative?
- S: Um, in some classes there's not necessarily negative, but I guess bad influences...I can see that. And then from my closer friends, positive.
- I: Friends and/or classmates...any influence on your behavior or your mood or your attitude toward school?

- 90 S: I guess sometimes when I see people that don't really try or things like that, it kind of frustrates me but...yeah...  
 I: Any influence on your goals?  
 S: No, not really, no.  
 I: Describe to me how you felt about school going through elementary to middle
- 95 school to high school. Kind of how you, what you thought about yourself going through school each step of the way.  
 S: In elementary school, I didn't really think about my future or anything like that, and in middle school, I kinda decided medical field and things like that and then now, I've buckled down on my studies and things like that to get into college.
- 100 I: What about school experience in each one of those...?  
 S: Like after school activities?  
 I: No, like how you felt about school when you were in elementary or middle school or like your opinion how you felt / what you remember about being in school during those times.
- 105 S: Well, elementary school was really fun. I mean they gave us a lot of freedom and everything cause we were little. And then in middle school, um, I tried harder for grades and things like that, to get A's and then now there's more people in high school and things like that, so a bigger friend group and then still maintaining my studies, that too.  
 I: Have you always been in this school system?
- 110 S: Mmhmm. I have.  
 I: Do you notice any changes in you or your attitude going through the different levels of school? You mentioned focus on grades...anything else?  
 S: No, not really, Attitude, no.  
 I: Have you ever or do you know struggle with school and learning?
- 115 S: I haven't really struggled, I would say.  
 I: Has there ever been something that you've had to work through – kind of improve in a certain area? If so, what did you do or what did others do to try to do to help you with that?  
 S: Like subjects or just like people?
- 120 I: Subjects or anything, any situation that you kinda had to work through.  
 S: Definitely math (laughs), it's my roughest subject, but, um, yeah, group work helps a lot and things like that.  
 I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?  
 S: Mmhmm, yeah.
- 125 I: Tell me about them. What do you like, what do you not like about them? You can think back – last semester, this semester.  
 S: I don't really like it when a teacher just lectures the whole class period, cause I don't really learn from that. Um, I don't like it when we just do busy work in a class either. I like to do things. Um, like I said, group work helps a lot. Um, yeah...
- 130 I: Do you think you're involved and interested in your classes?  
 S: Mmhmm.  
 I: Do you think your teachers do, have done and currently do, a good job explaining why you're learning or doing something in class?  
 S: Um, I wouldn't really say they teach us the "why" of things, but they just kind of
- 135 put it out there.



- I: And you mentioned this earlier, but homework...you do your homework?  
 S: Mhmm, I do.  
 I: Do class and/or report card grades motivate you?  
 S: Yes.
- 140 I: What do you think about how teachers grade?  
 S: Um, like for instance my math teacher, she grades more like 2 out of 4, things like that. But I think it's easier for them to do it. I know it's probably not my right to say, but out of 100 – things like that. So we get more credit for different things, I guess.
- I: Do you feel like there's some similarities with how teachers grade, or is it...do  
 145 you understand when you get work back, how it's been graded? Do you get feedback on it?  
 S: Um, most of the time I would say I understand why I missed something, but yeah.  
 I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?  
 S: Mhmm, I do.
- 150 I: Ok. How do you know?  
 S: Um, I guess like in math we build on like previous lessons, so if I understand the previous lesson, then I'm gonna like understand this one. And then in History, like it just kinda goes along and then, I like history, so...  
 I: Do you get feedback from teachers on your grades or do you check iNow or how  
 155 do you...?  
 S: I do, I do both.  
 I: How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests?  
 S: Um, I personally like tests; I don't know why, but I do. Um, I think they're a lot easier to focus on other than different things like that, so...
- 160 I: Do you usually feel like you're prepared for them?  
 S: Mhmm, yeah. (quick to answer)  
 I: What about state standardized tests like EOC, ACT, Writing Assessment, those types of things? What do you think and how do you feel about those types of tests?  
 S: Um, going into them, they're nerve-racking and then the time limit is always  
 165 stressful, but other than that, I mean, if you know the material, then...  
 I: In general, do you think the adults here are nice and care about you?  
 S: Mhmm, I do.  
 I: Why or why not? Any particular reason you think that or anything you pick up  
 on?
- 170 S: I mean, not really. I was just, um...  
 I: Like a sense of caring?  
 S: Yeah.  
 I: Do you feel like there's people here that work to get to know you?  
 S: Like teachers.
- 175 I: Mhmm.  
 S: I would say so, mmhmm, yeah.  
 I: Help you if you need it?  
 S: Yes.  
 I: Notice when you do something good or are successful at something?
- 180 S: I wouldn't say we get recognition for doing good things like good grades and things like that, but I know that like they know we do, if that makes sense.

I: Mmhmm. How do you feel about this school as a whole?

S: Um, I feel like the people that I'm surrounded by like help me like get where I'm going. Um, teachers are good. Um, I don't really know...

185 I: Do you feel like you have a place here?

S: Yeah. I do.

I: You feel like you're safe?

S: Mmhmm.

I: Do you like coming here?

190 S: I do.

I: Last question. So research on engagement in school and related data points would suggest that if I were to look at you as numbers, you should be engaged and your grades and your survey data suggested that you are. You feel that you are engaged in school. So just kind of on a broad scale, why do you think or what are some of the reasons why you are engaged in your school experience?

195

S: Um, ever since I was little, I've always remembered I want to go to school. Like I like school. Um, it's just, I don't know, like I said it keeps me busy and I know that I'm getting somewhere. Like I know that I'm not just coming here to do whatever, so...

## Student #3 Interview Transcription

I: As a sophomore this is your eleventh year doing this whole school thing. How's it been for you? What do you think about school in general?

S: Well, I guess like, I mean, I kinda... I don't dislike it. Obviously there's days where I wish I didn't have to come, but like I appreciate the opportunity and I kinda like to learn in certain circumstances, so I mean, it's been pretty good, so...

I: I'll ask you about those certain circumstances a little bit later. Ok, so is it important to you? Why or why not?

S: Yeah, I mean it's important just because I know that I need an education to get farther in life, like to get where I want to be then I need it, so yeah...

10 I: Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you interested in?

S: Well, as you know I'm in band, and I really enjoy that and I like to, you know, go off into other stuff that is involved, you know, kind of stuff similar to that. I kind of like to do just a lot of what most people like to do, but, um, I'm on math team which is not like, my favorite, I mean it's not like the most fun thing but I enjoy just cause I get to like be around other people that are similar to me. Um, I do a little bit of horse-riding, not like a lot, but you know, just every once in awhile.

I: What motivates you?

S: I don't know. That's kind of a hard question. Um...

20 I: What kinds of things? It may not be one thing, but... what thing or things motivate you?

S: Well, there's a lot, I mean, Kind of just generally I'm just trying to do my best. I don't know why, I just really enjoy like, you know, like knowing that I've done the best that I can no matter what it is. And, I mean, a lot of what I do goes into like you know, my future plans and stuff that I know I'm going to need this or this will help me in the future.

I: So what do you view as being successful?

S: Well, I mean, like for me or for just people in general?

I: Um, both.

30 S: Well, for people in general it varies a lot, uh, depending on what your goals are. I mean, like I know I had a conversation awhile back that was like, um, you know back whenever America was like first becoming a prominent nation like immigrants that came over, they thought it was amazing that they could like get a job and start their own because it was democracy and they were like "Oh it's free, that's good." So like for some people who have never had those opportunities being successful could be like owning their own cab company which is like "Ok, I own my own business. That's an amazing thing." But for me, it's probably more like, well, I mean I wanna get a good education. I wanna, you know, go to a good college and I really just want to do something scientific that will help people, like, I don't know, that's kind of my goal in life. I don't really know what it is yet, I just want to do something, like something scientifically based that will like, you know, better, you know, I don't want to be cheesy, but you know better mankind.

40 I: Do you feel like you have control of your ability to do that? Your future and your ability to be successful?

45 S: I mean, yeah. I kinda feel like everybody does, and like, you know, in most aspects, there's some things that you can't control that will affect it but I think you can, you know, work hard to overcome those things though, you know, in the grand scheme of things.

I: So you've talked a little bit about your goals. Is that kind of your biggest goal is that scientific work, that betterment to society as a whole?

50 S: Yeah, I mean, there's other stuff that I'd like to eventually accomplish, but...

I: What are some of your other goals? Now and after high school?

S: Well, like right now, very short term, I'm just like trying to, you know, keep all A's but that's kind of like a smaller thing, I guess. Um, hmm...

55 I: Goals are goals – it can be short term, it can be long term, big scale. So, you know, anywhere on there - things that are on your mind that you want to achieve at the moment or work toward in the future.

S: Well, recently I've been really focused on trying to get like practice and trying to get better on trumpet just cause I'm not like, I mean, I think I'm good, but I'd like to, you know, just keep getting better at that cause it's something that I really enjoy, so...umm, 60 that's one thing. There's also like religiously, I've really wanted, like recently, I've really been trying to be more courageous and like go out and, like, you know, cause I'm a pretty nervous person as you can probably tell, but you know, I've been trying to like be able to share like what I know about Christ with other people recently, so...

65 I: Would you describe yourself as self-drive or self-motivated or motivated by other people and factors?

S: It's kinda a combination of the two, I guess. Like, I mean, I motivate myself but not, I'd say more I'm motivated by others than myself just cause like when I see other people doing what I want to be able to do then it just helps me to know where I need to go, what I need to do to get there, so...

70 I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals?

S: Yeah, I'd say so. I mean, ...

I: Even if it may take awhile?

S: Yeah, I mean, obviously that varies depending on how long but, yeah.

I: Even if it costs you time you could be doing other things?

75 S: Yes. Yeah, I would definitely say that.

I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?

S: I...just to be completely honest, I'd say unlikely. Depending on the situation, because usually I'd like try to get myself out of it. Now if I was like completely to a point where I couldn't at all, then I would ask for help, but just to be honest, I'd say unlikely 80 (laughs a little).

I: So then same situation. How likely are you to keep trying or get frustrated and give up?

S: No I'd, like I'd keep trying. It's just you know, whether or not I'd go to other people. But yeah, I'd keep trying.

85 I: Talking about those same types of situations, how well do you think you control your emotions?

S: Hmm. I mean, I'd like to say pretty well. It's kinda hard to tell like you know, like self-judging, you know. But I'd say decently well, at least.

I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?

- 90 S: I mean, I think, honestly, I think I'm pretty... I'm pretty good at learning like I usually can pick things up pretty quickly, and like you know, in comparison to others, so I just, you know.
- I: What about your ability to get better at something or change?
- 95 S: That depends on what it is. Usually I can do that quickly if I really try, I work at it. But if I try to just leave it alone then that's not gonna happen.
- I: Your ability to work harder and learn more and do better? So similar question but a little different – work harder at something in order to learn more and do better at something...
- S: I think I'm pretty good at that... I don't really know how to answer that, sorry.
- 100 I: No, that's fine. We're going to shift gears a little bit, and, uh, I'm gonna ask you a couple questions about home situation, home set-up. What's your family structure?
- S: I mean, pretty like you know, normal. Both my parents are together and I have two, an older sister who just went to college last year and then a younger sister who's in fourth grade, so...
- 105 I: Any kind of cultural background information or descriptors of your family?
- S: Um, well, like way, way back, I'm like mixed between Irish and German but that's not really, you know, directly influencing anything. There's not really that much...
- I: Religious background...?
- S: Religious background like my mom's side it's, she's Christian, but her parents
- 110 and, you know, it's not really like solidly religious, but my dad's side is like pretty much completely everybody's, you know, we all go to the same church, so...
- I: Um, level of your parents' education?
- S: My mom, well both my parents went to college. My mom went to Motlow and then MTSU, and I guess for four years, and my dad went to Auburn for four years, so...
- 115 I: And home environment? How would you...
- S: Umm, I mean it's kind of hectic, but it's not like bad. I'd say I've got it well off.
- I: So how do you think any of those things, that home/family stuff, impact you here at school?
- S: Hmm, well, I mean, every once in awhile when there's like something going on,
- 120 which isn't too often, but you know it happens, there's... it gets kind of like... it does affect, I mean it affects pretty clearly like sometimes you know, it's harder to pay attention and stuff which can, you know, cause some stuff to change, but it's not like a super thing that really gets me down when I'm like at school, so...
- I: And it can be in positive way and/or a negative way, so you know, any kind of
- 125 influence. So what kind of expectations do your parents have for you at school – grades, attendance, behavior, those types of things?
- S: They, I mean, they expect me to do well mostly because I, I mean, I try to do well anyway. I don't really think that I wouldn't need them to expect me to do well for me to do, but they do expect me to do well, and you know, I mean, they're not gonna be
- 130 seriously mad at me if I don't. They're probably gonna be understanding about it, but they push me towards better academics.
- I: How involved in your school experience do you feel like your parents have been and are now?

- 135 S: Umm, not like really, not really extensively. Mostly because they know that I can kind of handle it just because, like, if I had problems with schooling then they would probably step in and be, work a lot with me but not really too much I don't guess.
- I: How involved are they or have they been helping with work or support, talking with teachers, those types of things?
- 140 S: Not, they don't usually talk, sometimes they help with work depending on what it is and if they can, you know, if they can help with the work whatever it is and talking to teachers, it kinda depends on the teacher. Not too much with my educational teachers as they do, like, with the band directors, but, you know, that's more just because they're trying to figure out what's going, you know, what's going on with the schedule and stuff.
- 145 I: Do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for those future goals, they would know where to go and what to do to help you?
- S: Yeah, I think they would. I mean, or they would be able to find out through what they know so...
- I: What about your friends and your classmates? So kind of your inner circle of friends and then the broader scale of classmates – do you feel any kinds of pressures from them, positive and/or negative, towards school/how you feel about school?
- 150 S: I think it's more positive. I mean, I think I have really good friends and the group that I hang out with, and I think it's all really good, and it's more positive because like originally like back in middle school or whatever, I started hanging out with these people. I wasn't really trying to push academically – I was doing fine, but then once, like, you know, I started to try to be with them academically, so it, you know, helped me.
- 155 I: Do they in any way influence your behavior, your mood, your attitude towards school, your goals, any of those things?
- S: Sometimes, like, sometimes when one of my friends like, you know, talks about something that they wanna, like goals wise, like “This looks like an interesting field”, and I'm like “Oh, that does kinda sound interesting”, so it's kind of helped guide, like direct me on certain paths, and I mean, like I said positively toward school, just a generally good attitude toward it of you know, I need to do well, but yeah...
- 160 I: Describe to me how you felt about school going through elementary school then to middle school and now to high school. What were your impressions and did you notice any changes in your feeling about school as you went from one to the next?
- 165 S: Well, elementary school was more just like, you know, I wasn't really being pushed academically just because I didn't feel that I was like needing to work academically, but it was still good to get like a base, like a good foundation. And then middle school was more like just when I was starting to be like “Ok, I can actually like be some, you know, I think I'm actually pretty good at this. I should probably work, you know, harder to do as best I can,” and you know, there was like, that's when the most change happened – from being kind of indifferent to being like “Ok, I need to like, I can actually work at this and be really good,” and then high school's just been like kind of the afterwards of that change where I've just, you know, been continuing to work hard.
- 170 I: Have you always been in this school system?
- S: Yes. Yeah.
- I: Have you ever or do you now struggle with school and learning?
- S: Oh, I mean, yeah, of course, I mean...
- 175 I: Tell me about it. What do you remember?

- 180 S: Umm, like, it's not been bad trouble. The standards that I try to like hold myself to, it's been, you know, I've been trying to like, it's been a difference between like doing like really, really good and doing, you know, I don't know how to explain it. Let me think for a second. Like I've been trying to get all A's, you know, straight through, which I realize is hard but I think I can do it. And it's more of just like, not that I've really,
- 185 really been struggled but it's like I've been kind of, you know, on the edge there, and it's just, there's just certain times where everything adds up, I guess, and you know, stuff just kind of goes down for a little bit and you have to work to get it back up.
- I: What have others done to help you during those times?
- S: Like I said I don't like, you know, direct straight go to others, and there's been
- 190 times when I've like had to get out of other things and people have been understanding about it because of that, so that would be the main thing.
- I: So this is the more appropriate question because you said you don't like to ask others: so what did you do or are you doing to try to work through that trouble?
- S: Really what I do is I kinda shut myself like, I shut myself off from everything that
- 195 would distract me, like you know, video games and that kinda stuff. I just, like, put that aside and I'm just like, "Ok. I'm not gonna do that for awhile, so that I can focus on this," and then that usually helps.
- I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?
- S: Yeah, I mean usually and if I don't for awhile, like, if there's a time where I don't
- 200 then I'll either ask the teacher about it or I'll figure it out, so...
- I: Tell me a little bit about classes. What do you like? What do you not like?
- S: Well, I mostly like classes where we're actually like learning new things and then applying them rather than repeating old things which is, you know...And then there's,
- 205 like I really like history cause we get to learn new things every day about what's happened and then I like math because usually we're learning about a new subject and stuff, you know, different things that we can do and how to apply them and, I mean, other that just repeating the same thing which seems to happen in some classes.
- I: Do you think that you're involved and interested in your classes?
- S: For the most part. There's like sometimes when it's kind of, you know (laughs),
- 210 gets monotonous or however that word goes, so...yeah...
- I: Do you think your teachers have done or currently do a good job explaining why you're learning something or why you are doing something in class?
- S: Yeah, I mean, yeah, I'd say so.
- I: And homework, you...do you do your homework pretty much?
- 215 S: Yes. (laughs a little)
- I: Always?
- S: Yes.
- I: Do class and/or report card grades motivate you?
- S: Yeah, they do. (laughs a little) I mean, I know you're not like working for the
- 220 grade, but...yeah.
- I: What do you think about how teachers grade?
- S: Uh, that's a good question. I mean, I think it's a good system like what most people do at least. It's not like, for some things it's kinda like certain assignments it seems where that will hurt your grade like too much depending on what it is like, like if
- 225 it's...like you know there's this one test that's really hard and then it hurts your grade a

lot, that's kind of, I don't think sometimes, I don't really think that's a good thing sometimes cause it shouldn't be based on like a single assignment, so if it was a little bit more like each thing was graduated where it either helped your grade or hurt your grade a little or other than just like this one big thing, but yeah.

230 I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?

S: Yeah, I mean especially like with the new system and stuff with the internet, you can keep up with it real easily, so...

I: Do you get much feedback from your teachers?

S: Well that all depends on the teacher. Usually, yes. Yeah, I'd say so.

235 I: How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests?

S: I mean, like, how do you think I do or...?

I: Yeah, how do you feel about them when you take them? Some people talk about how they feel...some people you say "quizzes or tests", and they have some pretty strong reactions or some people have confidence or... When you have to sit down and take a quiz or a test in a class, how do you feel?

240

S: It really depends on like whether or not I'm well-prepared which...

I: Are you usually prepared or not?

S: Uhh (small nervous laugh), yeah, that depends, it depends on what it is, cause sometimes if it's a quiz that, if you don't study outside of the class, then it's not gonna be good cause you're not really learning it as much in class, but a lot of times it's just applying what you learned, and I guess that really depends on what it is, and if I've actually studied outside of class, I do good. And I'm usually prepared, but every once in awhile (laughs a little).

245

I: What about state standardized tests, EOC, ACT, Writing Assessment, those types of things – what do you think and how do you feel about those?

250

S: Sometimes I, well, a lot of times I feel that they need to be like, there needs to be multiple levels of those tests. Like I get mad whenever they give us a test that's really, really easy, and it's just kind of...there's no point in taking it, cause it's so easy, so sometimes I feel that there's like, you know, there needs to be multiple like levels. And a lot of times on the EOCs, there is like an honors version, but sometimes there's not which I don't think is really right either. I mean...yeah...

255

I: Alright. Shifting gears a little bit. In general, do you think the adults here at this school are nice and care about you?

S: Yeah, in general. I think it's like a small enough school that you can get enough attention to really like help you, and yeah, I'd say in general.

260

I: Do you feel like there's people here that work to get to know you?

S: Yeah.

I: Help you? Even if you won't ask for it? (laughs a little) If they see that you need help, do you think that there's people here that would help you?

265

S: Yeah. That one I'd say there's like a little bit less, cause I think that you really just kind of have to ask which isn't much of a problem, but there's still some. It's just probably a little bit less often.

I: Do you think there are adults here that notice when you do something good and are successful at something?

270

S: Yeah.

I: How do you feel about this school as a whole?



S: I think it's, I mean, for the area, I think it's a really good school. Like academically and the programs we're offered, and especially for like the size of the school. It's just really...yeah...I think it's good.

275 I: You feel like you have a place here?

S: Yeah.

I: Do you feel safe?

S: Yes.

I: Do you like coming here?

280 S: (laughs a little) Um, for the most part. You know, like I said, there's days you just don't want to, but...yeah...

I: That has more to do with other things maybe than the school?

S: (laughs) Yeah, laziness...mostly.

285 I: Ok. Last question. So prior to this stage, I had to look at prior research and data and statistics and stuff and kind of categorize types of things, so if I were to look at just the research and the data, it would suggest that a student like you would be engaged in school, and, you know, sure enough when you took your survey and had your responses, it indicated you felt like you were pretty engaged in school, so just generally speaking, why do you think that is true for you?

290 S: Well, I think that I kind of go a little bit above to like help myself if I need it. Other than just kind of leaving everything here when I go home, I try to like you know, work a little bit to gain a better understanding which helps me to be more involved in class because then I kinda know what I'm talking about, so...

## Student #4 Interview Transcription

I: So as a junior, this is technically you're 12<sup>th</sup> year doing this whole school thing, so what do you think about it? How is it for you, in general?

5 S: Well, ...I guess for me it's been a little, it's been a little bit tougher just cause of the honors and AP kinda path, it's been a lot of hard work. And a little bit more stressful especially with high school than I had anticipated, but I mean, overall it's been pretty good...I think.

I: School important to you or...?

S: Yeah. (laughs a little)

I: Why?

10 S: Well, for me, it's college and scholarships and because I kinda started out, you know, I've always gotten the good grades, and to keep going on that path is, it's kinda just, at this point it's either "go big or go home" kinda...with grades and everything. (nervous laugh)

15 I: So tell me a little bit about yourself. Things like what are you interested in? What motivates you?

S: You mean like hobbies...? What do you mean?

I: Anything. What are you interested? What kind of...what drives you? What keeps your interest?

20 S: Hmm, well, I've always liked subjects that I'm interested in. When I get it and I can learn it, that's always good, especially with math like logically and figuring those things out has always been, I guess what keeps me from getting too stressed out and overwhelmed with things, and I've always liked English and writing, so that keeps me interested in that with writing and so...I guess, not to just be like "I have a love of learning", but I have a lot of...I have a wide range of interests so that I don't get bored with any one thing in particular I guess.

25 I: What are some of the other things? Extra-curricular or that interest you?

30 S: Art is really big, I've always, it's really big to me now when I can actually have time for it. It's kind of a good stress reliever...and tennis. I've played all 4 years and I really like it, or all 3 years since...not a senior yet, and, um, I used to write a lot more than I do now, but I still like that a lot, and sometimes I'll do that in my free time. And, what else? Honestly, piano and music – I used to do a lot of, but the past few years, school's kinda taken over so much that it's hard to be able to develop a lot of those things anymore, but...

I: What motivates you? Or what are some things that motivate you?

35 S: Well in school, scholarship, and that kinda right now especially, at least like pushing me to keep going is my class rank because it's staying at the top (laughs), so that 's kind of a motivator to keep going, but everything has paid off that I've done, so, just kinda seeing the payoff I guess...in the long run.

I: What do you view as being successful?

40 S: Hmmmm. What do I view as success? I guess...feeling as if I've accomplished something or, trying to think of the right word here...hmmm...at least progress, that's what I was looking for. That I've made progress with something that, getting better at something I couldn't do before. Just feeling like I've at least tried my hardest.

I: Do you feel like you have control of your future and your ability to succeed?

- 45 S: Yeah, to an extent. Sometimes that still scares me, but...for a big part, yeah, I think.
- I: What are your goals now and after high school?
- S: Hmm, well right now, there's just to graduate without completely losing my head with stress and I guess after high school will be to get good scholarships and figure out
- 50 what I'm gonna do, cause like I said my interests are so wide-ranging, I don't even know what I'm gonna do as a major or as a career, but I guess figure out what I want to do and go to school and keep going down that path, not kinda plateau and find something that interests me that I won't get bored of.
- I: Would you describe yourself as self-driven and self-motivated and/or motivated by
- 55 other people and factors?
- S: Probably both, because I've grown up being driven by like, you know, my parents and teachers and...but that's kind of raised me in a way that I'm incredibly self-
- motivated now with the way that I do things – it's a lot of my motivation is just work
- 60 drive kinda.
- I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals?
- S: Yes.
- I: Even if it may take awhile?
- S: Mmhmm.
- 65 I: Even if it costs you time you could be doing other things?
- S: I think if I could see what I want in the long run and I think I can reach it, then it's worth it to take time to get there.
- I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?
- S: (thinks) It depends. It doesn't scare me to ask for help, like I...ask questions
- 70 immediately if I need it, but I also have a little bit of a drive in myself to figure it out before, unless I just absolutely can't figure it out, then that's when I turn to get some help.
- I: Same scenario. How likely are you to keep trying?
- S: Pretty likely, especially if it's something that I want to succeed in. Less likely if
- 75 it's something that I'm not very interested in and I just can't get it, but if it's something I really want, then I keep going.
- I: What about get frustrated and give up?
- S: (thinks) I get frustrated easily but I don't give up easily.
- I: So in those types of situations, in that context, how well do you think you control
- 80 your emotions?
- S: I control them pretty well, like as far as...sometimes there's breaking point (laughs) with you know, 50-hour math projects, but pretty well, I think.
- I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?
- S: I pick up things pretty quickly.
- 85 I: To get better at something or change?
- S: If I'm really willing to and I..., if I have like a genuine interest, I really willing to get better at something and work at it.
- I: Your ability to work harder and learn more or do better?
- S: The same, probably.
- 90 I: Yeah, similar questions, but a little different context. Alright, tell me a little bit

about your home situation. What's your family structure?

S: Um, well, it's like me and my little brothers and they're in elementary school and they're kinda held to the same standards that I was, which is just to try your best and that, you know, ...

95 I: And you're at home with both parents, correct?

S: Yes, I am.

I: Any kind of cultural background that plays into your family home environment?

S: Not really, I mean, Christian household, but other than that, there's nothing unique.

100 I: Do you know what level of education your parents have?

S: They both graduated with at least 4 years...

I: Of college?

S: Yes, degrees.

I: And any descriptors stand out for home environment?

105 S: Hmm, not really, except that my dad's a really hard worker and he work's at home, so, you know, that's an example for all of us and, um, my mom is the same. She stays at home now, but so both, I guess examples of two really hard working parents.

I: How do you think any of those types, those things, those factors may impact or influence you here at school?

110 S: I think they drive me to want to impress my parents, or to at least make them proud of me cause I see how hard they work at home and I guess make me try not to be lazy, if that makes sense.

I: What kind of expectations do your parents have for you at school, and I'm talking about things like grades, attendance, behavior, work ethic...?

115 S: Definitely, grades, I mean work my hardest, and if I can't then, it's alright but definitely expect all A's and there's no skipping school obviously and, but so really just in all categories to just...no slacking.

I: How involved in your school experience do you feel your parents have been and are they now?

120 S: They're pretty involved, I think the last few years, especially with all the classes I've taken, they've backed off a little bit just because like AP and those things do push you to be more independent but they've always been involved and present.

I: Same thing about parent involvement as far as your work, support, resources, talking with your teachers...?

125 S: They've been, they've always been, like less so over the last few years because of honors and AP and having the same teachers, but they've always been coming in to meet the teachers, like they wanna know what's going on and they wanna stay involved and active and everything.

I: Do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for those future goals that they would know where to go or what to do to help you?

130 S: Definitely.

I: Alright, friends and classmates. So, you know, that friends group and then kinda that bigger peer group...do you feel any pressure from them at all positive and/or negative in regard to school?

135 S: Mmm, a lot of it is pretty positive because we all have the same classes, so it's kind of a work together kind of effort.

I: Any influence on your behavior, your mood, your attitude toward school?

140 S: I don't think so really. I mean, a little bit, because we are, when it gets kinda tough and we're all together, of course, when you have a bunch of people all complaining together, that amplifies your emotions about it but, not like a whole lot really.

I: Your goals? Same type question as far as pressure, influence on your goals.

145 S: Mmm, I don't, not a whole lot of pressure but maybe influences cause we all have the same interests or not the same interests but our goals are kinda in the same category I guess a little bit, so...I guess a little bit to be able to at least show that you're striving toward them.

I: Describe to me, to the best of your ability, how you felt about school as you went through elementary and then to middle school and now to high school.

150 S: Elementary school honestly was a lot of fun and I like it a lot. And it was very, where I went to elementary school, cause I went to S\_\_\_, it was very active and involved and hands-on kind of experience, and I think that helped me a lot with getting into middle school and high school because they did advanced programs and advanced math and things like that for the kids that got bored in class and things like that, and they had, cause they had they university, they had college students that come, so I think that probably positively influenced how I went into middle school. And middle school was different  
155 cause I was new, and I didn't have any friends, so it was little bit of an adjusting but I, generally, liked it a lot. And I've liked high school, but it has been...a very big load of stress cause I kinda streamlined down that path from the very beginning but overall, I guess...I can't even remember what you question was now (laughs).

I: Just your...how you felt about school from elementary to middle to high school.

160 S: It's definitely gotten, I mean obviously it's going to get harder, but it's gotten harder in a very steep kind of...but I mean, not too bad (nervous laugh).

I: Did you notice any changes in yourself through that timeline?

165 S: Well, definitely. Umm, as far as...maybe how much I'm willing to work just because it's kinda become the norm for me now, like kinda 5 hours of homework isn't a thing, and you know, I just sit down and do it, and I definitely think that you know, had that happened in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I would've had a breakdown over it, so I think it's definitely improved my work ethic and a lot of that.

170 I: And you somewhat answered this, but I'll get a more specific – so my next question is have you always been in this school system, and if not, when and where did you move schools?

175 S: Umm, well, kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade was S\_\_\_\_\_ Elementary, so that was F\_\_\_\_\_ County, different school system, and then 6<sup>th</sup> grade was when I moved to W\_\_\_\_. And then I've been here, you know, from 6<sup>th</sup> grade on, so...and I guess it was a little bit of a rough transition but that was more socially cause it was such different areas, but...I actually liked the classes and educational system better a little bit just cause I noticed a little bit of a difference but, so it wasn't too bad, but that's kinda how it went.

I: Have you ever or do you now struggle with school and learning?

180 S: Well, stress and struggle aren't really the same thing, but I definitely had a lot of, um, frustration, but that's mainly with the amount of work not the work itself.

I: And that's why I worded it the way I did, because "struggle with school and learning", that's your perspective, so if that has been an area of struggle for you then...

S: I guess the only struggle, per say, would be trying to balance school with

everything else with the path that I've taken through high school, but...

I: When do you first remember that becoming an issue or noticing...

185 S: The first night of freshman year (laughs), when we had an essay to write, and I think I had something like 5 hours of homework because I was taking AP World History and it started out kinda with a bang (call into office interrupts), but I remember that was a very, that was probably like the sharpest change from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to first weekend of freshman year.

190 I: What have others done to help you with that?

S: My parents have been really supportive of, kinda lessening their expectations cause they know I put that stress on myself and like I've got a group of friends, we're all in the same classes, same programs, and sports, and everything, so we've got the same amount of stress on our schedules, and so, you know, we support each other a lot.

195 I: So what have you done or what are you doing to work through that yourself? And you mentioned the support system that you have...

S: Well, yeah, like working with other people and making myself step back and take a break every once in awhile. It's kinda just finding balance where it doesn't get too bad.

I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?

200 S: Mhmm. Yes, I write down everything everyone says and, yeah.

I: So not just necessarily the ones you have right now but previous ones as well too, tell me about them. What do you like? What do you not like? What are some common denominators – things that you like and not like?

205 S: Well, amount of homework when it's unnecessary cause there can be excessive to the point that it's a little bit like, it shouldn't be that much, so that's always been like a frustrating thing when a teacher assigns something you know, the same thing over and over and over, and...I guess, I mean I've had such like, there's such different teachers with different teaching styles. I don't know if there's one common denominator really.

I: It doesn't have to be one.

210 S: Um, well, homework and...at least for me personally, when teachers are just disorganized, it throws me off because I don't know, it makes it harder to tell what's going on and like what I need to do myself on my own to prepare for class and so that's a little disorienting when that happens.

I: Things that you like about class?

215 S: Oh yeah (laughs). I like teachers that...there's a lot that I like, trying to figure out. I guess engage, make it not all, you know, just like "this is class, this is what we're gonna do", you know? Just not as strictly classroom environment where it's not as come in take your notes, leave, do your homework, come in the next day. Just teachers that kinda of engage and make it, you know, not as...I don't know what the right word is, but...

220 I: Maybe...monotonous, or...

S: Yeah! Yeah.

I: Or structured...well, ...

225 S: Classes that kind of vary, just where it's not boring every single day. I like classes like that, but where I still come in and feel like when I leave I feel like I've...know what's going on and I know, you know, I've accomplished at least something.

I: So do you think you are involved and interested in your classes?

S: Mhmm, yeah. For the most part. Pretty much especially like AP. Those you have to stay involved cause with the speed but, and I have teachers, a lot of my teachers

this year, it makes it easy to stay involved.

- 230 I: Do you think your teachers have done a good job explaining – the ones you have now, the previous ones – have done a good job explaining why you are learning something or why you are doing something?  
 S: Some, yes. Some, no. I know some teachers that like explain that and connect it to other things really well, and some I leave wondering like, I know exactly what we're
- 235 doing, but I have no idea why we're doing it, so I guess it's really a mixture.  
 I: And my next question is about homework, but we've talked about that, and you pretty well do your homework, correct?  
 S: (Laughs) Yeah.
- I: Do class grades and report card grades motivate you?  
 240 S: Definitely, just because of the kind of person I am and my parents, so, yeah, very much so.  
 I: What do you think about how teachers grade?  
 S: Umm, I don't really have an issue with it. I mean, different teachers grade different ways, but I never really had an issue with it. I think most of the time they do it
- 245 fairly and, you know, like the way it should be. It's not some crazy system that doesn't make sense – it usually makes sense, so...  
 I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?  
 S: Yes.  
 I: How?
- 250 S: Well, between like if I know that I understand what's going on cause if there's a new lesson every day and it builds, like I can tell by if I know what's going on or if I'm falling behind pretty quickly, and that and grades obviously, and so...Between homework and if I understand the lessons, it's pretty easy...  
 I: Do you get feedback from teachers on assignments or...  
 255 S: Mmhmm.  
 I: With the grades?  
 S: Yes.  
 I: How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests?  
 S: Quizzes, well quizzes, not so bad, just because at least in my classes, they don't
- 260 have as much stress. It's just kind of a checkpoint and...tests stress me out, just cause I usually end up doing the last night cram which it usually turns out ok, but they kinda...disorient me a little bit (nervous laugh), stress me out.  
 I: But do you usually feel prepared or no or sometimes?  
 S: Uh, mmhmm. Between like, well I always feel prepared as far as like what the
- 265 teacher has done and between what I've done, sometimes I don't, cause I feel like I may not have studied enough but as far as the lesson, it's like the teaching itself, yes.  
 I: What about state standardized tests, so EOCs, ACT, Writing Assessment...What do you think and how do you feel about those?  
 S: Mmm...I don't like them, but at least for me, I feel more prepared for them just
- 270 because of like the AP and honors courses cause, I guess, the material is kinda above like what the state standard, if that makes sense, like they don't bother me but they're just kind of an inconvenience, so as far as being prepared, I normally don't really stress about it. I mean, obviously, like ACT/SAT is a lot more, a lot different but like EOCs, by that time, you know what you need to know for it, so...

- 275 I: In general, do you think the adults here are nice and care about you?  
 S: Yeah.  
 I: I have like a why or why not. What gives you that impression?  
 S: Well, especially people in the halls are always, you know, very...no one's really  
 280 that unpleasant and like the teachers that I have, and the teachers I've had in the past have  
 always been very involved and, you know, willing to help out and, you know, they'll  
 show a level of concern if something's wrong or you don't understand, so...  
 I: Do you feel like there are people here that work to get to know you?  
 S: Mmm, ...a little bit. Not...not incredibly though Just, not any further than just  
 like teacher/student kinda thing.
- 285 I: Help you? People that are here that will help you?  
 S: Yeah, definitely.  
 I: Notice when you do something good or are successful at something?  
 S: Mmhmm, yeah, I do. There are definitely teachers, there are some that don't, but  
 there are some that, you know, that point those things out.
- 290 I: How do you feel about this school as a whole?  
 S: As a whole, sometimes it's hard, well, like to think cause I'm kinda isolated cause  
 I stay with the same people all day and the same teachers, but as a whole, I like it.  
 I: Do you feel safe?  
 S: Yes.
- 295 I: Do you feel like you have a place here?  
 S: Mmhmm.  
 I: Similar but a little different. Do you like coming here?  
 S: Ahh, some days, yes. Some days, no. Like it, that boils down to the stress thing  
 cause and knowing that I'm gonna come home with more homework, but as far as like  
 300 the atmosphere, yeah.
- I: Ok, last question. So if I look strictly at research and data and I kinda had to put  
 together a bunch of previous research on student engagement and then look at different  
 data points for you, it would all suggest that you are, should be very highly engaged in  
 school, and a lot of your data points show that, you know, in that number world that you  
 305 are. But your survey data didn't indicate that you felt very engaged in some of those  
 categories, and it's been awhile, so I'll...we talked about emotional engagement,  
 behavioral engagement, and cognitive engagement, so, um, why is that? Why do you  
 think you kinda answered that way?  
 S: Are you talking about that...(motions to the computer)?
- 310 I: Mmhmm (indicating, yes, the online survey).  
 S: Cause there were some, like with the questions you were asking, as far as in my  
 classes, but there are definitely some other areas...that bother me, I guess.  
 I: So tell me about those.  
 S: Yeah...
- 315 I: This is kind of that free response time.  
 S: Ok (laughs). Um, let's see, I can't..it's been so long, I can't even remember what  
 kind of things it asked, but I definitely did answer it honestly...to an extent.  
 I: Um, it talked about...(looking for survey)  
 S: Cause we've already talked about teachers.



- 320 I: It talked about... "I'm interested in learning", "I think what we are learning in school is interesting", "I enjoy learning new things", "I think learning is boring", "I like my school", "I'm proud to be at this school", "I try hard to do well in school", "When I'm in class, I participate in class activities", "I pay attention", "When I'm in class, I just act like I'm working", (student laughs) "I do just enough to get by", "My mind wanders",
- 325 those types of things...
- S: Yeah...
- I: So, um, and of course, I had to look at things kind of across the board, and it just didn't, your answers didn't appear as though you felt you were very engaged.
- S: I think that was a rough day anyways, that might be why, but as far as... I do,
- 330 there are definitely times where I do feel very engaged and, but there are also... I guess, maybe I had different classes then, too maybe.
- I: No, this was a few weeks ago.
- S: Oh, no, that was after government, so I do have all... there are just highs and lows, I guess, and... but there are definitely times when... it doesn't work, but, um, ...
- 335 I: So just the stress? As that comes and goes, it plays a greater impact?
- S: Yeah, that's it. And it also, one things that bothers me with the whole, especially with the AP and honors, which it's kind of unreasonable to ask this, but cause you know, one teacher will give like a ton of homework one night, then another teacher, like it all piles up, and there's, which I know teachers can't really coordinate with what they're
- 340 gonna do but a lot of that adds to the stress, and I don't get engaged very easily if I'm learning something that I have no interest in, like Chemistry. I mean, I take notes and write it down, but I can't get engaged at all, because of that I have no idea what's going on, I just know what to do, but I don't know why I'm doing it, and so it kinda just comes down to whether I'm interested at the time, really, and the more interested I am, the more
- 345 drive I have, but you know, it comes and goes in waves because I'm not interested in everything, but...

## Student #5 Interview Transcription

- I: So you're a junior, so technically this is your 12<sup>th</sup> year doing this whole school thing, how is it for you? What do you think about it?
- S: I like school a lot. I think it's going really well, but...
- I: Is it important to you? Why or why not?
- 5 S: It's very important to me, because I know that it affects my ACT scores and ACT score is what affects what school I go to.
- I: Ok. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you interested in?
- S: I'm interested in music, sports, and I'm thinking about maybe doing something in orthopedic medicine, when I go to college or something like that.
- 10 I: What motivates you? What kinds of things motivate you?
- S: Family motivates me most, like they always encourage me to better and stuff like that.
- I: What do you view as being successful?
- S: Successful, I think...it's accomplishing your goals. It's not necessarily if you end
- 15 up making the most money or something. Being happy.
- I: Do you feel like you have control over your future and your ability to be successful?
- S: Somewhat, because I gotta dad that's very controlling. He's very picky, but I think for the most part.
- 20 I: What are some things that may cause you to feel unmotivated?
- S: Not being accepted into a college that I'd want to go to, like...it's really hard to do that now. I have plans to go to like a really good school, but like it's just hard.
- I: What about now? Like in school, last semester, this semester...things that might make you feel not involved, not motivated in school?
- 25 S: I don't feel really like I'm as part of school stuff as I should be. Like I'm in band but I'm not in as other extracurricular activities as other people are, and I should probably be.
- I: What are – you talked about this a little bit, so just kinda go through it again for me and maybe expand – but what are your goals? Both for now and after high school.
- 30 S: My goal right now is to raise ACT score, and when I go to college maybe do something in sports medicine, orthopedic medicine, something like that.
- I: Would you describe yourself as self-driven and self-motivated or motivated by other people and factors?
- S: Umm, more motivated by other people like when I see somebody else that's doing
- 35 their best and they're trying to work hard and that makes me want to do that, but typically I'm kind of a lazy person, so I'm not necessarily self-motivated.
- I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals?
- S: Yes.
- I: Even it may take awhile?
- 40 S: Yeah. As long as I get there eventually.
- I: Even if it costs you time you could be doing other things?
- S: Yeah, I'm willing to do other things.
- I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?
- S: Very likely. I'm not really ashamed of asking somebody for help. I just think it's

- 45 what you're supposed to do.
- I: If something's difficult or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to keep trying?
- S: Very likely. It...typically depends on what it is like if it's something I really interested in, then I'm determined about I'll keep trying, but if it something I don't really
- 50 feel like that matters too much or I'm not really interested then I just might let it go, but...
- I: When it comes to things like that, things that are difficult or things that you have to work harder for, or in general, how well do you think you control your emotions? The emotional side of things.
- 55 S: I think I control it pretty well, and I always try to think of the positive aspects to just try to be happy.
- I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?
- S: I feel like I can learn things pretty well, like in math right now I have a 99, and I think if I pay attention and I put work into it, I think I can learn things pretty quickly.
- 60 I: What about your ability to get better at something or to change?
- S: To get better, yeah, I think, cause like I said, I'm not really embarrassed to ask for help or anything and if I'm motivated about it, I'll keep working at it and keep trying to be the best that I can be.
- I: What about to work harder and to learn more and to do better?
- 65 S: I like to see myself work harder. It just, it makes me feel better personally and to do better, I just think that's what we should all strive to do.
- I: Tell me a little bit about home. What's your family structure?
- S: I live with both my parents and my brother. My brother's still at home.
- I: Any kind of cultural background information?
- 70 S: We're a Christian family, so it's...but we're very typical. We're the average family, so...
- I: What's your parents' level of education?
- S: They both went to four-year university. My dad is, has a degree in software engineering, and my mom is a nurse.
- 75 I: And what's home environment like, just in general? How would you describe it?
- S: Well, we live in a...we're not really struggling or anything. We love each other, but we get on each other's nerves – all that stuff, but Noah's not necessarily sick anymore, so everything's pretty good.
- I: How do you think any of those things, if at all, impact you here at school?
- 80 Anything about your family dynamics, background, your parents...
- S: Not necessarily background, but when, like I said, when Noah was sick, that affected some things because he was always in and out of school, he was in and out of the hospital and that affected some things, and it's...and like I have OCD, it motivates me to do more like I try to get over it and I think I've been doing really well with it.
- 85 I: And you think like your family and your parents have influenced that or impacted your work here at school?
- S: Yeah. But I think they've done it in a very positive way.
- I: What kind of expectations do your parents have for you here at school?
- S: Great expectations.
- 90 I: As far as like grades, attendance, your behavior, your work ethic, those types of

things.

S: Yeah, well, they always make sure I'm at school and my dad is the one who really pushes me and Noah. He wants straight A's and stuff but he knows that's not always possible, so as long as he sees that we're working hard and trying our best and, yeah, he's proud of what we do.

95

I: How involved in your school experience do you feel your parents have been and how involved are they now?

S: Freshman and sophomore year I think they were pretty involved, like my dad is in my IEP and he's pretty much controlling that and but as I got older, they've kinda stepped back and let me take control of things and my IEP too.

100

I: So what about their involvement with helping with work or any kind of support, resources, talking with your teachers...how involved are they?

S: My dad and my mom are very involved. If I ever need homework help, and Noah too, they're always willing to help and they're able to help and, uh, they're always trying to support me in what I do like band concerts and stuff. They always try to be there and stuff.

105

I: Do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for those future goals that they would know where to go and what to do to help you?

S: Yes, I think they would know. We have lots of connections, I guess (laughs a little).

110

I: What about friends and classmates? Like your peers here at school and your friends – do you feel any pressure from them about school, positive and/or negative?

S: I don't really feel pressure with them. I try to do what I wanna do instead of what others do.

115

I: What about is there any influence on your behavior or your mood...?

S: I don't really try, I just try to be my own person. I love my friends and stuff like that, but I just think it's important to be who you are instead of who they are.

I: Influence at all on your attitude toward school or your goals...?

S: Not really. I just...like I said, I just wanna do what I wanna do.

120

I: Describe to me how you felt about school as you went through elementary to middle school to high school.

S: Elementary school, I thought, I liked school a lot. I liked going to school, learning new things, and middle school was kinda rough because awkward middle school stage, but, and then, I didn't really like school in middle school, but when I came back to high school and we figured things out and...I started liking it again. The older I get, the more I start liking school again.

125

I: Did you notice any changes in yourself and how you felt about school or, um, you know, and you kinda answered that but I'll be a little more specific, if so, when and why do you think?

S: I think...when I started realizing that around sophomore year that things aren't handed to you, like you have to work for what you want. I saw that people who make really high ACT scores and did really well, that they weren't, they weren't getting into schools they wanted to and stuff like that, and I started to realize that I just can't want it, I have to work for it.

130

I: Have you always been in this school system?

S: Always.

135

I: Have you ever or do you now struggle with school and learning?

S: I used to struggle with science somewhat, but I made, I think my first C in science, but other than that, I'm pretty good at a lot of things that I do.

140 I: When was that? When do you first remember that?

S: That was sophomore year.

I: Ok. And so what have others done to help you in that?

S: Well, like I'd go to Mrs. M\_\_\_\_\_ or like this year, I'd go to Coach L\_\_\_\_\_ and they'd always be willing to help be and they'd help. I'd ask for help to review things, and  
145 I think that helped a lot.

I: What did you do or what are you doing now to try to work through that area to improve – or that struggle?

S: Well, what I did do is, I'm not taking science right now, but what I did do, I'd stay after school. I remember last year that last nine weeks, I stayed with Mrs. M\_\_\_\_\_ pretty much every day after school for about 6 weeks.  
150

I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?

S: Yes, pretty much.

I: Tell me about them. What do you like? What do you not like?

S: My 1<sup>st</sup> period, that's my favorite class of the day, I have Mrs. K\_\_\_\_\_ for AP  
155 English III. I like it that it's very involved, and it's very like modern day. We learn about issues that go on today and all kinds of stuff like that. I really like my 2<sup>nd</sup> period too. I'm taking Chinese and I think it's something different, and some people, the IEP people, were worried that I'd be able to stuff because of my hearing impairment but I, Miss W\_\_\_\_\_ actually told me this last week, that I've kind of proved them wrong. I've done  
160 really well in that. In band, I like band, but it's kinda getting tiring now because I've been doing it for so long but and then Algebra II, I'm doing really well in it and overall, I like my classes.

I: Do you think you are involved and interested in your classes?

S: I think I'm, yeah, I'm very interested in all my classes.

165 I: Do you think your teachers do or have done a good job explaining why you are learning what you're learning or why you're doing a certain thing in class?

S: Yeah, I think they...yeah, every teacher, they always give examples like if we ask, like I remember Ms. L\_\_\_\_\_, we'd be working on something, and be like "Hey, Mrs. L\_\_\_\_\_, what do you uses this for?", and she'd just, she's take the time to explain it to us.

170 I: What about homework? Do you do your homework?

S: I do it, homework...I don't have much this semester, but I have math, and I do it.

I: Do class grades and report card grades motivate you?

S: Yes, they do, cause I know that grades aren't everything, but they show my understanding, so and if I'm understanding, then I know that will affect my other things  
175 like ACT scores and stuff like that.

I: What do you think about how teachers grade?

S: I don't really like it when teachers grade right and wrong – it has to be a certain way. I like it when they grade, if you're getting the concept right. I remember I had a teacher in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he'd...it was Mr. S\_\_\_\_\_, he'd say he wouldn't mark it wrong if you  
180 had a certain mistake as long as you got the concept right and you were understanding what you're doing and trying what you're doing – that's what was good.

I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?

S: Yes, I...I'm pretty on top of that. I'm always checking my grades every once in awhile, kinda and stuff.

185 I: Do you get feedback from teachers, or is it...how do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?

S: They hand stuff back and Mrs. K\_\_\_\_\_ doesn't always hand stuff back, but we'll do group review like peer review, and they'll write down stuff like what they think we're doing and, um, if...Mrs. K\_\_\_\_\_ will do that too, and in my 1<sup>st</sup> period, basically we get  
190 everybody's perspective on things, and Ms. L\_\_\_\_\_, she hands back stuff, and, um, she'll write notes and stuff and she sees that we're struggling, she'll take us aside and do stuff.

I: How do feel when you take quizzes or tests?

S: I don't really feel nervous about them. I just think that they're just a part of it, and as long as I'm understanding what I'm doing and I think I do fine.

195 I: Do you usually feel prepared or not?

S: I usually feel prepared. I don't spend hours studying for a test, cause, but if I, as long as I get the help that I need and I'm doing my work when I'm suppose to do it, I think it's enough preparedness.

I: What about the state standardized tests – whether it's the EOCs or the ACT,  
200 Writing Assessment – what do you think? How do you feel about those?

S: I think, I don't really like them because...I don't really see how you can measure someone's intelligence or work ethic on just a single test. I'm not really sure how else you would do that, but it's, cause I know people that, who are really smart and they know a lot of things but they just can't get their ACT score, stuff like that, up to par and there's,  
205 they don't get to do things they should be doing, stuff like that.

I: Shift gears just a little bit. In general, do you think the adults here at this school are nice and care about you?

S: Yes, I think they do.

I: Any particular evidence of that – if I said why or why not? Is there...?

210 S: Well, I think, for example, the IEP team, they're always making sure I'm doing well. If I start slipping off, they're making sure that I get off track and when I'm doing really well, they take the time and they always say that they're proud of me and I basically love all my past teachers. They're always smiling at me in the hallways and stuff like that, and I aggravate Mr. English, but...and stuff like that.

215 I: Do you feel like people here, that there are people here that work to get to know you?

S: Do what?

I: Do you think that there are people here, adults here, that work to get to know you as a person, as a student?

220 S: Yeah, I think they do cause they'll just ask questions like when Noah was sick, they'd ask how he's doing, and every once in awhile they'll ask how I'm doing and stuff like that.

I: So you've already said that there's people here that help you and notice when you do something good and are successful at things...

225 S: Yes.

I: How do you feel about this school as a whole?

S: I think this is a pretty great school, and I'm glad that I go to it, and I hope that one

day, my kids could go to a school like this. I really think it's a good experience.

I: Do you feel like you have a place here?

230 S: What do you mean by place?

I: A place, kind of an area that you fit in or group or things that you do...do feel like you are comfortable here?

S: I feel very comfortable. I'm with people I've grown up with my entire life and I really like that.

235 I: Do you feel safe?

S: I feel very safe.

I: Do you like coming here?

S: I do enjoy coming here. I used to, like I said in middle school, I didn't enjoy going to school but now I do.

240 I: So last question. Obviously in this process, I've pulled a lot of different research, you know, existing research with things about school and student background, statistics, and, you know and I look at things as a whole and look at your demographics, parent/guardian status, and some of those different pieces – it would suggest that you should be engaged in school. And one of the ways we can kind of get an initial

245 measurement of that was that survey that you took. Do you remember?

S: Yes.

I: So it looks at some different points of engagement. Your survey data, though, indicated you didn't feel like you were very engaged in school. So if you look at some of the things, the personal things that I've already – the research and statistics and stuff that

250 say you should be – but your survey answers that said, "Hmm. Maybe I'm not." Why do you think that is?

S: I'm not really sure, like...some days you feel like you're doing better and some days you don't. Maybe that was a day that I just felt like I could...uh, doing better. But I feel like overall, I'm doing pretty well.

255 I: That you're kind of in tune with what you're doing here at school and involved – those types of things.

S: Yeah...yeah.

\*This student has a slight hearing impairment and uses hearing aide devices and can read lips. Some questions were asked with more detail and wording than for other students to ensure comprehension of the questions and context.

## Student #6 Interview Transcription

I: You are a sophomore, so this is technically you eleventh year doing this whole school thing. Tell me how school has been for you. What do you think about it? Is it important to you?

5 S: I think it's important because you have the privilege to come to school and learn freely and not have to pay to have somebody teach you to get education and move on in the big world.

I: Just in general, your years of experience with school, what do you think about it?

10 S: It's good to have somebody else other than family to talk to when you have other things that need to be talked about with your teachers coming here to learn and how to do things, helps out a lot.

I: Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you interested in? What motivates you?

S: Umm, well I'm in, I wanna finish school. I wanna graduate. And I want to go to college, and I wanna go into the medical field, if I can, I'm trying to get that far.

15 I: That's what you're interested in?

S: Yes. I'm interested in nursing.

I: And what motivates you, just in general, and as far as accomplishing the things you're interested in?

20 S: My mom helps me get through a lot and then noticing how my brother did in school motivates me to do better than how he did and to set a good example for my younger sister.

I: What do you view as being successful?

S: Accomplishing your goals.

25 I: Do you feel like you have control of your future and your ability to succeed and accomplish your goals?

S: Yes, if you try to get there and you put all 100% effort into it that you being successful.

I: What are some things that may cause you to feel unmotivated or kind of checked out of school?

30 S: When you're getting talked down to and you're not being...they're not giving you advice to do better and to accomplish more things and you're not giving it all – it's not very motivating at all.

I: And you're...by who? You're getting talked to by – who all does that mean?

S: Just anybody in general.

35 I: You talked about this a little bit – what are your goals? Now and after high school?

S: My goals now is to graduate and go to college, and after high school is to graduate college and get a good job.

I: As a...?

40 S: As a nurse.

I: Would you describe yourself as self-driven or self-motivated and/or motivated by other people or factors?

S: I am motivated by other people but I'm also motivated by myself too because I want to prove to myself that I can do good in school and get a good job.



- 45 I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals?  
S: Yes.  
I: Even if it may take awhile?  
S: Yes because I want to be able to enjoy what I do and not be forced to do it.  
I: Even if it costs you time that you could be doing other things?
- 50 S: Yes.  
I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?  
S: I'll ask for help if I don't understand it, but if I can work and put all my effort into it and understand it myself, then I won't ask for help.  
I: Still talking about if something's difficult for you, how likely are you to keep
- 55 trying?  
S: I'll keep trying until I get it. If anything is difficult, even if it means I have to ask for help, I'm gonna keep trying until I accomplish it.  
I: How likely would you say are you to get frustrated and give up?  
S: Not likely at all. I will keep trying until I do get it even if it takes years, I'll still
- 60 do it.  
I: How well do you think you control your emotions?  
S: I control them pretty good until I get upset, then I lose control of some emotions. I try to keep everything in and set a good example in how you're suppose to act in public, and I try as hard as I can to keep them all controlled.
- 65 I: So what are some things, you know, that get you to that point of upset that...?  
S: Talking about my family disrespectfully upsets me really easy or making fun of somebody. Bullying others upsets me really easy.  
I: How do you feel about your ability to learn? You know, you can kinda think back over the years that you remember.
- 70 S: I learn better one on one than I do in big groups, so I've always had a disability in learning in groups, in a classroom not having one on one help some, but I've gotten better at that to where I can work better in groups.  
I: And so that kinda leads into the next question. How do you feel about your ability to get better at something or to change?
- 75 S: ...I like to get better at things. I'll try as hard as I can to work more in groups or work harder in school. I want to be...I want to be better than I was the day before, so I'm gonna try to fix everything and get it to where I can do better than I did yesterday.  
I: Next question talks about home situations. So for starters, you family/guardian structure...you live at home with...both parents?
- 80 S: Mhmm.  
I: And you've always, that's how it's always been for you?  
S: Yes.  
I: What about any kind of cultural background? Things that play into who your family are, what they're about. Any kind of cultural information?
- 85 S: Not really. We're just...I don't...(shrugs).  
I: Ok. What's the level of your parents' education?  
S: My mom didn't go to college because she had Casey in high school. My dad went to college for two semesters and then didn't go back after that to help out with my brother.
- 90 I: Ok, um, home environment? And I know right now it's probably a little different

that it has been, so, you know, you can walk me through what was the norm before and then talk a little bit about how things are now. (After the survey and participant selection but before the interview, the student disclosed that there were some marital issues going on with her parents)

95 S: Well, we were...used to be a very close family until my aunt passed away in 2012, and then my aunt got divorced, so she got remarried, and that's pulled her away from our family, and, um, we're no longer a close family. We haven't been in about three years, and since the situation happened now, we're even further apart because I'm having to deal with mom and dad arguing, not getting along – that happened about two weeks  
100 ago, it's been maybe two or three – and they're just now getting to where they'll sit down calmly and talk about it without any violence...from my mom. Um, we're getting there to where my mom will let us do more with our dad without her being around. It's very different than what I've grown up around, so...

I: So taking into account all of the home environment, or the family changes you've  
105 talked about over the last few years, do you think any of those things have impacted you or are impacting you here at school?

S: Well, the situation that's recently happened, I have been struggling to get through school. My sister has. She's taking it hard cause she's the youngest. She doesn't have anybody at school she can really talk to about it, so she just holds all of her emotions in,  
110 so...and when I come here, I have you to talk to or Coach C \_\_\_\_\_ or any teacher I can talk to that I know won't, that will help me through it. She doesn't, and so I try to do as much as I can to help her when she comes home having to deal with mom and dad at nighttime. They don't sleep. They go to bed until we fall asleep, and they'll get up and start fussing and arguing, and then it'll wake us up, so I have go and sleep with her most  
115 of the time at night just to keep her asleep and just to keep my parents from waking her back up.

I: And you talked about some stuff that's gone on the last few years as well, do you think...how do you think any of that impacted you at school?

S: With my aunt passing away, it affected me a lot cause I've...I missed a lot my  
120 sixth grade year and got very far behind. She, we did everything together. If I wasn't at school and she wasn't at work, we were together. Um, seeing her go away was hard but also seeing my aunt divorce, get remarried, and move on without us has also slowed me down in life, because I do miss her.

I: So these are two different aunts?

125 S: Yes. It's my great-aunt and then my aunt. Um, my great-aunt is the one who remarried, and she has moved on and doesn't communicate with us, and it's hard on me because she raised my mom, so she's pulled away which has taken me away from a lot cause my, her adopted daughter, went to school here, so a lot of people talk to me about her, and it's hard because I don't communicate with her either. Um, seeing my aunt go,  
130 she usually sat down at the kitchen table with me and helped me with my homework every day no matter if she still had to go back home an hour away, no matter what time it was, she would stay. She stayed the night with us every weekend. We went out and watched a movie together. We did everything together, and it's...February is the hardest month because she passed the nineteenth of February which is my great-grandmother's  
135 birthday. So...

I: What kind of – go back to parents for a second – what kind of expectations do

your parents have for you at school at far as grades, attendance, behavior, work ethic?

140 S: We want me to...they expect me to give it my all. They expect me to come here learn and not care about what others think or say. They want me to be a good leader and not a follower of other people. My grades, they want me to have good grades, no failing grades, A's and B's are what they want.

I: You kind of mentioned - you talked about grades and work ethic – behavior, attitude? You said leader, not a follower...

S: Stay out of trouble, stay in school, not in ISS, not in out of school suspension.

145 I: How involved in your school experience do you feel your parents have been or are now?

S: My parents were very involved in my elementary school years. They worked on the PTO board, and then as I got older, they started falling out of it, and then it was my job to say, "Hey, I wanna be in this sport for school", and they would – if I got into that sport – then they would be interactive with that but other than that, they weren't interactive with school after elementary school.

I: How involved are your parents when it comes to helping you with your work or support, resources, talking with your teachers?

155 S: They're, umm, my mom keeps in contact with all of my teachers every day. She helps me with homework that she can. Other than that, my dad will help me. She, he usually helps me with math and science, because that's subjects my mom doesn't like. Um, they're there when I need them.

I: You think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for your future goals that they would know where to go and what to do to help you?

160 S: Yes. If I needed help finding anything out, they'll help me find it out or help me figure something out.

I: What about your friends and your classmates – like your peer group? So, you know, friends and then larger peer group. Do you feel any pressure from them, positive and/or negative, about school?

165 S: It's mostly positive that I get from them cause they're uplifting and help...they're, they help motivate me. As others, they help me. Um, sometimes if I'm not close friends with them, I have peer pressure getting in front of the class to talk. I've had that ever since I was able to talk, to be talking in front of a big group of people, but good...good friends, close friends, I have no problem with getting in front of and talking with them, and they keep me uplifted and help me when I'm down.

I: Friends and classmates – any influence on your behavior or your mood?

175 S: In the past, yes, my friends have influenced a lot on my behavior. They have put me into positions where I wanted to fit in but I also didn't want to get in trouble, so I just picked fitting and doing what I had to do to fit in with them. Now I don't have that problem because I've gotten to where I don't want to be in trouble. I want to move on and go to college and be a nurse, so I've picked better people to be around.

I: So same line of thinking about friends and classmates influencing, which you kinda answered about the attitude toward school, so your goals at all? You know, why or why not? Do they have any impact on your future goals and working toward those?

180 S: You talking about school?

I: Yeah.

S: My...school does impact on having to go to nursing because I've gotta have a lot

of classes in order to go to college and to get those classes. If I didn't go to school, I wouldn't be educated at all to be able to go into the medical field.

185 I: But what about your friends and your peer group here at school? Do they have any kind of positive or negative influence on your goals? Like I said, you kind of answered this earlier, but...

S: They want me to accomplish my goals. They don't wanna take me away from what I want to do, and that's how I am with them. If they wanna do it, I'm there for you, go do it. And that's what they do.

I: Describe to me how you felt about school in general going from elementary to middle to high school. Did you notice any changes? Any changes in yourself? What do you think about school as you went through those different steps?

195 S: Moving from elementary to middle school, I felt nervous to be having to switch classes, cause in elementary school I didn't have to switch classes. Learning multiple teachers, I was nervous about. Going from middle to high school, I wasn't looking forward to being in the dungeon, so I wasn't excited to move high school, but once I got out of Freshmen, then I enjoyed it.

I: You talked a little bit about some changes you noticed in yourself and when and why, so one of the big ones you noticed was that nervousness going to from elementary to middle and then the Freshmen wing, the Freshmen Academy experience. Anything else? How you felt about school in elementary versus middle versus high school?

S: I was, as I got older, in moved school I got more confident in myself, and I started maturing a lot and making more decisions that what I did in elementary school.

205 I: Have you always been in this school system?

S: Yes.

I: Have you ever or do you now struggle with school or learning? If so, tell me about that.

210 S: I used to. I used to, I had...elementary school, sixth and seventh grade, I had everything modified, so I only did half of what the other kids did, so it didn't help me. It helped me get through, but it was just by the rim. I wasn't trying as hard as I should have been, but once I got out of it, I wasn't doing very well because I didn't have to try in order to make it through, but once I started trying, it made it much easier doing what everybody else did instead of only doing half of what was expected.

215 I: What have others done to help you when you, during those struggles?

S: They have tried to motivate me and to being and doing work like everybody else has and not settin' there and just doing half of what teachers expected. To do it all in the same about of time instead of doing half in a longer amount of time. Um, they, my friends, they're one of the reasons I wanted to get out of it, because they didn't have modified anything and I did, so it made me feel like I was a kid who had a disability and I wasn't like the other ones. I always left the class and was in a smaller class. There was only five of us instead of twenty-something kids in that class, and I wanted to be with my friends and not just with kids who wanted to be there just to get modified stuff.

225 I: What did you do or what are you doing, you know, now in the recent year or so, to try to work through that struggle or improve in that area? You personally, what have you done?

S: I have tried harder and to getting what the teacher wants and not just pushing it off and waiting til the last minute and say, "I only got this much done. Will you give me

- 230 more time?" I've, um, accomplished a lot more in the amount of time than just waiting and just doing only a third or a half of what's expected, so I've tried...just myself, I have put myself out of that and shown myself that I'm better than that and I can do what is asked in that amount of time.
- I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?
- S: Yes.
- 235 I: Tell me a little bit about them. What do you like? What do you not like?
- S: Um, I don't like that, um, everybody, else...if I don't understand something and everybody else does, it makes me feel uncomfortable to ask questions. Um, I do like that if I don't I can ask a certain person, a friend or somebody, that will help me understand what's going on, so...
- 240 I: Anything else? About classes in general?
- S: I'll usually ask the teachers one on one and not in front of a class if I'm confused on something.
- I: Do you think are involved or interested in your classes?
- S: I am on some of them. Um, there's, I have several classes now that I enjoy, but
- 245 some of them I'm not so involved because I either, one of them I don't like some of the people that are in there, so it holds me back from just saying things and answering questions and stuff, but the classes that I am involved in, I enjoy doing, have found out that I enjoy doing, so I've just gotten to where I'm comfortable just talking out and not scared to do anything in those classes.
- 250 I: And describe some of those classes. What is it about them that you enjoy or are interested in?
- S: Well, I'm interested in, um, my psychology class and my art class. I didn't know I was good at art or had that talent to draw until I got put in that class. Um, I enjoy it a lot because it's something that I have found out that I have the ability to do that I didn't think
- 255 I did, and then psychology's just interesting because you learn about the brain and how your body functions, and some things I found out I haven't learned before.  
(interrupted by knock on office door)
- I: Back to classes and teachers. Do you think your teachers have done a good job explaining why you are learning what you're learning or why you're doing certain things in class?
- 260 S: Yes, they use the world as an example of what you...of every, of them teaching you everything, you're gonna use it some form when you get older and get out of school.
- I: What about homework? Do you do homework?
- S: I do. I've gotten better at it. I used to not do it at all, but I do my homework now.
- 265 I: So why/why not? What was the shift? Why did you used to not do it? And why do you do it now?
- S: I didn't, ...I used the excuse I didn't have time to do it, so, and then it took my grades down, and then I started doing and realized, I had time for it, I could make time for it, and it improved my grades tremendously from failing to passing grades just doing
- 270 your homework.
- I: So do class grades and/or report card grades motivate you then?
- S: Yes, I wanna have better grades than what I had last, on the last report card or progress report.
- I: What do you think about how teachers grade?

275 S: Some teachers, I think, grade too into their work – one little bitty error, you miss a whole five points off of it or something. I think some teachers grade it to where if you tried to do it and they could tell you tried, they're gonna give you a passing grade. If you didn't try to do it, I understand to getting the grade you deserve. Um, sometimes I think teachers should be more lenient on how they grade things and not be so strict because not  
280 all students, we're all human and we're not, we're gonna make mistakes in everything we do, so they should be more lenient and less strict on their grades.

I: Do you usually now how you're doing in your classes?

S: I do. I keep up with my grades on the iNow grade portal. I look at them every week, and if I'm having my grades drop, I'll try even harder to get it to come back up. I  
285 don't want to go back to just failing all my classes. That's how I was Freshman year, but now I have all A's and B's and I've kept my grades up.

I: Do you get feedback from your teachers about your grades to know how you're doing or do you just pretty well have to check iNow?

S: They, um, in English class she'll be, she gives us, well all of our classes, when  
290 they give you your work back, you look at your grades, and if you have any questions, then you can ask. Um, I usually just keep with my grades online, and that's how I see what my grades are.

I: How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests?

S: I'm not a very good quiz or test taker cause I have a lot of pressure put on to me  
295 of to do well, get a good grade on it, because usually in all classes, you tests and quiz grades are the more, the biggest percentage than everything else, so it's harder to keep that percentage up, as it is different to the other...sections.

I: Do you usually feel prepared or not for the quizzes and tests in class?

S: I study for them, but it's...I don't...I have that feeling to where I don't want to be  
300 the last one done, like I get nervous and think everybody is waiting on me to finish my test, so then I get nervous and I just start going through it just guessing on 'em just to get done with it. If I took my time away from the class, going back to being pulled out of the class, I'd do better on them because I'm not, I don't have pressure put on me, but when I'm in a class together, I have pressure put on me.

305 I: By yourself? You put pressure on yourself?

S: Yes.

I: What state standardized tests that EOC, Writing Assessment type stuff – what do you think and how do you feel about those?

S: I don't like them because it's pulling...it's pulling everything that you learn in  
310 one school year to one day. You have to like remember it all one day, and then I think it should be if you...do have the EOC, it should be at the end of a lesson or after a couple of lessons, maybe five lessons and then have one. I don't think it should be eighteen lessons and one day have a test on just that.

I: In general, do you think that the adults here are nice and care about you?

315 S: Yes, they want...I think the adults here want you to do good in school. Um, some teachers, I haven't had experience. I've had that experience to where they've pick and choose who they feel more confident in and they just work on them instead of everybody else – I've had that experience, um, but other than that, I think teachers, they want you to pass and get out of school and move on.

320 I: Do you feel like there are people here that work to get to know you?

- S: Yes, there are several people. You, Mr. E \_\_\_\_\_, teachers who aren't having to deal with...well, I mean you have to deal with everybody else too, but the more people that you notice having the more struggles, getting in the most trouble, you tend to know them more, than the people who don't get in trouble, and there's a lot of people here who  
 325 want to get to know the students and try to figure out who they are before they get into detail about how they stayed in trouble and all that.
- I: Do you feel like there's people here that want to help you if you need?
- S: There are teachers and...any adult here at this school that wants to help you if you need it. They want to be a supporter and not somebody that doesn't care about a child.
- 330 I: Do you feel like there's people here that notice when you do something good or are successful at something?
- S: Yes. You have been one of them.
- I: How do you feel about this school as a whole?
- S: ...Um, I feel comfortable here until everybody else starts...until students says  
 335 something that offends me, then I don't feel as comfortable, but I feel comfortable here knowing that at 8:15 all the doors lock except for if you come through the attendance office, you have to be let in. You can't just walk in and say, "Hey, I'm here." Um, I like that the teachers stand out in the hallways. It has taken down the fights and the bullying a lot having teachers in every section of the school, so it's helped a lot.
- 340 I: Well, you answered the second of my questions, but do you feel like you have a place here?
- S: I do. I feel comfortable. They, teachers make me feel welcome here.
- I: So do you like coming here?
- S: I do. I like coming here better than...I haven't been to another school, but I've  
 345 had the fear of having to move because of family situations and I haven't want to...I don't want to leave this school, because then I'd have to lose everybody that I feel comfortable talking to, all my friends and then having to re-make it with somebody else at a different school.
- I: So last question. I've had to look at a lot of research and a lot of what's written  
 350 about different scenarios with students and different data points, and I look at some of that research and some of, um, the descriptors, your family dynamics and your socioeconomic status and your history in school and just some different research and data points about you. It would just suggest that you should be relatively engaged in school. When I looked at your survey answers that you did and maybe not right this moment data  
 355 but last year's data and last semester's grades, you don't necessarily, especially with your survey data, indicate you are engaged. Why do you think that is? What do you think is the discrepancy there?
- S: I wasn't engaged in school. I really didn't care about school. I didn't think it was something important because of things that was happening at home. I just felt they're  
 360 sending me to school, so they can have time to argue or they can have their time to get away from us. That's what I thought, but now that I've realized that's not what they're doing, I've gotten more, school is more important than it used to be to me.
- I: And would that describe last year? Or you're talking about the last few weeks?
- S: That would describe last year and these last few weeks. Last year, I just...last year  
 365 wasn't a good year either. I stayed in trouble last year. I never went to normal class. I was in ISS or out of school suspension, so I thought my parents didn't want me at the time

370 because they didn't want to be known as "your daughter's always in trouble, you're not a good parent." I had those thoughts and when I came back, my sophomore year, I made a big turnaround, and I haven't been in trouble. I've not been in ISS. I haven't been suspended or anything, and now my parents and I have gotten a closer, we've gotten closer cause I'm not in trouble. I'm trying to take that target off my back from last year and to stay out of trouble.



## Interview Transcription – Student #7

I: This is your sophomore year, so we're about 11 years into your school, counting kindergarten, your school experience. Tell me your general feelings on how it is for you – what do you think about it? Is it important to you? Just your general thoughts overall.

5 S: Uhh...from the time that I've been in school I think it has helped me through how to..do things as making my choices I guess..and it has improved me as a person to become better at what I want to and what I want to succeed at...school..it, it shows you opportunities. (pause) It does. And since I've been here at this high school, I've had a lot more open opportunities for things that I really like to do and what I want to go into as I'm older, as I get older..and, um, just show myself as a better person to improve every  
10 day..on a regular basis.

I: Alright, so tell me a little bit about you personally. What are you interested in?

15 S: Uh, I'm interested in doing mechanic and welding stuff...preferably more like military stuff including...I like the, I like how I have to move..keep myself going back and forth and doing something..making sure I have the parts that I need and kinda like keeping track on top of, top of the project or uh, the customer or anything like that. If, it helps me think..it helps me improve my thinking skills on the next level.

I: So what motivates you then? Along the same line of thinking with what you're interested in, what motivates you? And what do you view then as far as being successful?

20 S: Uh...anything that's interesting that comes into mind and motivates me I guess..or as if somebody has a good idea and it's doable and, uh, I'll do it. I'll help and get it done...and (pause) for my...Is it successful?

I: Your view of being successful. What do you view as being successful?

25 S: Uh...my view (pause) is...letting other people encourage me as well as encouraging myself to be successful (I: mhm) because I don't wanna be just independent, I want to be able to help myself as including let others, uh..., open themselves up to help others as well..and..success isn't just about independent people, it's about helping you and others as well, and, and that's what I think it's about.

I: Do you feel like you have control of your future and your ability to succeed?

30 S: With the route I'm taking now in high school, I think I do. And..the more harder I try, the more control I gain and I think that if I do better..than I think I can, then I will have more than enough control to be about to..make my..dream or idea come to life, I guess.

I: So same line of thinking. What are your dreams? What are your goals for now and after high school?

35 S: Umm, my dreams now are....I wanna be able to..do more than just core classes and welding. More uh, ..not like work after school, but..uh..volunteer for any community service. I haven't done that in awhile cause I've been busy at home but I've been planning on doing it around school...and, uh, (pause) to do that.. I (long pause)...during school, my goal for that is to work harder and join with other people to, to help and after  
40 high school, I want to be able to...help other people with what I want to do and teach them and help them..differently.

I: As you said what you want – you mentioned military and mechanical type work. Right? Is that what you said? That's goals after high school?

S: Yeah

45 I: Would you describe yourself as self-motivated or do you think you are motivated by other people or factors or... a combination of?

S: Uh, I think a combination..because..I have my own motivation but sometimes I like the encouragement of others. It kind of gives me more of a enthusiastic idea. It, it makes it more fun than just doin' it by myself. Um, that's, that's what I think.

50 I: Ok. Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals even if it may take awhile? Or even if it costs you time you could be doing others things? Are you willing to work for the long run for those goals?

S: Most definitely. Uh, I would do what I can to make my life successful and..make it encouraging for anybody else.

55 I: So even if you had to make some sacrifices on the front end on time or, you know, going back to school, do you think that's worth the long run goal?

S: Yes, it is. (responded back quickly)

I: Okay. Um, if something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?

60 S: Um...I would try to learn myself how to get it done and if I wouldn't be able to..do it on my own, I would ask people that I know in that area of expertise of what I'm having difficulty with, so they can help me so..I can do what I need to do to finish.

I: So something's difficult or becomes difficult, would you keep trying then or potentially...do you see yourself as one that pushes through or gets frustrated and gives up?

65 S: Uh...since, uh, ever since I've been little and now, I haven't really given up on a whole lot of stuff. I'm not a very easy person on that and I see myself pushing..pushing through and...even if it's hard, I would do it.

I: So how well, then, do you think you have control of your emotions then when things get difficult or frustrating?

70 S: Uh...I have good control (I sense a little uncertainty or not a lot of confidence) and at some..depending on the situation..is, is most important...but, in most cases I have a lot of control of my emotions.

I: Okay. How to you feel about your ability to learn? Learn new things, to get better at something or change something?

75 S: Can you repeat that again?

I: Yeah. How do you feel about your ability to learn, as in to get better at something or to work harder and learn more? So your ability...is it easier for you to learn or do you recognize that maybe that if something is hard for you to learn that you're gonna work harder to try to learn more and do better?

80 S: Uh...a lot of it lately for me has been dependent on the subject, I guess, and welding, uh, if you look at my grade it's perfect. (chuckles, perks up a little) I love that class...uh, English, history, I have really good grades in there, and last semester, eh, the subjects I didn't really like...I mean I do need them..uh, it honestly, to me, it's on the subject. It's on how I want to focus myself and..I know it's important to pass my classes and get through, *but* I just don't see the interest in some of 'em and (stumbles a little)..everybody has their own opinion, and uh, in my opinion, I just think those class...not very..not all that important but I do need them. It's..just..my learning curve is just really different and, uh, it..I just like things that..spark my interest I guess.

- 90 I: Tell me a little bit about some of your home description as far as family/guardian...who do you live at home with?
- S: I live with my..my mom and my sister. I've been with them ever since I was born...no dad, so..eh..it's not that bad. Thing's difficult here and there..but...(pause)
- 95 I: Do you feel like you could describe any particular cultural background or...kind of a family background with your household..or...has what you've already told me pretty much describe it so far?
- S: Umm, ...me and my family, we don't really..connect very well, I guess I could..I should say, uh..I, um..I don't stay at home very often because I have, uh, I work with a lot of my friends on..trying to earn money, do stuff for myself that way, you know, if I, if I
- 100 can get a scholarship I still have money to go to college and I've been doing that lately and since I'm a sophomore and I'm old enough to get a job, I'm working towards that, so I won't be really home and...I mean I've ... personally noticed that without them, I'm not gonna go into detail (pause), I'm feeling differently about my family, and it's on a personal level that, and uh, I need.. I need to get my stuff straight to be able to do what I
- 105 need to do before I can worry about anything else. Family is important, yes, but my mom has more than enough power to be able to take care of herself without my need. I know I'm her son, but I don't have to..I shouldn't have to pay anything to help as a 16 year old .
- I: Um, is that..do you think that's an expectation for you at home?
- S: For me, a lot of things are expected at home and chores, I know those are one,
- 110 but... some..somethings from my family are expected a little too much. Like if I come home with uh..with a couple dollars, I get asked "Hey, can you go to the store?" or something and I'm like, I don't have a whole lot of money, I need that for something else. Then I get yelled at and go get it either way. That's kind of the falling out of the family part right there.
- 115 I: Well, that plays into things. Um, so you live with your mom. What...do you know what level of education she has?
- S: Uh, she graduated high school, I think. She got her GED or something. Uh...I don't know about college. She wanted to go back to school since she got her taxes but..uh...I would say her highest education is high school graduation.
- 120 I: Okay. So those different factors, how do you think those may or may not impact you here at school?
- S: Uh, I haven't really had a whole lot of role models, so I've had to encourage myself for a lot of the things I do...and ..my school history kinda says that..uh, but..I've had to pick myself up more than anything. Family encouragement hasn't really worked. I
- 125 mean the only person in my family that's really been encouraging is my grandfather, and I don't see him very often so..I don't have that as well so.. I have my friends, my girlfriend and me to encourage me.  
(secretary calls into office during interview)
- I: Sorry about that. You kinda answered this for me but I'll be more specific. What
- 130 kind of expectations does your mom have for you at school then as far as grades, attendance, behavior, those types of things?
- S: Uh, as you said more specifically, my mom she wants me to pass my classes as well as everybody else does. Uh...she doesn't expect me to get A's and B's or anything but she wants me to strive to do that and, which I understand, and...but on the downside
- 135 it's kinda hard to do that when you don't have any encouragement or anybody willing to

help you except for the people at school and...I get lectured all the time ..you, you..what if you're embarrassed about going to a teacher? It's not about being embarrassed (sounds slightly annoyed) or that I'm an athlete and I don't like being told doing things, it's more my, my thought. I don't wanna be helped on that point – I wanna be able to learn to do it myself so I can help others and that's why it makes it hard for me but that helps me,  
 140 personally, to do well and that's..how..that's how I show how my grades and everything work with my mom and everything else.

I: Okay. How involved in your school experience has she...do you think your mom has been as far as those expectations and being involved with things here at school or  
 145 talking with teachers or...?

S: She hasn't been very involved. From sports events to my promotions in ROTC and, uh, talking to my teachers...it's disappointing, uh, from my perspective and it's discouraging because it, you know, you want, as a kid everybody wants their parents to be there for them and even if, no matter how old you are, you always want your parents  
 150 to be there for you. And...you want them to help you or..or, how do I put it? Give you enthusiasm.

I: Yeah, so my next little add on to that is: help with work or just support or providing resources or helping you find the resources you need for stuff at school? So you can factor that into your answer.

S: I've had to..I had to do a lot of that myself. Uh, I've had to buy more of my stuff for school..football..for ROTC. From shoes, boots, clothes, and ..my resources had kind of uh, not have kinda dropped from my mom's responsibility for providing for me has kinda become for myself.

I: So in that planning and support aspect at school, do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or even just planning for some of these future goals that we've talked about, do you think she would help in that way or know where to go or what to do to help you?

S: Uh, I've told her that I have opportunities, especially in welding class because my welding teacher has already helped me and told me what I can, what doors I have  
 165 possibly open and, uh, and I would..it's..kinda.. like whenever, have you ever heard somebody, they think they're listening them but they say something like "Cool," "Awesome," "Ok, that's awesome" and it kinda, it's like "Ok, you're not listening, whatever, I just leave" and it's kinda like those conversations and it's...uh...I don't see her helping in my mind. Uh, I've had to help myself..a lot and I don't think that's gonna  
 170 change.

I: What about your friends and your classmates? What kind of pressure do you feel you might feel from them? Positive and/or negative..as far as behavior , attitude toward school, that type of stuff?

S: For the past two months, almost two months since school's been back, uh, I've been realizing who's my real friends and who's not...and who have..backstabbers, who don't care. And I, uh, I've been..from my friends to classmates, I would say...(long  
 175 pause, shows signs of uncertainty)

I: Kind of your peer group, your people around you on a daily basis...

S: I would say my circle is getting smaller day by day...and I am, I'm beginning to  
 180 realize not...not everybody's who they say they are..and...I can name at least 3 names

that are still in *my* group I guess..3 or 4, not including my girlfriend (smiles, laughs a little) cause she'll be in there for awhile. Uh...(long pause)

I: So how does that group then either influence positively or negatively your attitude about school? Your attitude about your goals? Your behavior..as far as working toward things, or not?

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S: I think just about every day we'll talk about something, um, that important from school and after school or, uh, life in general. Um, there is negativity in it and there is always gonna be some type, ya know, and um, you got to think about this and this and ya know, what if this happens? And you can't do that, but there's more than likely an alternative for it and me and my friends, we will talk we'll try to find..we'll do..we'll go worst to best. We will talk out the negative and we'll bring up the positive to try to figure out if there's an alternative for it. And whenever we're done with that, we'll do the negative and see what could happen. Then we'll do the positive and see what happens if it goes negative, and it's, uh..we will, what we try to do is everybody, we'll say what we want to do and..whenever we..and we'll go one by one and whatever person says they wanna do, we'll try to help them, uh, do what they need to do. Help 'em do what they need to do, tell them what they need to do to get it done and what resources they need I guess, and uh, we'll go person by person, no matter who it is. It's random...uh...we look for the best solution..and uh, yeah we have our friends and negativity and our fights and that's just normal stuff but I think my attitude with that includes and that into school and uh it...it helps me want to come to school and..it..it kind of...it raises my attitude, it kind of..well not raises my attitude in a negative way, in a positive way. Uh, and it makes me want to learn more, do more, get more interacted into it and uh, makes me want to be able to connect to the things that are important. And that's what I'm trying to say.

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I: Alright, we'll shift gears just a little bit. Describe to me how you feel about school as you went from elementary to middle school to high school. Did you notice any shifts, any changes in yourself? When..what were some of those transitions you noticed about school and about yourself along the way?

S: I definitely noticed some changes (chuckles a little). Uh, from elementary, I absolutely hated school. I did not want to come to school at all. I wanted to stay home, play, just do nothing – well, not do nothing, just run around and..uh..I can't sit still, eh, it's not my thing. Um, and I didn't really like school in elementary but whenever it got to middle school, I was like "Okay, it's schoolwork. I'll go and get my work done and go home" and after that I..after I graduated middle school and went to high school, it completely different mindset. It changes you completely and it makes you think, you know, I got 4 years, I need to start..I need to pick up my feet and get going, and uh, it really, really makes you think and uh, the only thing you can do is..you gotta stay in one straight line. You can not (emphasizes) change courses because then it will completely turn everything around. It won't help you, it will throw you back, it will set you back, and uh, that's shown me that you can't let anything get in your way from your attitude and it changing me is that I have become more of a...a demonstrator and a helper, I guess, and for myself, that has made me want to go through more and get better.

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I: Do you think some of your previous school experience has shaped you in that way or been part of that or has that been something that you have become aware of just from being in high school?

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- S: Uh, the previous high school I was in..was a very..it was way bigger than this. Um, it was in my freshman year. I think that's what really made me change..from high school and my first few months there before I moved back here..uh I had really amazing friends, good classes, really awesome opportunities from football to science, English, everything. And, uh, whenever I came back here, I looked at every possible thing I could do. In freshmen year I did the main things I needed to do and..for like finance and, of course, ROTC which that covers in government and uh, so I'll have extra classes for my senior year to take. And uh, from that high school it kinda changed my perspective of everything. It really opened my eyes.
- 230 I: So you haven't always been in this school system?
- S: No, I haven't.
- I: So when..what's your timeline of moving schools? And what's the other high school you were at?
- S: This is L\_\_\_ High School from Indiana. Uh. I went there for 4 or 5 months for the first part of Freshman year.
- 240 I: Where were you before that?
- S: I was here.
- I: Here. Okay.
- S: And I went to E\_\_\_ Middle for 8<sup>th</sup> grade year..it was like the second half, for a couple months. Uh...I'll go from kindergarten, elementary to...alright. I was born in C\_\_\_, only for a year. I came down here to Tennessee, 3 years later my sister was born. I was only here in M\_\_\_ or W\_\_\_, one of the two. I went to..uh...was an elementary there..and I moved up to C\_\_\_, Missouri. And it's a very big city, a college city...and I lived there for almost ten years, went to B\_\_\_, D\_\_\_, L\_\_\_ Middle School, and then after
- 245 L\_\_\_ Middle School, it was, uh, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I moved down to M\_\_\_, Missouri, and I was there for..it was the first part of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, first half, and uh, I played my football season, first, uh second football season there and...I moved. After..uh during, no after Spring Break, and I uh, I came down here for uh, E\_\_\_ and I went there for the last half and came, went to Indiana for 4 months and then came back down here. That's a long line
- 255 (chuckling) – I've been moving quite a lot. It's tiring.
- I: Well, we're glad you're here. Have you ever, or, I think I know the answer to the "do you now" part but have you ever struggled with school and learning?
- S: Yes, I have. Quite a lot actually.
- I: Tell me about that. What do you first remember and, well, we'll start with that.
- 260 When do you first remember struggling? Tell me what that journey has been like.
- S: (pause) Where do you want me to start from?
- I: Just what's your first remembrance of learning and school being difficult for you.
- S: I think my first remembering of struggling was uh 7<sup>th</sup> grade. It was...either history or English. I could not pay attention. I had no attention span at all. I could not understand a word my teacher was saying. Uh..I had difficulties keeping on track, just catching the grasp of what she was trying to explain, and I no-, I didn't notice that until a few years ago and..that's what really got kinda..put me in..put me in a bond a little bit because..in some classes I'll notice it myself, I'm just, I'll..I'll listen to the teacher and I'll know what she's talking about, but something will catch me, catch my attention, and
- 265 I'm like "oh, hey, what's that?" and I just..that teacher or whatever...it..it..kinda all started at middle school, 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 270

I: So you didn't, you know, elementary school..you talked earlier about you didn't like it but it didn't seem hard.

275 S: It..eh..it wasn't hard. I had a really good, I mean, as a little kid I was taught to pay attention to a lot of stuff. I had a uh, I have a military grandfather, which he was a lot about discipline, and uh, he was around a lot so I had to uh, ...strict, so I was used to teachers being strict and wanted things done, so I got my stuff, that's how I got my stuff done but until I moved, that's whenever it all changed and uh, and middle school kinda really caught my eye on that.

280 I: So since that point when you started struggling, has anybody along the way done anything to try to help you with that or work through that struggle? Have you noticed any improvement?

S: (long pause) Um, from my family, not that I can say. I've had to do that a lot on myself.

285 I: What about anybody at school? Has anybody noticed the struggle? Have you talked to anybody about it and anyone at a school done anything maybe to help?

S: I've talked to Coach C\_\_\_ about my uh..about my Biology grade and I have to send, uh, Mrs. R\_\_\_ and Mrs. B\_\_\_ a email and ..uh..I think the only people that have really wanted to help me is uh, K\_\_\_ and my friends.

290 I: Okay...Do you feel like you're still struggling or working toward some improvement in that?

S: Uh...I think I'm working toward improvement. I have a *lot* better grades that last semester...um, I've been..I've been really doing a lot, a lot better lately. I haven't really been as distracted as much..and..I think that's what..is really helping me.

295 I: Alright, so your classes now, do you typically feel like you know what going on in your classes and where you need to be?

S: I do...I think I understand a little bit more this semester (laughs a little).

I: What do you like about your classes and what do you not like about your classes that you have?

300 S: Uh, I have a small class in the morning, so it's not really loud..and I mellow out a little bit..I'll, I'll be calm and I'm not as hyper, so I'll pay attention...and, uh, for ROTC...it's a big class. I wake up so, it's about the time of the day I need to wake up anyway, and, uh, for the rest of the day I'm ready to get something done and just be done with it, I guess. If I have to do something else, I'll do it.

305 I: What other classes do you have?

S: I have history and welding after this period (referring to 2<sup>nd</sup> block).

I: So...what do you..there's a whole bunch of things that go into a class. What are characteristics, what are things you might like or not like about those classes?

310 S: Umm, I like how...uh, my English class..she explains things. Cause it's English, you gotta explain it. And, uh, for ROTC, it's simple. Just follow what he wants you to do, study, go..read through the book, get notes down and..that's it. And we'll do some other stuff like drill and stuff..and, uh, for history..uh, he'll..my history teacher, Coach K\_\_\_, he will stand at the front of class, explain, tell us what's important. He has a whole list of the vocabulary words we need to learn, who and the people and what are important and  
315 he explains that as well which makes it easier...and, uh, welding..it's just demonstration. It's all you can do is just learn by demonstration.

I: So you would say you were pretty involved or interested in most or all of your classes?

S: I'd say..all my classes.

320 I: Okay. Do you think your teachers do a good job explaining *why* you're doing what you're doing or why you're learning what you're learning?

S: Uhhh..nobody's really asked that question in either of my classes this semester. I'll be honest, it's a..nobody really has thought about it cause..uh..my teachers are actually pretty fun. They're funny, they have weird things they do besides just...some  
325 teachers that I've seen here.."Alright, kids, get your papers out and go to the book."  
That's not fun. What are you doing? Call names, say "Hey, explain this. What happened yesterday?" (I: Yeah.) Make people think..it's kinda..what..the attitude of teachers, how they come into class and..how they're set to do things..it's not just about the students when they're in there. They wanna have fun besides, "Alright, page 343, read this  
330 section."

I: Mhm. So you're saying they don't just show up and say, "Let's do this." You feel like they're trying to get you guys involved in..."this is why we're doing what we're doing and this is what you're going to be learning today..or supposed to be learning, doing today?"

335 S: Yes.

I: Okay. What about homework? How are you at doing your homework?

S: Uh..(laughs) funny. I don't really have a whole lotta homework this semester. Uh,  
340 history class, he will explain, we will have a section review at the end of class. We do our paper, we study over it, we turn it in. He gives us our grade on whatever point grade he has it on. And we will go through the entire chapter, what we need to do throughout the week or..sometime two weeks, uh, for history...and it will, really our only homework is our, uh, study guide. And that's it. Uh...

I: What about last semester? So when you get assigned homework, how do you feel about it? How are you about doing it?

345 S: Last semester I wasn't really, eh, you know...biology, that felt like I was in an honors class. I did not understand a word she was saying...and the homework, was note cards and everything and vocabulary but I was like, "This feels like English class. This is a science class." And I didn't feel really happy about that class because I was...we did experiments but they weren't fun. She said she'd been using them for years, and that...I  
350 was like, "You got to change it up." You can't stay the same. Staying the same is boring. And you wanna make, not just yourself happy, you wanna make everybody around you happy, but you have to focus on the things that are in need not in want.

I: What about final grades and report card grades, do those motivate you...at all?

S: If I know there's a bad grade, I kinda get upset about it, um...especially on final  
355 report cards cause then I, I know something's gonna happen whenever my mom sees it. And uh...

I: But are you personally motivated for that end goal...for that report card grade?

S: If it's good, I wanna do better, and uh, if I am close to, like, like it's a eighty..a  
360 91, and it's not an A yet, and I'm like .5 or whatever points off, then I wanna get that grade. You know, I'll go ask for extra credit to get that grade up to an A. And uh...if it's a bad grade, I..I..I really have to, I really have to try to get it fixed and raise it.

I: What do you think about how teachers grade?



S: Well, everybody grades differently. It's, uh...we can't really tell them to change it but.. we would like a little..some, some people like a little bit of leeway on their..their  
 365 grades, and you know. "Hey, you know, I did this. I tried. I'd like a little bit..a little bit more credit than that." And...I mean, there are kids that are really smart in this school that don't have to worry about that but you have to look on the kids, you know.. that have trouble with that, and you can't just be, "Okay, kids, you got an A and you got a D" or whatever. You can't do that. It's ..uh...it's not all about..the good kids (said slowly for  
 370 emphasis). It's definitely not all about the good kids. I don't remember being a good kid in middle school...or in elementary. But..uh...you have to..the grading, it..(long pause)..I would say I'm ok with the grading this semester, but last semester, it was..really off. Like I..I didn't get why I got those grades or how and I was like "I had the answer right but you put it wrong because I had like..uh...I was .5 off on one .0002 or something"  
 375 and...some teachers be like, they'll give you half credit if you get it half right. It's like "Ok, well, I'm ok with that but you, I got this answer right, but you put it wrong. What's going on here?" you know? And some teachers, they'll grade *everything* at the end of the year, and I'm like "You are putting so much stress on yourself doin' that" and that's what screws up everybody's grades because your gonna get so binded up into something and  
 380 you're gonna put the wrong number and you're over-thinking something and it's, it doesn't make it fair for the person that has to deal with that grade and the person that gets..doesn't even deserve that grade. And it makes it completely unfair for everybody.

I: So kind of along that same line of thinking, as you go throughout a nine weeks or a semester in a class, do you pretty well know how you're doing? Do you get that  
 385 feedback or those grades back?

S: I check my grades frequently. I..I will do that often as possible sometimes. I'll do it at least every day almost. Uh..I..this semester I can't..I will not be able to stand myself with that..with getting a D. I don't wanna get a D. Or an F..uh..I mean like I may have some homeworks that I didn't turn in or something but that..I just can't see myself doing  
 390 bad this semester. I can't do it..cause it's my sophomore year and going into junior year, going in as a junior next year..it's not gonna look good. I don't want it to look bad, I want it to look good.

I: How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests? Do you usually feel like you're prepared..or not? Or...somewhere in the middle?

395 S: I worry sometimes, I really worry sometimes. Even if I study for test or quiz, I really worry because I'm not a, I'm not a quiz or a test taker at all. I've always been bad, I don't..the only thing that really keeps my grade up is classwork and uh...

I: Do you feel like you know to be able to prepare yourself...or know what you need to do to be able to prepare yourself for quizzes or tests here?

400 S: I know what I need to do, and..and..it..even if I study week or.. a month for the final, like the EOC or something, um.. as soon as I get on the test and they ask me a question I know I'll immediately forget it and I'm like, "Uh, crap. I know this" but it..it agitates me because I'm like "Why..why is it that I do this and everybody.." It makes me feel like I'm the only one doing wrong and everybody'll get it right. And I, I worry...and,  
 405 that, that for my learning..everybody's learning curve is different but it, it scares me, personally, as a test taker.

I: Well, you kind of segwayed into my next question. Because I asked you about classroom quizzes and tests, and you know, trying to prepare and feeling prepared. What

410 do you think about the state standardized tests like the EOCs, and the Writing Assessment, you'll be doing the ACT next year..what do you think, how do you feel about those?

S: Uh, EOC..um..been doing 'em for 3 years now cause every state I've lived in has done differently, but uh...(long pause) I mean, I'm really unfond of them because they take really long, and I..as I said earlier I'm not a person to sit still, so..uh..I'll start trying  
415 to look around and am like.."Hey, catch my interest, something" and it, it doesn't work and I just get completely bored and, and that's..I...tests, the length of them is really what gets me and I just get..I'm like..I'll read the questions, I'll read the..the options or if it's a writing thing, I'll do what I need to do but...I won't grasp what I have to do because it's..never been in my head that a test, a test doesn't really help me. It's just..I know they  
420 wanna see how well I've done this year but..you're putting pressure on kids, adults, pre-adults, whatever..uh..that have more important stuff to do. Sometimes..everybody has their own life, but...I know you want to see how well they're doing in school, but you can kinda look at their previous..grades on that..and..from..you're, you're making it harder on yourself if you just wanna a, a test (laughs a little) and they will through  
425 questions in there that we haven't even learned and I'm like "What is thi...wha..what is the point in throwing a question in that you know we haven't learned?" Cause if you write the curriculum and you tell the teachers "this is what they need to learn," why would you throw something in there that we don't, we don't know?

I: That's a good question. Alright, in general, do you think the adults here at this  
430 school are nice and care about you? Why or why not? Do you feel like there are people here that work to get to know you and help you?

S: Hmm.

I: And I can repeat that if you...I kind of had several things going on. In general, do  
435 you think the adults here are nice and/or care about you? Why/why not? Do you think there are people here that work to get to know you and help you if you need it?

S: Uh, some teachers. I know a few..that have helped..and wanted to help, but  
around the stories that I've heard from my friends and uh, K\_\_\_, a lot of teachers are self-centered around themselves. And I..I'm not really ok with that cause if I get that teacher, I'm not really gonna have a good attitude in class...and..if you are a self-centered teacher  
440 and not willing to help anybody, you just wanna get 'em outta your class, you're not helping yourself. And that makes *a lot* of people angry. Uh, I...a few..I've..I only know a few teachers in this school, so I'd say a couple care..and have tried to help me. Mr. R\_\_\_ especially. He's my..favorite teacher. Best teacher..ever..I've ever had. Uh...I really...I think he cares a lot. He's more than willing to help anybody. Even in detention,  
445 he gives..he'll be like..if somebody needs help with homework that they didn't finish, he's helping them. Um...I think..Freshmen year teachers really encourages kids..because they have to have a positive attitude..because if you don't..if you come into high school with a negative attitude, you're most likely to come out of high school with a negative attitude. And..it depends on you, the people around you that you hang out with, and your  
450 teachers. It's not..it's not just.."I'm gonna complete school and do whatever I want," it's more, you know, you gotta have..more than just yourself..to get through it..and you have to have people that help you, care, and want you to do better..not just be basic...or, uh, how do you call it? How would you guys call it?

I: Do the minimum maybe?

- 455 S: Minimum, yeah.
- I: So when you feel like you've done something good or been successful at something, do you feel like there's people here that notice that?
- S: Some people...uh
- I: As far as adults, teachers, us, or anybody in the building...in general, do you think  
460 that there's people that notice when you do something good or are successful?
- S: I think the only reason why people would notice if a student is doing good is if it's announced. And a lot of that stuff is announced, uh, on the Hype, but like, what if that person doesn't want everybody to know, you know? I mean you gotta ask 'em and I get a question in my head like do they really ask this person? Do they really want them, the  
465 school, to know? And it's like football, you know, uh, losing the C\_\_\_ County game, you don't wanna be beat down about it all the time. You know, ok, so let me drag my head around going to school. Don't make it worse.
- I: So if you personally, like in ROTC, if you do something well or correct or you're in English class and you do well on an assignment, do your teachers seem to notice and  
470 what are some of their responses maybe?
- S: Major will definitely notice. He notices all the time. He knows my attitude very well. Uh, if I come into class with just a slouch face like I don't care, uh, or don't want to do anything, he'll call me over and be like, "What's up?" And, uh, it's mainly him that will notice, but I would say only a few people, only a few teachers.
- I: Last couple questions. How do you feel about this school as a whole? Do you feel like you have a place here? Do you feel safe? Do you like coming here? Just kind of your  
475 overview of this school.
- S: Uh...the school's, I'm fine with the school. Um, the rumor stuff though, with the safety, like if a kid says he's gonna do something, more than likely not gonna do it, but  
480 then again you know, you got people worrying and not coming to school like that incident that happened awhile back here and it's like, makes you think like "Really? Is my school gonna take the caution of hey this kid's really gonna wanna, do, say that?" It's getting around. I mean, are they gonna do something about it? And it makes you think about it and how well you teachers kinda care, and like I've walked past a couple classes  
485 and people, teachers, I've heard teachers say, "Whatever, I'll protect you. I'll do what I have to do." I'm like, it's survival of the fittest. As soon as that happens, you have no idea what your mind's gonna do unless you've been in the situation already. You can't just say, "Ok. You're safety's fine. I'll protect you."
- I: What about as far as out and about with your peers in the hallway, the cafeteria, in  
490 your classes, do you feel like you have your, and we kinda talked about this earlier, do you feel like you have a place here? And do you like coming here? As far as education and socially, this is somewhere you wanna be?
- S: As I said earlier, it's like encouragement. I have to have somebody to really want me to come to school sometimes, and that's, the only person usually is K\_\_\_, you know.  
495 She really gets me up on my feet. Makes me happy, And she's probably been the most encouraging person I've had in my life in a really, really long time.
- I: Last question. So statistically speaking, if I were gonna pull a bunch of data, personal on T\_\_\_, statistics might say you shouldn't be engaged in school, or you maybe shouldn't be doing as well as you are, but you are. Why is that? Why do you think that is?

500 S: Because of change. It's, uh, it's about how you react to yourself and how you control yourself in the situations you're in. So statistics is data. It doesn't predict what you're doing or exactly how you're doing it. It just, uh, tells you what happened, what has happened. Um, it can show my history. My history is the past. It's the past, whatever. You...the older you get, the more you change. And the more different you become, I  
505 guess. Um, uh, you can't base statistics on a person. It doesn't work. It's...it doesn't really match. Well, I mean you could...

I: Well, why does it not match for you? And you've kind of talked a little bit about it, but, for you, what makes you different than your statistics?

S: Um...more of my...it's been more of my grades and stuff, honestly, and my, uh, positivity. Cause I've had a lot of negativity and so if you look up my track record, it's  
510 not very good (laughing a little). I'll be honest. Um, it has really been on my grades lately, and the...I think...I really think that, uh, it all, it's about how you carry yourself from chin up, chin down, looking down, looking up, posture, I guess. I don't think posture, well, posture does kinda count.

515 I: If you personally believe that how you carry yourself can affect your attitude, then it will.

S: It's...it's kinda like why I joined ROTC. I wanna be able to carry myself better as a person. Not just as a civilian that lives in a small town, as a person going on to a really big world in two years. And that's..and people always question, "Why ROTC? What's so  
520 important about it? Do you wanna go in the military and die?" No, it's...it helps you from academics to being able to...like getting a job. That's why we wear our uniforms, to make sure everything is all squared away, make sure, uh, our ribbons or our insignias for anything have to be squared away, otherwise, we'll get a bad grade. It's like getting a job. You gotta wear good, good posture, good attitude, and you have to have a, you wanna  
525 have a clean resume or background or record or anything and it all depends on how you want to do.

## Student #8 Interview Transcription

I: So you're a sophomore. This would make it your eleventh year, if you include kindergarten, of doing the whole school thing. So just kind of in general, how is it for you? What do you think about school? Like is it important to you or not?

5 S: It's important but it's, well now I like coming to school, but when I was younger I didn't like to, so...but right now, it's important and I'm just trying to get through high school.

I: Tell me a little bit about you. What are you personally interested in and what kind of things motivate you?

10 S: I like doing sports and...the fact that I'm getting closer to like, I don't know, graduating, it motivates me more to, you know, keep pushing and not give up and then friends that are there for you. That's a big thing cause I like, you know, motivating my friends and yeah...

I: What do you view as being successful?

S: ...

15 I: What would you describe as being successful?

S: Um, ...how do I say this? Accomplishing something that is important or, um, how do I say this? I don't, successful...it's like...

I: What would it be like to consider yourself successful?

20 S: It'd be like accomplishing my goals, you know, that I've set and getting, you know, through everything without being pushed back. You know what I mean? Being held back or whatever. Just getting to a point where I'm stable, I guess I would say, and feeling good about myself, and not being in trouble (laughs). I guess that's what I would call...

I: Do you feel like you have control of that – your success and your future?

25 S: Yeah...but sometimes, I don't know. It's like certain little things happen that kind of make me, I guess, doubt myself, and, but it'll take me, you know, a little while then I'll get back to where I was.

I: So what are your goals? Like now – and you already talked about to graduate – and after high school. What are some of your goals?

30 S: I want to go to college and I want to become an RN or do something in labor and delivery, something in that, you know. Um, ...yeah...that's like my main thing, and then, you know, of course I want to get all the basic stuff like house and stuff like that.

I: Would you describe yourself as self-driven and self-motivated and/or maybe motivated by other people and other factors?

35 S: I'm really motivated by myself. I mean, people can help motivate me, but if I don't like believe in myself, it's not...like, my grandparents, they always tried to tell me to do something that if I can do it or whatever, but if I don't feel it, then I'm not gonna try it, so it's kinda like based on me, how I feel about it, the situation.

I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals?

40 S: Sometimes. Sometimes, I don't, I'm not gonna lie, I get lazy and I don't want to, but I've...if it's like something like I'm really trying to work forward to, then yeah, even if I don't want to, I might, you know...

I: If it takes awhile to work towards your goals, are you still gonna stick with it? You still willing to do that?

- 45 S: Yeah.  
 I: If it costs you time or energy that you could be doing other things? Still willing?  
 S: ...I'd be willing, but I, when those kind of things happen, I always try to find some kind of time to like refresh myself, but I mean, yeah, cause after it's all over with, then I have plenty of time to, you know, do what I want to.
- 50 I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?  
 S: Not very likely. I like, I feel like I could talk to someone about it and they can do all they can to help me, but like I said, I guess I'm stubborn, and when it comes to like asking for help cause someone will be like, "You need to...", like my aunt, she's always telling me, "Go ask your teacher for help" or whatever and I don't. I just, I don't know, I don't ask for help. I try to fix the situation myself.
- 55 I: So that kinda takes me to my next question. That thing this is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to keep trying? Or get frustrated and give up? Like what's more likely for you?  
 S: At first it's, like at first I would give up, and I would probably stop trying but then I'd find, I always seem to find the motivation to start over, so it's not really just something that I worry about when I...whenever I say I'm done, I'm normally not done (laughs), and like I'll go back to it and, so...
- I: How well do you think you control your emotions?  
 S: How what?
- 65 I: How well do you think you control your emotions?  
 S: Very well...because, yeah...  
 I: Especially, you know, we're talking about things that are difficult or continuing to try or give up or...do you think you have a pretty good grasp of your own emotions?  
 S: Yeah.
- 70 I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?  
 S: I...ok, I know I'm smart, and, you know, I know I have the ability of learning what is being taught, but if it's hard and I just can't understand it, I'll just stop, and I'll...like I won't try again until maybe the next day, like I have to just stop completely for the whole day. Like in math or something...
- 75 I: Like just kind of shut down for the day?  
 S: Yeah...cause it frustrates me and I don't wanna be stressin' about it all day, so I just don't even try to worry about it.  
 I: How do you feel about your ability to get better at something or change?  
 S: That would be kind of a hard thing especially because...I'm, I'm OCD like really bad, so changing things and not having it the way I want it, it's, it would be especially if I'm, um, transitioning to how someone else wants me to do something then it would be harder. But I mean, I'll do it, but it'll be a little hard.
- I: What about your ability to work harder in order to learn more or do better or change?  
 85 S: I think that would be the situation where I would, I probably would have to have someone there to like keep me focused cause I'll, I'll be thinking about it, but I won't pay any attention to it, and that's when I need somebody like to remind me like "You need to go do this" and like push me into doing it.  
 I: Tell me a little bit about home situation, and you know, I know we've talked  
 90 previously, but for this sake – your family/guardian structure? I know that you previously

lived with your grandmother, correct?

S: Yeah.

I: And you currently live with...?

S: My mom.

95 I: Your mom. Who else is at home?

S: Um, my brothers and sisters.

I: How long did you live with your grandparents?

S: I've lived with, ok, you know, my mom, she was young when she had me, so she was just kind of running around, so my mom...my granny was always there to help my  
 100 mom. My mom got in some trouble, so I was around, I was like six years old, I was with my grandmother and my brother – he's with my aunt – and, um, you know, I stayed with her until my mom came back, and I was like eight then and my mom, since I was, you know, I was stuck under my granny by then, so I kinda, I just stayed with her, but you know, I'd go see my mom on breaks and all that. That's what my brother does now, but  
 105 home-wise, I don't know, I just, I would...I'm not gonna say I don't like being there but...I don't (laughs). It's kinda, I don't know, I like to be independent, so I like to do things for myself, cause that's how my granny's taught me cause it was just me and her, so I'd have to help her and she'd help me, you know, so I'm just very independent, and my mom, she doesn't really understand that – that I like to be independent and do things  
 110 for myself, but, you know, she tries to be there a lot. It's not bad, but sometimes it gets stressful because, because I'm the oldest, a lot of things get put on me, and it's hard. That's like the only thing cause sometimes...I have to take on my mom's responsibilities or help her with her responsibilities and then I have to worry about myself, and I guess you could say in my house I...I basically help take care of everybody, so I'm like another  
 115 parent in the house, so I have a lot of...responsibility.

I: Any particular cultural background, factors, information – things that stand out to you growing up as far as your culture, your family, influences...?

S: Hmm, like family-wise like what I notice about my family?

I: Cultural background could be a religion aspect, a race aspect, any thing that you  
 120 feel like has been a part of your influence growing up.

S: Well, you know history and whatever (alluding to race), so I'm, I am Church of God and Christ and it's like a big congregation and they take, um, you know, black pride very seriously, so my thing is, um, my family, we feel like we've worked hard to get where we are now, so if we just throw it all away by acting up and getting in trouble and  
 125 all that then it's just like no use for it, so basically we just try to stay on the right path and, you know, own up to what we are, and even if we get in trouble or whatever, we still try to make ourselves presentable to others, you know, not just come off wrong off the jump. Like whenever I see someone, I might not, I might look at them, I might not, you know, really want to talk to them, but I'll give 'em a chance, but if I don't like 'em after that then I won't talk to them.  
 130

I: Level of parent education. Do you know how far your mom went through school?

S: My mom...actually, I don't...I'm not gonna say, I think my mom did  
 graduate...yeah, I believe she graduated, cause I think my dad didn't, but...I believe, she was a trouble maker actually, but you know, she still got through school, and she  
 135 attempted to go to college, and she did like maybe a year and then she got pregnant with my brother, so she dropped out, and she's been trying to go back, but she's gotta get

everything settled first. That's it though.

I: What about your grandmother? Do you have any idea about your grandmother?

140 S: Oh, my grandmother...I think, you know, she went and she finished college. I know, not college, grad-, high school (laughs). I know that for a fact, but...I'm not sure if she went to, I'm not sure if she got to college during her time cause this is my great-grandmother that's been taking care of me so, you know, she, I don't...

I: That was a long time ago.

S: Yeah. (laughs), so I don't know about that.

145 I: So those family, cultural, home type things, how do you think any of those things impact you here at school and how you feel about school?

S: It actually helps me. It makes me want to come to school, because I don't like being at home (laughs), cause I be ready to go, like even on weekends, I'm ready to get up and go, so I wake up at like 5:00, (laughs) and I get ready for school and I, you know, I kinda sit around and wake up a little bit...and then, I don't know, I like coming to school cause it gives me something to do and then when I come here, I have people I can talk to, you know...yeah, I don't know, I like coming to school.

150 I: What kind of expectations does your mom or your grandmother have for you at school as far as grades, attendance, behavior? Do they make it clear what the expectations are?

155 S: My grandmother does. My mom kind of...you know, she tells me I need to keep my grades up, the main thing is she wants me to keep my grades up and stay out of trouble the best I can cause she knows I'm just like her and it's kinda hard, but I've been doing good so far, so...she just wants me to really keep up my grades. My grandmother wants me to be active in everything in school and keep my grades up and be on time, and she expects a lot and I try but it doesn't always happen that way.

160 I: How involved in your overall school experience do you feel like either your mom or your grandmother – you know, at whatever point in time – do you feel like they have been? How involved?

165 S: Like the...time, like all through school?

I: Yeah, uh-huh. Just school in general. How involved?

S: My mom, no matter like where she's been, she's always asked me how's school or whatever, and if she needs to be at a meeting, she will go, but normally, my aunt does my meetings, so my momma's kinda like, she's there but...there's other people that are also helping her, so she doesn't have to always be there all time cause she also has my brothers and sisters, and she has to be at their meetings and all that so, you know, I mean she's there...but, you know, she has other people to help her.

170 I: So that's even kind of now too? That describes now?

S: Yeah.

175 I: Involved helping you with your work, support, if you need resources or talking with teachers, meeting with teachers...how involved have they been along the way?

S: Um, ...I would say pretty involved because whenever my grades, you know, started to drop or whatever, they'll call and see what the problem is or ask me what it is or have a meeting or something or help me, make me do some work at home to, you know, help me master that skill or whatever so, I mean, yeah they're pretty involved.

180 I: Do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or like planning for those future goals that they would know where to go or what to do to help



you?

S: Well, you know, the people that's been there, yeah.

185 I: So you mentioned this earlier. Let's talk about friends and your peers or your classmates. Do you... what kind of pressure, if any, do you feel from them about, or as it affects you with school, positive and/or negative? What kind of influence do you think they have on you toward school?

S: My friends, we're all here for the same reason. We're just trying to get through it, so that we can go on and do what we want to, you know, like career wise. But, I mean, I have good friends and I have bad friends, because, I mean, being a teenager sometimes I'll, not trying to get in trouble, but I like to goof around a little bit, so you know, I have friends that goof around and stuff, but I don't in trouble that much. And then I have friends that encourage me, you know, and all that, so it's kinda like a mixture cause...

195 I: And so you kinda answered this a little bit, but how do you feel like your friends influence your behavior – specifically here at school?

S: It depends of what group of people I'm with cause when I come to school, okay outside of school, my family, I'm not gonna like sugar coat it, we fight a lot, so, you know, that's kinda what we do – we argue and we fight, and I do that outside of school like with friends and all that, you know, but that's just what we do, and then I tried not to bring that to school, but if I end up being around certain people that also don't like a person, it tends, you know, it doesn't end up well, but... I don't, it's kinda just weird for me cause I have friends that are good and then friends that are bad. It's just because I talk to everybody. I try to anyways, and I just don't really judge anyone. I'm not quick to judge anybody, so I give everybody a chance, even if they're bad I just... I try to stay out of trouble and let them get in trouble and not me.

I: So you've talked, basically, about how they might or might not affect your attitude toward school... and you talked about it a little bit earlier, your goals. Your friends and people, your peers around you at school – what kind of influence, if any, do they have on your goals?

S: On my goals?

I: Mhmm.

S: A lot of, I mean all my friends, they... even if they might not seem like they have goals, they have goals and... it's more like I'm encouraging them than they're encouraging me, so I mean, they, you know, try to do for me what I do for them and it's ok, but I encourage myself most.

I: Describe to me how you felt about school going from elementary to middle school to high school. Did you notice any changes in yourself or your attitude toward school as you went from elementary to middle to high school?

220 S: Elementary school, I was, um, the little quiet girl. I didn't really talk to anybody. I didn't have that many friends – I had maybe a few, and in middle school, it kinda, you know, grew cause I met new people, but in middle school I did stay in a lot of drama, and I tried to leave that at the high school, and when I came to the high school in the ninth grade, I did really good. I didn't talk to any of those people, and... so, I mean, the only difference between middle school and high school is, in middle school, you know, I said I stayed in a lot of drama – high school, I'm trying to tame myself, but I... by taming myself, I have a lot of like boiled up energy inside (laughs) and it's... yeah, that would be like the main thing, just like how people talk to others and associate... like, I don't know,

225

- 230 like I said, it's basically the whole drama thing. That's the big change for me – I stay out of trouble and tried to actually do good.
- I: What about your attitude about school itself as you went through different phases?
- S: My attitude...I...I didn't like school in elementary school cause, you know, I wanted to stay home and sleep and all that. In middle school...I didn't mind going, but I didn't wanna go cause, it was just...I don't know. And I don't know, when I got to high school, I started to like school, so...
- 235 I: Ok. Have you always been in this school system?
- S: I went to M\_\_\_\_\_ ... kindergarten and first grade, and then I moved here.
- I: Ok. Have you ever or do you now feel like you struggle with school and learning?
- S: Just math. (laughs) That's it.
- 240 I: Has it always been that way with math?
- S: (shakes head no)
- I: No. So what have other people done to try to help you with the area you struggle in?
- S: I have meetings with my teachers and talked to them and talked to, um, people that, um, do tutoring and all that. That's, yeah, that's what I do.
- 245 I: So if I asked what do you do, what did you do, which is more about now, what are you doing to try to work through that struggle...in math?
- S: Well, ... I try to listen and ask more questions in class cause I have Mr. D\_\_\_\_\_, and you know, he has his doctorate degree, so sometimes I think he forgets that he's teaching high school students, and he kinda goes fast, so I have to raise my hand, you know, ask questions and then I'm suppose to be going to tutoring, but I don't always get to make it there cause of my ride, and sometimes I don't wanna walk home, so...but I do have a opportunity to go to Mr. B\_\_\_\_\_ and, for, you know, help in math and...
- 250 I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?
- S: Yeah, usually.
- I: Tell me about them. What do you like or not like about your classes?
- S: I don't the fact that I don't have, I really don't have anybody to talk to. I, all of my classes, I have one maybe two people out of all of my classes that I actually talk to...cause, I don't know, they...just separate me and it makes me mad. (laughs) I don't like it.
- 260 I: So that affects how you feel about the class itself?
- S: The reason it affects me is because when I'm in class, if I don't really have anybody I can look at or even like know, it kinda throws me off and I'm kinda like...wondering off cause, I don't know how because usually if you're with your friends, you talk a lot, but I won't talk to them, it's just I want to be able to know somebody in the classroom, so if we do get a opportunity to talk, then I'm comfortable.
- I: Do you think you're involved or interested in your classes? Do you think you would describe yourself as involved and interested in them?
- 270 S: Yeah...I think especially because I get to, I have somewhat of a advantage of what classes I get to take, so...if I take a class I like then, you know, I'm gonna be active in it, but...yeah, I'm pretty active in my classes.
- I: Do you think your teachers have done or currently do explaining why you're learning what you're learning and why you're doing something in particular in class?

- 275 S: Certain teachers. And then, some teachers don't do a good job with that and that's what makes it hard, ...and right now, the only class that is really throwing me off is math, and...that's because we go through like two lessons a day, and so it's kinda hard for me to keep up.
- I: Yeah, when you're on block.
- 280 S: Yeah, and then like on, especially because there's people in my class that are like faster, a little faster, and so the people that aren't that fast, we're back here like "Whoa", especially cause like two lessons a day, and it's kinda hard.
- I: What about homework? Do you do your homework?
- S: I don't really have homework. I didn't have any homework last semester, but
- 285 vocabulary on Fridays and this semester, I have...mainly just math cause either I don't do it in class or it's assigned for homework, so that's like the only class right now.
- I: Do your class grades or your report card grades motivate you?
- S: If they're good. Well, yeah, I would say yes, cause if they're bad, then...
- I: Like the fear of bad grades or prospect of good grades...does that motivate you
- 290 one way or another?
- S: Yeah. It motivates me...ok, if I have good grades it motivates me, you know to keep going – I'm doing good, so let's stay on this path. If I have bad grades, then it's like, ok, I gotta do better. I need to start doing my work, cause I, I did summer school last year and I really don't wanna go back (laughs). It wasn't fun.
- 295 I: Think for a minute about how your teachers grade things in class. What do you think about how teachers grade?
- S: I've been in a class, I forgot what class it was, but I've been in a few classes where we can miss the same amount of problems and not get the same grade. So I don't, you know, I don't understand it, but that's how it happens. I don't know if like, we
- 300 missed a word or a number or something, but that's happened...but grading, hmm, I don't know, sometimes I feel like...they, you know how you write something down and then, um, it's not what they wanted but it's the same thing, but they still mark it wrong? Some teachers do that, but, I mean, I usually stick, I get good grades, no matter what except for right now. I'm trying to, kinda struggling a little bit.
- 305 I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?
- S: Yeah. I check my iNow.
- I: Regularly?
- S: Mmhmm.
- I: Ok. What about feedback from teachers? Do you get feedback from them, so you
- 310 know how you're doing and understand your grades or...?
- S: Yeah, but most the time, it's like if they hand the paper back, they write feedback on there and, you know, let me know.
- I: How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests?
- S: Umm, ...
- 315 I: Like class, in class quizzes or tests.
- S: That's tricky (laughs). I, I don't like taking tests because, generally, testing is my weakness and that's what I've been working on, my testing skills, but if I know the information, and you know, I feel like I'm gonna pass then I do pretty good.
- I: Do you usually feel prepared? That you know the information?
- 320 S: No, even if I know the information, I feel like there's gonna be something on the

test to throw me off, but usually I get through it. But, I don't know, testing, I guess you would say makes me kinda nervous.

I: So what about the state, the big state standardized tests – like EOCs and ACT and stuff like that?

325 S: Actually, I feel more confident when I take those tests, I don't know why – cause usually those tests, even if we've done it in class and, you know, forgot about it, somehow it just comes back, and you know, I remember it, or either I could put words together. Those tests just seem easier to me, I don't know why.

I: Alright, shift gears a little bit. In general, do you think the adults here are nice and care about you?

330 S: Some of them. (laughs) Some of them just...

I: So why or why not? What's the...?

S: Some teachers just, I don't...since last year they just either come off at me wrong or, I guess they expect me to be a bad kid, and I'm not...and they like me that way cause  
335 I know there's a few, I'm not gonna say names, but there's a few teachers that just, even if they see me in the hallways, they've always got something to say, and that's when I've like gotta try to control myself...and just keep walking cause, I mean, it's just a few teachers, but out of all the teachers I've had, most of them are, you know, cool and all that. I'm...I've never had a teachers and like been in their class and they treated me that  
340 way. It's other teachers that like I haven't had yet or like they haven't had me in their class.

I: So do you feel like there are people here that work to get to know you?

S: Yeah.

I: What about people that you think would work to help you?

345 S: Yeah, I have a lot of...well, I have a few teachers right now that they stay updated on me and they like come and check on me – ask me if I need any help or anything, so I mean, yeah, they do pretty good with that, and it's pretty weekly that, you know, they stop in and check and make sure I'm ok and, so yeah.

I: What about people that notice when you do something good or when you're  
350 successful at something?

S: Normally they point it out and they, you know, tell me keep doing good, or they'll help me to stay doing that, whatever I was doing, you know, good or whatever.

I: How do you feel about this school as a whole? T\_\_\_\_\_ High School – someone said, "What do you think about THS?"

355 S: I like this school. I just – it's really just me, but I just feel like I would want, I want to do more things cause, you know, not trying to compare schools or nothing, but I do, I see other people like they do a lot more in their schools, and I would like to do stuff.

I: What do you mean? A lot more...what?

S: Like...like they would, you know, take more trips together or either do bigger,  
360 um, assignments like, we do a lot, in this school, we do a lot of independent, like projects and I see a lot, they do a lot more teamwork and, you know, reports and all that which makes it more fun and, you know, enjoyable. I mean, I like this school and...the people in it.

I: Do you feel like you have a place here?

365 S: Hmm, I wouldn't say exactly. I'm just kinda here to, cause I have to and (laughs), so...

I: No, it's all good. Do you feel safe?

S: Yeah, I do.

370 I: And you kinda already answered this already, but I'll stick with my questions. Do you like coming here?

S: Mmhmm.

I: Ok. And you've already told me a little bit about why or why not, so last question. Um, if I were to just kind of look at A\_\_\_\_\_ as just a bunch of data points and, uh, statistics and look at some of the research on background and, um, just previous  
375 experiences and socioeconomic status – different types of statistics – research, you know, aside from you personally, research would tell me that you would be not likely to be engaged in school, but you are and your survey showed that you were pretty engaged in school and a lot of what I see from you personally, perofrmace-wise, you are engaged in school. So why do you think that is? What do you think are some of the big factors there?

380 S: Mmm, you're saying like if you seem, you know, you said data points or whatever and how I am, but then you personally see that like I'm actually engaged in school?

I: Mmhmm.

S: Uh, well, I mean, a lot of people, they see me as not...like in class I'm quiet, so a  
385 lot of people think I don't do my work and that I'm not part of participating or whatever, but I do, I'm just quiet about it, and so I guess you would say, it's just because I, I don't know, I guess it's the way I carry myself that some people think that I'm just...kinda one of those slackers, but then I'm actually like, I actually do stuff and when they see me do it, it's kinda like, "Oh, ok. Well, she does do stuff."

390 I: Well, if I were to print a bunch of paper information about you, no one had ever met you, and we looked at different data points in your background and your descriptors about home life and things like that, statistically, you might stand a better chance of not being engaged in school...and you are.

S: Yeah.

395 I: And so that's what I'm curious, you know, what do you think was the, is the difference for you? Why do you think you are when maybe other people in some of your circumstances aren't?

S: Because of my background and my family cause, like I said, recently, well, you  
400 know, I said that. We just, my family's always pushed me to do things even if I don't wanna do them, so like I'm used to, if somebody asks me, like in the school, to do something, and I don't wanna do it, I'll do it anyways, just because I've been taught to do things, just try it, you know, maybe you will enjoy it, and if I don't like it, I don't have to do it again, so I...I take it as "try it, if you don't like it, don't do it again." And I, I don't know, I like trying new things and...that's basically it like in school, I just, if I see  
405 something I wanna do, then I'll try it.

I: Ok.

## Student #9 Interview Transcription

I: So as a sophomore, this is your eleventh year doing the whole school thing, technically, including kindergarten. Just kind of broadly speaking, how is it for you? What do you think about school? Is it important to you? Why or why not?

5 S: Well, I mean, school itself isn't necessarily important, like I try in my classes, most of the time, but I don't know. The main thing for me is my friends. I like being here cause it's, I make more friends.

I: Ok, I'll ask you a little more about school experience later. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you interested in and what motivates you?

10 S: Well, um, I guess for motivation normally like the type of music I'm listening to, it depends on what I wanna do, and then...

I: What kind of things are you interested in?

S: Uh, art-related, like drawing and what not.

I: What do you view as being successful?

S: Uh, being happy, I guess. I don't know (nervous laugh).

15 I: Do you feel like you have control of your future?

S: Sometimes.

I: Alright. What are, so I'll ask you to expand on that a little bit, but I'm going to throw in the next part of that question. So do you feel like you have control of your future as well as your ability to succeed and be successful as you just described it?

20 S: Maybe, I don't know, like...it just...I'm not exactly sure, like...(seems somewhat shy and nervous).

I: No, that's fine. It's just kind of a...do you have a why or a why not? Or...?

S: Well, like following up on what I said I was interested in or...?

I: No, the control of your future.

25 S: The control of my future? Um, I don't know, I feel like life has those things it likes to just throw in, so I mean there's not always control, but most of the time.

I: What are your goals? Now and after high school? Just kind of short-term, long-term – what are your goals?

S: To make it through it (laughs).

30 I: To make it through high school, alright. And then what about after that?

S: Um, well, I want to have a career I'm gonna be happy with, so...find something...

I: Alright. Would you describe yourself as self-driven/self-motivated or motivated by other people and factors?

35 S: Um...a little bit of both I guess. My friends help keep me motivated but it's normally, like, an internal thing.

I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals?

S: Yeah.

I: Even if it may take awhile?

40 S: Most things do.

I: Even if it costs you time that you could be doing other things?

S: If it's something I wanna do, like really wanna do, then yeah.

I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?

S: Not very (nervous laugh).

- 45 I: Not very? Why is that?  
S: Um, I don't know. I feel like I'm a bother to people, so I don't like to go out of my way to ask for help from them.
- I: Ok. So same scenario, something is or becomes difficult, are...how likely are you to keep trying or to get frustrated and give up?
- 50 S: Well, I'll get frustrated and give up here and there, but I'll have to go back eventually.  
I: So would you say you're more likely to keep trying then?  
S: Mmhmm.
- I: So in those types of situations, things we've talked about so far, how well do you think you control your emotions?
- 55 S: Um, for the most part decently well. (nervous laugh)  
I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?  
S: I learn rather quickly in most subjects.
- I: Alright. To get better at something – how do you feel about your ability to get better at something or change?
- 60 S: Change in general isn't really my thing, but I don't know, it takes me awhile to get better at some things.  
I: So similar question but just a little different: um, how do you feel about your ability to work harder and learn more and do better?
- 65 S: Uh...I don't know, like...(unsure, looks a little uncomfortable)  
I: So would you say that you would work harder through something in order to learn more or do better at something?  
S: Maybe.
- I: Tell me a little bit about home situation. What is your family/guardian structure?
- 70 S: Like?  
I: Who do you live with at home?  
S: Oh, I live with my mom.  
I: Ok. Do you have any siblings?  
S: I have, technically, I have like five, but I only see two of them.
- 75 I: Any kind of cultural background information for your family? Influences?  
S: Not really.  
I: And, um, the level of your mom's education?  
S: I think, she's going back to college, but originally it was just ninth grade.  
I: And so then she's finished? Did she go back and get her GED if she's going to go on to college or...?
- 80 S: I don't think so, but I'm not sure. Like she did college when I was in like second grade and started most of business – she has one term left to do, and she'll get her business degree.  
I: Home environment – just kind of describe what the vibe is at home.
- 85 S: I mean, I guess it's good. I kinda stick to myself and hang out in my room.  
I: How do you think any of those family/home factors may impact or influence you here at school?  
S: Um, I don't know. I try to be more social here. I'm not social at home at all. (little laughs throughout last statement)
- 90 I: Ok, um, what kind of expectations does your mom have for you here at school as

far as like your grades, attendance, behavior – those types of things?

S: Uh, she expects me to be on my best behavior, of course, and make straight A's but, um, ...

I: So she pushes you in those areas then or she's clear about her expectations?

95 S: Mhmm.

I: How involved in your school experience do you feel like your mom has been?

S: She's pretty involved when she can be.

I: What about like now? At this point, in high school – how involved do you think she is?

100 S: She's been really busy, so she hasn't been able to do much, so...

I: What about her involvement as far as her helping you with work or support, resources, talking with your teachers – those types of things?

S: I don't normally tell her about the parent/teacher conferences, so she doesn't come to talk to the teachers then. Most of my work I can do on my own.

105 I: Do you think if you had a problem or needed help with information or planning for your goals, that she would know where to go or what to do to help you?

S: Probably.

I: Alright. What about your friends and your classmates? So, you know, your friends, and then kind of your larger peer group of classmates – do you feel any pressure from them, positively or negatively about school, toward school?

110 S: Well, like, my friends in general, like they're positive like sort of thing, and then I don't really intermingle with the other classmates.

I: Any influence on your behavior or your mood?

S: They always keep me happy and on my best behavior, like...

115 I: Attitude toward school? Your goals? Those types of things – how do your friends or your peers influence you? If any?

S: Well, they make me want to come to school, of course.

I: Anything else?

120 S: Goal-wise, it makes me wanna have more relationships growing up like...outside of high school.

I: Alright, shifting gears just a little bit. Describe to me how you felt about school as you went through elementary school and then middle school and the now at high school. Just kind of that school journey.

125 S: Well, like, starting off, I really like school in general, just like the learning and all of that, but like eventually, it kinda got to be more of a nuisance than actually fun.

I: When, so you noticed that change, that shift. When did you notice that?

S: Probably during middle school cause things started to be like, I don't know, more difficult so to say.

I: Ok. Describe that to me a little bit. What started being more difficult?

130 S: Um, there was like less, uh, group-related things I guess. It was more individual...than anything.

I: Did you notice any changes in yourself, in you, going from elementary to middle to high school?

S: I've gotten a lot more awkward and shy (nervous laugh).

135 I: Really?

S: Yeah.



I: Why do you think that is?

S: I...I mean, like, I got picked on when I was younger, so it kinda, I'm more introverted now.

140 I: Have you always been in T\_\_\_\_\_ City Schools? Always been in this school system?

S: Uh, for the most part. I've switched out here and there. I went to F\_\_\_\_\_ County and Florida for a little while, but I always come back, so... (laughs).

I: Alright. When was the last time you moved away and then came back?

145 S: Last term. I, uh, came back, when was that? October, cause it was Halloween.

I: Ok. Alright when did you, so you left when?

S: Like April of my ninth grade year.

I: Have you ever or do you now struggle with school and learning?

S: No, like, not normally.

150 I: Any area that you have any remembrance of any kind of struggle and what you did or what anybody else did to help you through that?

S: Well, in my English classes, writing is so not my forte, and I mean, I just brainstorm with my friends and it helps.

I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?

155 S: For the most part.

I: Tell me a little bit about them. What things do you like? What do you not like? What sticks out in your mind when you think about your classes?

S: Umm, ...I don't know, like...I'm not sure.

I: Ok. That's fine. Do you think you are involved or interested in your classes?

160 S: Sometimes. It just depends on the class and what we're doing.

I: So let's go back then to that – what are things in classes that make you feel more involved and interested?

S: Um, like in geometry, uh, certain, like, parts of that where it actually, you know, requires the attention? I feel more interested in it cause it's more challenging than something else.

165 I: Do you think your teachers have done or currently do a good job explaining why you are learning something or why you're doing something in class?

S: I guess. Like I mean...(nervous laugh).

170 I: Do you usually feel like you know why you're doing a certain activity or learning something in particular?

S: Yeah.

I: How about homework? Do you do homework?

S: Not normally (nervous laugh).

I: Why? Why do you not normally do it?

175 S: I either forget about it or like it's just there, sits in my backpack.

I: Do class and/or report card grades motivate you?

S: No, not really. (laughs)

I: Do you, do know why? Do you have any particular reason?

180 S: Um, like I do most of my work just not the homework, and so I know I'll get at least a decent grade, and as long as I'm not failing, it's...it's fine.

I: Ok. What do you think about how teachers grade?

S: Like, I think it should be more along the lines of effort. Not necessarily, like still

the actually grades, but also with a bit of effort, cause if somebody tried really hard , and still fails, it's like "They tried."

- 185 I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?  
 S: Sometimes when I check.  
 I: Ok, so when you, are you talking about iNow. Do you check iNow?  
 S: Uh, I have to ask the teachers. I don't have my iNow information anymore.  
 I: So do you get feedback from teachers typically then about how you're doing in  
 190 class?  
 S: When I ask about it.  
 I: How do you feel when you take quizzes and tests in class?  
 S: Uh, how do I go about this, the work...  
 I: Well, when you sit down to take a quiz or a test how do you feel about that? Or  
 195 when you do that?  
 S: Um, I mean, it's work we have to do, so I might as well do it.  
 I: Do you usually feel like you're prepared for them or not?  
 S: Most of the time.  
 I: What about the state standardized tests – like EOC, Writing Assessment, those  
 200 types of things – how do you feel about those? What do you think and how do you feel  
 about those?  
 S: Uh, well I don't necessarily like them. We normally have all the information we  
 need to pass them so...  
 I: Ok, what do you not like about them?  
 205 S: They take forever, and a lot of them require more work than normal tests.  
 I: In general, do you think that the adults here are nice and care about you?  
 S: Yeah, for the most part.  
 I: And I have a little why or why not thing tacked on.  
 S: Well, like most of them like they actually try to encourage people, I don't know,  
 210 ...  
 I: Do you feel like there are people here that work to get to know you and help you?  
 S: I would say so.  
 I: Do you think there's people that notice when you do something good or are  
 successful at something?  
 215 S: Yeah (nervous laugh).  
 I: How do you feel about this school at a whole?  
 S: I love it. It's amazing.  
 I: Do you feel like you have a place here at THS?  
 S: Most of the time.  
 220 I: Do you feel safe?  
 S: Yeah.  
 I: Alright so similar question. But it's one of my little questions, so I'm gonna ask.  
 Do you like coming here? Why or why not?  
 S: I...I enjoy coming here more than other schools, and like here I have friends and  
 225 people I know who actually care.  
 I: Ok, so last question: Research and data suggest, you know, I have to do a bunch  
 of research on the front end of this and just kind of look at what's out there statistically  
 speaking. Um, research and data suggest that, um, you and, you know, your particular

- 230 kind of demographic situation and a couple other factors that maybe you shouldn't necessarily be engaged in school, but...when I looked at survey data, and kind of the responses I got from you in that initial online survey a while ago, it indicated that you are. And you felt like you were engaged in school, so I'm interested in why you think that is? Why, what is, ...why do you feel like you are engaged and involved in school?
- S: Like in school in general or...?
- 235 I: In the...kinda the operation and, you know, doing your thing here at school. Um, when you took the survey there were some categories, three different categories. It was kind of like emotional, cognitive, you know, the thinking processes, um, and behavioral engagement, and, um, the way you replied, the numbers, you know it's that one to five scale, your selections kind of indicated that you feel like you were pretty engaged here at
- 240 school in those different areas when research and data might suggest that maybe you shouldn't be...but you are. So I'm very interested into why you think that is?
- S: Well, like I said, I went to two different schools other than T\_\_\_\_\_ schools, and there I didn't feel like, uh, like I actually had anything to do with the school or was actually involved in anything. Well, here because of the amount of people I know and
- 245 what not, it keeps me like inside of the school rather than off thinking.

## Student #10 Interview Transcription

I: So as a sophomore this is your eleventh year of this school thing counting kindergarten, an so just generally speaking start me out by telling me how is school for you? What do you think about it? Is it important? Why, why not?

5 S: I mean, It's important cause I wanna like get somewhere in life but it's like it's hard, like I don't know.

I: We'll get to the "why is it hard part?". That will come out when we get through some of these questions. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you interested in?

S: Umm...I don't know.

I: What motivates you?

10 S: I like to listen to music and it helps me, like, concentrate on things.

I: Do you have things at school or outside of school that you are interested or like to be involved in?

S: NnNn.

I: What do you view as being successful?

15 S: Umm, I don't know how to put it.

I: It's ok. You can just think out loud.

S: I mean I guess to be successful just to like do everything on time and that way your grades won't get bad and you can actually get your credits, and then you'll just, I don't know.

20 I: What about just life in general? What is your view of success?

S: Um...I can't think right now...

I: Do you feel like you have control of your future?

25 S: I mean sometimes I do and then sometimes I don't. Like...sometimes I feel like no matter what I do, it's not gonna like...I don't know how to put it in anything...like no matter what I do, I feel like it's not gonna be enough, and then sometimes I do things, and I just like, "Ok, well, it's my life, and..."

I: Do you feel like you have control over your ability to succeed?

S: ...yeah. (quietly and slowly)

30 I: What are some things that might cause you to feel unmotivated or kind of "checked out"?

S: Um...I can't think right now, like...I don't know really.

I: Things that make you feel not motivated to do things or to do school...

35 S: Just like always being brought down by certain things and people, and it just...it makes me feel like if nobody believes in me, then I should just give up on being successful.

I: What *are* your goals for now and after high school?

S: Umm...

I: Do you have goals for yourself?

40 S: I mean mainly I just wanna figure everything out and, if everything in high school goes good, I wanna, um, I don't know...I've always wanted to be a hair stylist and everything, so...

I: Would you describe yourself as self-driven, like self-motivated, or motivated by other people or factors?

S: Motivated by other people.

- 45 I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals? So if you talk about high school going well then maybe doing hair and stuff, are you willing to do what it takes for that to happen?  
S: Yes...yes.  
I: Even if it may take awhile?
- 50 S: (nods)  
I: Yeah? (student nods again) Ok. Even if it costs you time you could be doing other things?  
S: ...yeah...  
I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?
- 55 S: Um...I mean, like whenever I'm in class and I don't understand things, I have trouble asking teachers for help. Like I don't know – I don't really ask for...help that much.  
I: Is there any particular reason why, you think?  
S: It's just like anxiety, like I hate, I don't know, I feel like whenever I raise my  
60 hand or something and say something, I feel like everybody looks at me and it just stresses me out.  
I: So still on those same lines, if something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to keep trying or get frustrated and give up?  
S: I usually get frustrated really easily and just really just give up on it.
- 65 I: How well do you think you control your emotions?  
S: Not that great.  
I: Any kind of explanation there do you think?  
S: I don't know...  
I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?
- 70 S: Umm...I mean some things I learn really easily and then some things, I don't comprehend that well, and it just takes a really, really long time to like figure everything out.  
I: What about your ability to get better at something or to change?  
S: Umm.....
- 75 I: How do you feel about your ability to improve or to get better at something or change?  
S: I mean, I try...to improve it, and it just, it doesn't seem to work out that great, cause like no matter what I do to try and figure something out and just...it goes right past me...
- 80 I: What about your ability to work harder in order to learn more or do better at something?  
S: Umm, I mean, I,,try to work harder and just like...I don't know, like make better grades and figure everything, but I just get lost sometimes and I can be sittin' there working on something, and I just like look and something and it just distracts me.
- 85 I: Tell me a little bit about home. What's your family/guardian structure? You live primarily with...?  
S: My dad. (gets more quiet and seems to withdraw a little)  
I: Your dad. And who else lives there with you?  
S: Just me and my dad and my little brother.
- 90 I: Any kind of cultural background information?

S: I mean, not really.

I: Do you know what level of education that your mom and dad have?

S: Um, I know none, both of them didn't finish high school. And that's about all I know.

95 I: Ok. And I know we've talked a little before but for this purpose, tell me a little bit about your home environment, what it's like at home.

S: Umm, it's hard for like, it's just hard for me cause no matter what I do, my dad just seems to bring me down, but I mean he doesn't bring down my brother. He just chooses me to yell at and take all his anger out on me.

100 I: So how do you think any of that, any of the family stuff that we've talked about might impact or influence you here at school?

S: Umm, it makes it harder for me to...just to do everything that I'm supposed to at school cause like something could happen at home and then the next day, whenever I come to school, it's on my mind and it just, it...I don't know, it just makes me not realize what I'm doing.

105 I: What kind of expectations do your parents, I know you talk to both parents somewhat, so dad or both parents, what kind of expectations do they have for you at school – like your grades, attendance, behavior, those types of things?

S: I mean, my mom, she tells me all the time to do, just, she wants me to do great,  
110 but then my dad, like if I do something, or if I'm sick and I can't go to school cause I don't feel good, he just always is like, "Ok, well, you can fail", or if I needed like a project to do, and I, like if I have a project to do and I need stuff for it, he doesn't get it for me, and that's what I tell him, I'm like, "Ok, I guess I'll fail." He doesn't really care. I mean, sometimes he'll tell me, "Oh, you need to do this and that" but I don't really feel like...I don't know.

115 I: How involved in your school experience do you feel like your parents have been along the way?

S: ...um, not that involved, I guess. I don't know. (nervous laugh)

I: No, that's fine. Um, how involved do you feel like they are now? At this level?

120 S: It's kinda still the same.

I: Ok. Anywhere along the way, have they helped out with your work or support or talking with teachers?

S: No.

125 I: Do you think if you had a problem or you needed help with information or planning for your goals that they would know where to go and what to do to help you?

S: I mean, my mom might cause like she actually wants me to graduate and stuff, but I don't, my dad not so much.

I: What about friends and classmates? So you know, you've got your friends then kind of your larger group of classmates – do you feel any pressure from them, positive and/or negative?  
130

S: Umm,...I mean some of my friends, they're just like...I don't know, like they actually want me to do good and they help me with stuff that I need, and then some of them that I used to be friends with, they, I'm not friends with them no more cause they really didn't help me and...classmates, I don't know. I really, if I have a group of friends  
135 in a class, I don't really talk to none of the other students.

I: Still on the friends and classmates thing, any influence over your behavior or your

mood – those types of things?

140 S: I mean...there's, I don't know how to put it, like...some, there's certain people that, if I'm in a good mood, they obviously know what to do and it bring me in a really bad mood, and then some of them, just like peer pressure me into doing bad things or like it just changes my whole behavior and, I don't know...

I: Ok. What about influence over your attitude toward school? Do your friends have any kind of impact one way or another on your attitude toward school?

145 S: I mean, yeah, because, like through elementary school and everything, I was like, and middle school, I cared about school and I never missed a day and I never skipped and anything and then there's certain people that just like pressured me into doing something and it just made my grades drop and my attendance go down and, cause like in middle school, um, two years in a row, I didn't miss any school.

I: Really?

150 S: And my grades were like better than they are now. And now, it's just completely opposite.

I: So, kind of along those same lines, describe to me how you felt about school from elementary and then going into middle school and then to high school.

155 S: I mean, in elementary school, I like, I liked it I guess cause like there wasn't much older people there and I didn't feel like people were gonna judge me and then in middle school, it was kinda still the same and then in high school, it just changed everything cause there was older people and more people that could judge me and...yeah.

I: Did you notice any changes in yourself and if so, when and why do you think?

160 S: Well, I noticed changes in myself in like the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, cause that's when I got all sad and stuff, but I mean, now...

I: Why...

S: In 7<sup>th</sup> grade?

I: Yeah. Talk to me more about that.

165 S: I just all sad and like I got really, really depressed because that was when my aunt died, and that was when like I don't know, everything changed, cause it like, it changed everything from like my whole family doesn't even talk no more cause they just, I don't know, but, I mean, um, in high school now, like my depression level got higher because more people judged me and just like put me down.

I: Have you always been in this school system?

170 S: NnNnn. I just got in this school system.

I: When and where did you move schools?

S: Um, well in elementary school, I moved schools a lot cause I lived with my mom and we moved a lot, but then in 6<sup>th</sup> grade was when my dad got custody of us and I've been in T\_\_\_\_\_ since 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

175 I: Have you ever or do you now struggle with school and learning? If so, tell me about that.

S: Umm, well now I do because like...there's just so much going on in my mind sometimes, it's like it just is hard for me to concentrate and do what I'm suppose to on time and...I don't know.

180 I: Ok. So when do you first remember that starting to happen?

S: The what?

I: The, that struggle with trying to concentrate and keep...

S: Umm, it was, it was my first year of high school.

I: Ok. What have others done to help you?

185 S: Umm,...I don't know, like some just give me like positive help and I don't know how to put it. Umm, they just talk to me about everything and then like they'll tell me that they believe in me and it just, it makes me feel better, and it's easier for me.

I: What did you do or what are you doing to try to work through that struggle?

190 S: Umm, I'm trying to like distance myself from certain people that brought me down and that like just wanted me to do bad things. And I'm tryin' to just like, um, just think about I only have two more years left and it's, it's not gonna be forever, so...

I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?

S: Sometimes I do, and then sometimes I'm just completely lost.

195 I: Tell me a little bit about them. You know, how you feel in those classes and what you like and don't like – that type of stuff.

S: I mean, um, well, in my English class, I really don't like English cause I hate having to do like research papers and...cause like whenever I read, it hurts my eyes like really bad and I hate, my worst fear is having to stand up in front of the class. And that's why in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I failed a lot because I didn't get up in front of the class or when we had to read stories and...it just, I don't know. But I mean,...

200 I: What are some things that you might like about any of your classes?

S: Umm,...I don't know. Uh...

I: Do you have a class that you like?

205 S: I like Cosmetology cause like I get to learn new things about hair and something I'll actually probably really do in life.

I: Do you think that you are involved or interested in your classes?

S: Umm, I mean, I'm not really that involved in any class except for cosmetology, but I mean, I'm still failing that, but I don't know.

210 I: Do you think your teachers have done a good job explaining why you are learning something or why you're doing something in class?

S: Nnn, not really. Like cause in history we, he doesn't really, I don't know, it's just confusing for me to learn all kinds of stuff and have tests every other day and it just, I don't know.

I: What about homework? Do you do your homework?

215 S: Sometimes, and then sometimes I just forget about it, and like I'll...

I: So if I said: why or why not? You don't do it typically because...?

S: I mean if I don't do it, it's because like I forgot, and like it just didn't cross my mind, and then sometimes I don't do it because I don't understand it and then the next day, I'll forget to ask the teacher for help, and so, it'll just be sitting in my binder.

220 I: Do class grades or report card grades motivate you?

S: Umm, they make me want to do better...like cause whenever I look at my grades, it just...it makes me feel like I'm not gonna make it. It just, it makes me want to do better, but I don't really...can't seem to do much better every time. I don't know.

I: What do you think about how teachers grade?

225 S: Umm,...I don't know, sometimes it's like, it's unfair just the fact like, in English, we get graded on whether our Chromebook is charged, and I mean, sometimes I'll forget to charge it and then it just brings my grade down, and then like...I don't know.



- I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?
- S: Yeah, I mean I always check my grades and then they're still the same, but...
- 230 I: Do you get feedback from teachers about how you're doing?
- S: NnNnn.
- I: Ok. How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests in class?
- S: Umm,...I don't know, like I forget to study sometimes and so whenever I'm handed the test, I know I'm not gonna do a good job on it, and I mean, like...I don't
- 235 know (very unsure and a little uncomfortable).
- I: So, and that kinda answers part of my next question, are you usually prepared for quizzes and tests or not?
- S: No.
- I: No...because you forget? Or...?
- 240 S: Yeah, I just forget about it or, um, like, I don't remember to study and (coughs).
- I: What do you think about or what about state standardized tests? So like the EOCS and Writing Assessment, stuff like that. What do you think and how do you feel about those?
- S: Umm, ...I don't, I don't, I don't really like 'em because like some of them like they go to your grade at the end of everything. I fail a lot of tests, so it just kinda makes me like wish I could, wish I knew more than I do, and like my writing skills are terrible, like writing paragraphs and stuff, I can't do that real well.
- 245 I: In general, do you think that the adults here are nice and care about you?
- S: Yes.
- 250 I: Why or why not? Do you have any reasons in particular or...?
- S: I mean...just the fact that whenever I'm feeling down or something, I know I can come to someone here and it just like, to let out my feelings and stuff.
- I: Do you feel like there are people here that work to get to know you?
- S: Umm, yeah...somewhat.
- 255 I: What about to help you?
- S: Yeah, cause like a lot of my teachers just always tell me if I'm failing or they'll tell me to, that they want me to do better and that they're willing to help me.
- I: Do you feel like there's people, adults here that notice when you do something good or when you're successful at something?
- 260 S: Umm,...sometimes.
- I: How do you feel about this school as a whole?
- S: Umm, ...I mean, I don't know how to put it...like there's some days where I'm glad that I go here, but then there's some days that I wish I didn't. Just the fact that like there's some people that judge me, and just like, it makes me just wanna move or something, but then I don't, because I realize that like I have people here that are willing to help me that actually I know better.
- 265 I: Do you feel like you have a place here at school?
- S: Yes.
- I: Do you feel safe?
- 270 S: Yes.
- I: Do you like coming here?
- S: Umm, ...
- I: You kinda answered that, but I'll ask you anyway.

S: Umm, there's some days that I do wanna come and then some days, I don't.

275 I: Alright, last question. So I had to look at a bunch of already existing research and then some of your specific data points, things about you, and, you know, between the research and the data, it would suggest that maybe that you shouldn't necessarily be engaged in school, and between some of your information and your survey, the survey that you took at the beginning of the nine weeks that had 33 questions that you rated, you  
280 didn't really indicate that you were very engaged in school, involved, motivated, engaged. So why do you think that is?

S: Umm, ...I don't know really...umm...

I: You've talked about a couple things...just kind of...I know it's been awhile since we did the survey, but it talked about, you know, trying and asking for help and studying  
285 and liking being here, feeling comfortable here and different things like that and you didn't have, you know, being here every day and doing what you're supposed to in class, and stuff like that and you didn't have a whole lot of positive answers on that...if you have to kind of step back from everything and I ask you: why are you not very engaged in school? Why are you not very involved or...?

290 S: Because like...I don't know, like with my dad and everything telling me that I'm not gonna make it. It just makes me feel like, if my own dad doesn't believe in me, then it kinda just makes me feel I shouldn't believe in myself, cause I mean, I don't really have a lot of people that believe in me, and like I don't know, kinda just...I just feel like, no matter what I do, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna make it.

295 I: When did that start with your dad? Why do you think he has that attitude?

S: Mmm, I don't know...it started like...I guess towards the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I think, but I don't know. I just feel like, sometimes I feel like just because he didn't make it through high school, he just wants to put me down, so I don't, but then again, sometimes I feel like he puts me down just to like, to see if I'm better to like bring myself back up.

300 I: Anything else?

S: Not really.

I: Ok.

## Student #11 Interview Transcription

I: This being your eleventh year of school, you did do kindergarten, right? (student nods) Eleventh year of school thing, how is it for you? What do you think about school? Is it important? Why or why not?

5 S: Well, uh, I think it's really important cause it helps you...in the future and it helps you keep, uh, what is it called? It helps, you...build up with the future and know what you're supposed to be doing?

I: Grow?

S: Yes, grow in the future is another way to say it but, I think it's a good tool to have in life, because you use it with everything. Learning is something big.

10 I: Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you interested in?

S: I'm interested in music a lot, uh, real a lot, but if my music career doesn't work out, then I'd rather be a lawyer or...a preacher, just something, or an inspiration to kids, something to talk about, to talk to kids.

15 I: So along those same lines of thinking then, what motivates you as far as working toward those interests and, well, I'll ask you that one first. What motivates you?

S: Well, my family and my, well, in my generation, I'll be the first to graduate which will be big to me, which I would love to do, be the first one to graduate, also, um, be a good example to my brothers and sister.

20 I: What do you view as being successful and do you feel like you have control of that?

S: At this point, I feel like I have lots of control. Um, ...I don't really know exactly how I'm gonna get to where I'm gonna get, but I know that I'm pushing myself to get there.

I: So you feel like you have control of your ability to succeed?

25 S: Right.

I: Well, what do you view as being successful?

S: Um, growing up and takin' care of your kids and keeping 'em in school and, uh, making sure nothing bad happens to them and stuff like that. Uh, ...yeah.

30 I: What are some things that may cause you, or may have caused you in the past, to feel unmotivated or kind of checked out of school?

S: Well, ...my anger is one thing that I have a big problem with, uh, and rumors. Rumors is what brings me down a lot.

35 I: Fair enough. Alright. You've talked a little bit about what you're interested in, what you view as successful, so in your goals, you mentioned, um, music career or lawyer, do you...so I kind of know what those are now and for after high school even. Would you describe yourself as self-driven and self-motivated or are you more motivated by other people and other factors?

S: Umm, more motivated by people and other factors. But I also feel like, I am motivated by myself because I push myself to be the best that I can be.

40 I: Are you willing to do what it takes to work toward your goals?

S: Yes.

I: Even if it may take awhile?

S: Yes.

I: Even if it costs you time you could be doing something else?

- 45 S: Yes and no cause there's things I would like to do that's fun, but other than that, I would rather have something that I could grow up and have for the rest of my life instead of for that moment.
- I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?
- S: Anytime it's good to ask questions.
- 50 I: Are you likely to keep trying to get frustrated and give up?
- S: Try again.
- I: Any you kind of talked about this a little bit. How well do you think, especially in those difficult situations, how well do you think you can control your emotions?
- S: I think I control them pretty well...until it just...keeps bugging me and just keeps
- 55 bugging me. After awhile I get frustrated and upset. It's easy for me to control my emotions unless I get angry.
- I: Has it always been that way?
- S: No.
- I: How do you feel about your ability to learn?
- 60 S: I feel like it's a great tool...it's something...life throws at you on purpose that you're gonna need in life anyways, so...
- I: Do you feel like you have a pretty good ability to get better at something or to change things if you need to?
- S: It depends on what it is and how I make it a habit.
- 65 I: Well, like learning like at school. You know, if you...you're...
- S: I would like to learn more and be able to understand it better than what it is given to me.
- I: Do you feel like you have a pretty good ability to work harder if you need to to be able to work harder or learn more at school?
- 70 S: Nnn (a little uncertain)...yeah, I do.
- I: Let's talk for a little bit, just touch on some things about home which we've done before, but this is different context. Your family/guardian structure...tell me, who are you living with? Who...you go back and forth between a couple places, so what's that set up like?
- 75 S: I live with my grandmother, but I also stay with my step-mom, so basically what it is is when I'm with my grandparents, I'm working and taking care of my brothers and sister, and when I'm with my step-mom, I have time for what I need to do and to get done basically.
- I: Do you get to see your mom at all?
- 80 S: Every now and then. I do but I don't, ...but I call her all the time, so that's about it.
- I: What are some of your cultural influences? Some of your cultural background of your life, your family?
- S: Uh...like my race like type?
- 85 I: Well, that could be part of it, you culture. Do you have anything you could identify purely as a cultural background?
- S: Well, ...I don't know. Being Muslim is something I guess you could say. Being Muslim is one of the things that I like but I don't like cause...things that I can and cannot do. The things that I have to do is praying five times a day, that's one thing I don't like
- 90 doing. Something I like to do is eatin' pork, and that's one thing you cannot do so...

I: And then you mentioned race. And you've grown up with a predominant...is your whole family African American race or have you grown under any other influences?

S: No, um, ...my race is different from my family, basically because I have, I am part white, so...I'm white, I'm Native American also Puerto Rican.

95 I: Have you had those influences growing up or just know it as part of your...?

S: Yes, yes...a lot.

I: What level of education do you parents have?

S: My mom, she has a twelfth grade, almost graduating level. Um, my dad, I don't know, I've never talked to him, uh...my grandmother, I know she graduated. She went to college and, uh, so did my granddad. He did the same.

100 I: Do you feel like any of those factors, any of those things impact you here at school?

S: Not really, I try to make a different way for myself. I try to look at it different and do better, to improve and...I always keep my head up. That's about it.

105 I: What type of expectations, or kind of describe for me the expectations, that your grandparents or your step-mom or the different people that are in your home environment...what kind of expectations do they have for you here at school? As far as grades, your attendance, your behavior?

S: Well, to be very inspiring also set a good example for others and not making a bad name for myself.

110 I: Are there any academic expectations? Your grades? Or is it more about your character?

S: Well, my grades, they're good, but I would...I could do better...always.

I: How involved in your school experience – so you know, any point leading up to know – do you feel like your family has been?

115 S: They push me...I...they've always pushed me to do better and to see it through, just succeed in life.

I: Um, what about family involvement with your school work or finding resources to help with schoolwork or talking with your teachers, like, you know, actually being involved in school?

S: Well, I try to make sure I get everything in on time. I really don't ask my grandparents or my step-mom for help because...you know, they don't teach the same things as they used to – is what they would say. But I really just do a lot on my own, and I use Google a lot. It works real well for me, so I think that's...that helps a lot.

125 I: Do you think if you had a problem or needing help with information or planning for those future goals that, um, they would know where to go or what to do to help you here at school?

S: Yes, they would.

I: What about friends and classmates? Do you feel any pressure from them, positive and/or negative?

130 S: Well, my friends...I have friends, but they're not really friends, they're just people I talk to. I'd rather not have friends, so that I can, so my feelings won't get hurt or they can hold me back and just like keep me in trouble, stuff like that. I figure I should not have friends, only family.

135 I: And that was kind of – it answers mostly the rest of that question is: friends and classmates influencing your behavior or your mood or your attitude toward school? So

from what you just said, I would say pretty well the answer to that's, "no". At this point in your school career, you've learned, or you've decided, not to let them affect those things?

140 S: Right. They...they're not really doing anything unless, you know what I'm saying they're trying to help you improve, unless they're like trying to help you do your homework or...help you, uh, get what's best for you or whatever. They're not trying to see you succeed as much as you want to...or excel as much as you want to. I think of friends will always be there as just friends.

145 I: Describe to me how you felt about school from elementary to middle school to high school.

S: Elementary, I'm just gonna say that, it was a really fun year, I miss it – I really d...years...I really do miss it. Um, uh, do not wanna go back, I'm gonna say that because I'm glad I am where I am now. Middle school, I have a lot of memories. I love middle  
150 school, I would like to go back to middle school. That's one thing I'd like to do. High school...I don't really know yet. I don't see...exactly what I want for this school, like...I don't know. High school is just a place I come and learn.

I: Did you notice any changes in yourself as you went from elementary to middle to high school?

155 S: Well, I'm not as aggressive as I used to be. Um, I feel like I'm a lot more intelligent...and I don't have a lot of problems with my...with anybody really. I don't have any problems with anybody. I just feel like I matured a lot more over the years.

I: Have you always been in this school system? Have you always been in T\_\_\_\_\_?

160 S: Yes.

I: Have you ever or do you now struggle with school and learning?

S: Here and there. It depends on what my subject, not my subject, what the objective is. Other than that, nawh, not really.

I: So what do you mean by "it depends on what the objective is"? Can you describe  
165 that?

S: If it was like something that I know I didn't know how to do or, uh, something that was too long, I didn't really know how to sum it up to get the information that I needed from it or something that I was not able to understand.

I: What have others done to help you with that?

170 S: Well, just asking questions, uh, really, really it helps a lot. Uh, my friends, so-called friends, basically family, is who I go to for help most of the time, if they're in my class.

I: So if when you tried to work through that or when you are trying to work through some of those struggles and improve in that area, you would ask questions, go to  
175 some...?

S: Uh, I would always ask questions or, well, first I'm gonna do my best to figure it out on my own, but I'm always gonna ask questions, and if I can't figure it out then I'm gonna go to tutoring, one on one.

I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?

180 S: Uh, sometimes I do, sometimes I don't cause I don't like to pay attention as much as I would want to, but most of the time I do.

I: Tell me about your classes a little bit. What do you like? What do you not like

about them?

185 S: Well, I like everything about my first period which is media productions. Um, my second period, yeah I like it, but it's not as, it's not all that like I thought it was gonna be. Uh, my third period is very interesting. I get to learn new things about how microscopes and how like the world really is and new things like new organisms and stuff like that. I like that, looking at things like that under the microscope. Uh, my fourth period, I feel like it is helping me with my grammar a lot more than how I used to speak, um...and it  
190 just, in my fourth period also, it helps me to look things different while I'm reading, um...I don't, I always second guess when it comes to language.

I: Do you think that you are involved and interested in your classes? Would you use those words to describe yourself?

195 S: Well, I feel like I'm involved in all my classes, but, um, ...second period is not all that, that's the only thing.

I: Not so much on the interested part?

S: Yeah.

I: Do you think your teachers do a good job explain why you are learning or doing something?

200 S: Yes...I do, but I wish they had more, and it would be easier for me to understand it, it is was one on one, so – it is but more information to me, feels like I can do more with that.

I: What about homework? Do you do homework?

S: I do my homework every night.

205 I: Why? What drives you to do that?

S: Well, to keep my grades up and also, I'll always be able to turn something in, makes me feel better and know that I turned something in, and then when it comes back, it's something like if I got something wrong, I can fix it and then it's bein' able to like...do it right, basically.

210 I: What about class, class grades and report card grades? Do those motivate you at all? Or are a motivator?

S: Yes, cause the ones I keep, as long as I keep my grades above a C or a B, that...really makes me happy and makes me look back on when my mom was in school seeing her grades, you know what I'm sayin', having better grades than her is something  
215 I love doing.

I: What do you think about how teachers grade?

S: To be honest, today I don't think it's...it's as cool as I thought it'd be, but I think the old grading system is a lot better than the new one.

I: What do you mean?

220 S: Well, they got it on a computer, and I don't like it being on a computer. I'd rather have it on a sheet of paper in my hands, so it feeling...it's a lot better cause I don't always have Internet access.

I: So my next question is: Do you usually know how you're doing in classes?

S: Yes, I always get feedback at the end of class and before class.

225 I: So when I ask about how teachers grade, I mean when you, you know, is it something you get back fairly quickly? When you get it back, do you feel like it's fair? Those types of things.

- S: Mmm, I do feel like it's fair when I get it back, and I also think we do get it back kinda quick like I felt it was, we should probably get it back close to the end of the week or...something...not during the day and stuff like that.
- 230 I: How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests? Do you usually feel like you're prepared or not?
- S: Well, when I take quizzes or tests, it takes me about ten minutes to study because, um, it helps me to get a quick...a quick vision of it instead of just reading it all out cause I'll forget it. And I feel like, when I takes my tests, I am like, I'm not prepared but I am prepared but...how can I say this? Umm, ...I just try to go my best. Just put it to you like that.
- 235 I: What about the big state standardized tests? Like you've done TCAP in the lower grades, then you've been doing EOCs and this year you'll take the ACT, no , next year you'll take the ACT, but you know, the big standardized tests. What do you think and how do you feel about those?
- 240 I: Well, about the standardized tests, I think that have too many of them in the state of T\_\_\_\_\_.
- I: How do they make you feel when you have to sit and take them?
- 245 S: Uh, ...
- I: Do you feel...that's another...do you feel prepared or not...or?
- S: Well, I like taking them but they're boring after just sitting there for so long. They, I feel like they give you...uh, a few minutes too long on the test.
- I: Alright, shift gears just a little bit. In general, do you think the adults here at this school are nice and care about you? Why or why not?
- 250 S: Well, I just wanna thank all the teachers and staff members who support me and they're really, they are really good people. Uh, they see a lot in me and I really appreciate that, so...yeah.
- I: Do you think that there are people here that work to get to know?
- 255 S: Yes.
- I: Help you?
- S: Always.
- I: Notice when you do something good or are successful at something?
- S: Yes, they do.
- 260 I: How do you feel about this school as a whole?
- S: Well, I really like this school. It's a good place to be, and, uh, not a lot of trouble here...and not a lot of violence or anything bad going on here at this school. So I prefer it to any kids or whoever decided they want to come to T\_\_\_\_\_. It's a really good school.
- 265 I: So you feel, would you say you feel safe here?
- S: Yes, I do.
- I: Do you feel like you have a place...here?
- S: Yes, I do. Yeah.
- I: And then I would guess by default, if I asked, do you like coming here to school?
- 270 S: No, but I do like coming here to learn. I don't like getting up early in the morning. That's about it.
- I: So statistically speaking, and when I asked you to participate I had said I had kinda put some different little categories of students together, statistically speaking, if



275 you look at different data and research and stuff, it would suggest that you maybe, shouldn't be very engaged in school, and the survey that you did for me, didn't reflect, um, a very high level of engagement in school, so, um, do you think you are or you aren't? And why?

S: Well, when I took the survey, I do apologize because I was in my right state of mind, I was just in a hurry to rush and get through, but I feel like...it, it was, ...I feel like, 280 uh, it's a lot better than I thought it would be.

I: You feel like maybe you personally, if I were just to day "Do you think you're engaged school and your school experience?, you would say what?

S: Uh, yes. Uh, very much so, I think so.

I: And when I talk about statistics or re-, you know, previous grades or attendance 285 or, um, work you've done leading up to this point in your school career, you know, maybe would suggest you wouldn't be engaged but you feel like you are, and, so, what are your thoughts on why that is?

S: Um, ...because...and my momma always told me that an education's free – 290 always go and get it and don't ever stopped trying to be better at what you can, well, what you can be here at school. Bout it.

## Student #12 Interview Transcription

I: So you are a junior, correct?

S: Yes, ma'am.

I: So we're talking about technically your twelfth year of doing this school thing. So tell me about it. What is your experience been? What do you think about school?

5 S: I mean it's kinda pointless after, you know, eighth grade cause it's just the same stuff, different problems. Same people.

I: Is it important to you?

S: I get how getting a diploma's good and all and you need it for life, but at the same time, I don't really see a point in going to school for extra years if they're just gonna

10 reteach everything you already learned.

I: So tell me a little bit about you as far as: what are you interested in and what motivates you?

S: I guess ROTC motivated me for the first year and a half...and then it just, I just wasn't in the flow of everything from then on.

15 I: What are you interested in?

S: Personally, military and drawing. I carry around a sketch pad everywhere I go.

I: Ok. So what do you view then as being successful?

S: Successful would be, uh, a head of a company or just...not living on the streets, that's successful. As long as you got a roof over your head and clothes on your back and

20 food on the table, that's all you need to be successful.

I: Do you feel like you have control over your future and your ability to be

successful?

S: Yeah, definitely.

I: What are some things that may cause you to feel not motivated? Or what are some

25 things maybe in the past that have caused you to feel unmotivated?

S: Depression...bad situations...bad news...

I: Alright, so what are your goals as far as now and after high school?

S: My goal for now is just to get through high school, ...and for I guess would just join the military and live...

30 I: Would you describe yourself as self-driven then, like self-motivated, or are you more motivated by other people and other factors?

S: Self, self-motivated, self-driven.

I: So are you willing then to do what it takes to work toward those goals?

S: Yeah, I'm more than willing to do what I have to do to get where I want to be in

35 life.

I: Even if it takes awhile?

S: Even if it takes awhile.

I: Or it may cost you some time you could be doing other things?

S: Yeah, if I wanna get somewhere, I'll do what I gotta do for it.

40 I: If something is or becomes difficult for you, how likely are you to ask for help?

S: Not very likely. I don't like asking for help.

I: Alright then, so how likely are you to keep trying...if something becomes difficult for you?

S: A few more times, and then if I can't get it after maybe six times then I'm done

- 45 with it.  
 I: So at what point then do you think you might get frustrated and give up? Or would you maybe not?  
 S: I probably wouldn't give up. If I just gave up, I probably wouldn't be doing half the things I'm doing now.
- 50 I: How well do you think that you can control those types of emotions or any of your emotions?  
 S: Emotionally, I'm a pretty stable person, so...pretty good.  
 I: So how do you feel about your ability to learn?  
 S: I'm easily distracted and I'm not ADHD, so it's just not interesting enough for me to...grab my attention. That's why I draw mostly – it's just what I do. That catches my attention. And just nothing else does.
- 55 I: What about your ability to get better at something or to change?  
 S: I tried changing before, that didn't work out too well. But to keep doing something, yeah, I'm pretty motivated to do that.
- 60 I: What about your ability to work harder and learn more or do better?  
 S: I'm pretty motivated to do that.  
 I: So tell me about your home – we're gonna shift gears a few times along the way, so this is one of those shifts – tell me about your home situation. What's your family structure like?
- 65 S: It's a strong family structure. I'm never there that much. Got my own personal life, so...I'm hardly ever around.  
 I: But...got mom and dad at home?  
 S: Yeah.  
 I: And you guys, I think I know from previous information, you moved here when you were younger from another...?
- 70 S: Yeah, back in 2009, I think...or 2007.  
 I: Any particular cultural influences on your family background?  
 S: Um, ...no.  
 I: No? What level of education do your parents have? Do you know?
- 75 S: They both have never completed high school...for different reasons.  
 I: Any kind of technical training or military or...?  
 S: Technical training I guess could count – my mom worked in a factory for a few years and I guess my dad was a cook if that counts. He was a cook all his life.  
 I: Ok. What about home environment? Helpful, positive, support...you know, how would you describe it?
- 80 S: It's positive...supportive of everything I do.  
 I: So how do you think those home factors...may or may not impact you here at school?  
 S: Personally, what happens at home doesn't affect me here. It's just two different places, and I'm two different people. So...just has no effect.
- 85 I: What kind of expectations do your parents have for you at school?  
 S: Uh, they expect me to make all A's, not get in fights with anybody and I've done that part.  
 I: So grades...what about attendance and work ethic?
- 90 S: They expect me to be on time for everything. Unless I'm sick, I don't miss a day.

And even when I'm sick, and it's not that bad, I'm still here.

I: How involved in your school experience do you feel your parents have been along the way?

95 S: I think after middle school, ...halfway through middle school, they just stopped. They don't come to parent-teacher conferences, they just don't do anything else about it. They just make sure I have good grades, that's it.

I: Do they help you with your work or any kind of support, resources...? You'd mentioned they don't talk with your teachers anymore. Just kind of check in on things?

S: They just check-in.

100 I: Do you think if you had a problem or needing help finding information or planning for your future goals, that they would know where to go or what to do to help you?

S: No.

105 I: Alright, shifting gears a little bit again. What about your friends and your classmates? What kind of pressures, if any, do you get from them? Positive and/or negative.

S: Depending on the situation, positive and/or negative. Depending on how my hair looks today, I get negative feedback on that. I've been getting feedback on that all week actually.

110 I: Some people don't like change. (in reference to his new, different hair style)

S: Nah, they don't like how my hair looks. I think it's just they're jealous. But positive feedback is if I broke up with my girlfriend, they're gonna support me 100%, no matter what I do, even if I was to say, go fight the guy that she would leave me for. They'd have my back, so they're positive people.

115 I: Yeah, ok, so what about those friends and classmates as they may influence, your attitude toward school or your goals?

S: Nah, they don't affect that at all.

I: So you'd kinda have the same attitude, the same aspirations regardless?

S: Yeah.

120 I: So tell me a little bit about how you felt about school as you went through elementary to middle to high school.

S: I guess I was excited, in a different place back when school first started, back in elementary school. In middle school it kinda just sometimes I didn't want to be there, sometimes I do want to be there. Now it's just, "I don't want to wake up in the morning." I want to stay in bed and sleep, but I know I gotta come here. You can't get a job without it. So what motivates me is that...the reason I got to go to school. I have to be here to get where I want to go in life.

125 I: So what if any kind of changes in yourself did you notice as you went through different levels of school?

130 S: I'm not as nice as I was earlier...to people.

I: Why do you think that is?

S: Cause I usually go out of my way to get out of peoples' way, and now I'm just, if they're in my way, I gonna...I won't break through them. I will yell at them if they're in my way. I'm just...I'm not nice.

135 I: Do you think that has anything related to school? You know, how you, your experiences through school or ...

S: I don't yell at teachers, so I think, if I'm mad at the teacher, I'll wind up taking my anger out on people around me cause I just have issues with certain teachers cause for some reason they annoy me.

140 I: We'll come back to that in a minute. We're getting there with that one. Um, so you haven't, I know you haven't always been in this school system. How old or what grade do you remember you were in when you moved to this school or...?

S: I was in second grade....for the second year. I was held back...

I: Ok, so you basically just started second grade over when you came here?

145 S: Yeah.

I: Have you ever...well, this may be part of the answer to my next question – have you ever or do now you know struggle with school and learning?

S: A little bit, yes. Yeah.

I: Ok, so, tell me a little bit about that. When do you first remember?

150 S: Um, I guess it would be the end of my eighth grade year, I could never pass math or Algebra now, so I guess that's probably where things started to go down hill. Cause I haven't had, the math teachers I've had never, you know, tried to help me. They just...I've had two teachers that didn't try to help me. One was Ms. N\_\_\_\_\_ back in eighth grade and she just...she asked me my personal opinion, if I cared about the class. I told her, "No." So she sent me out in the hall and would expect me to do work that I had no knowledge about. And then Ms. L\_\_\_\_\_ was never a really good teacher. She'd spend most of the time yelling at the class, ...so...

I: So has anyone done anything to try to help you? In the areas you struggled in?

160 S: Ms. D\_\_\_\_\_ helped me a lot. She helped me a lot with the work. She actually explained it to me.

I: So...did some additional explanation. What did you do or maybe what are you trying to do now to work through that area of struggle?

S: I'm trying to do the work best I can, so...no matter what I gotta do to get it done. Even if I look at my friend and ask him for help.

165 I: Do you usually feel like you know what's going on in your classes?

S: (shrugs) Mmhmm.

I: Tell me a little bit about them. What do you like or what do you not like?

170 S: I just like...certain teachers I like that they...seem like really nice people, so I'm can't get mad at them for when I don't know something, ...but there's the teachers that don't really see eye to eye with me or I don't see eye to eye with them, so I won't do something that they want me to do, and then I'll start doing my own thing. And then...I guess some of the learning problems I've been having are the people around me, students, first period is anything but quiet.

I: What do you have first period?

175 S: Algebra II with Coach D\_\_\_\_\_.

I: Do you think that you are, or would you describe yourself as involved or interested in your classes?

S: Not really, no.

180 I: No? Do you think that your teachers have done or currently do a good job explaining why you're learning or doing something in class?

S: Ms. V\_\_\_\_\_ has explained things pretty good, why we're doing in class, but other than that, besides Mr. G\_\_\_\_\_, he actually, "we need a job"...My English is not

good, but he teaches a valuable skill. He teaches welding, so you can get a job outta that. So...he does a good job teaching welding and all that.

- 185 I: What about homework? Do you do your homework?  
 S: What little homework I do get, I usually don't do it.  
 I: Why is that?  
 S: Oh, I, I don't go home til 9:00 cause I'm with my girlfriend, so like my mind's doing different things and that's just not on my mind. It's not my priority.
- 190 I: What about class grades and report card grades...do those motivate you?  
 S: Unless they're an F, they really don't motivate me, cause I can get by with a D.  
 I: What do you think about how teachers grade...as far as when you get grades back from them or you know...? How, what do you think about how the grading process works?
- 195 S: It's fair. If you do all the work, you get a good grade. Even if it's just a participation grade, it's still a grade, so...  
 I: Do you usually know how you're doing in your classes?  
 S: No. I have no idea how I'm doing.  
 I: Ok. Why or why not?
- 200 S: I can't get on iNow. I don't know any of the stuff, so I can't really check...  
 I: Do you have log-ins or do you ...?  
 S: No, I don't know any of it.  
 I: Ok. And your teachers don't give you feedback.  
 S: I don't ask them for feedback. I don't like asking for things.
- 205 I: Right. You told me that earlier, I forgot. How do you feel when you take quizzes or tests? Do you feel like you're usually prepared in class or not?  
 S: Most of the times, yes, it's easy stuff to learn, and half the times, I just wing it on things that I don't know.  
 I: What about the bigger state standardized tests?
- 210 S: I mean there's a lot of pressure on those, then my mind just goes blank and I just have to pick the best answer...even if it's not correct, it's still the best one in my mind.  
 I: So what do you think and how to you feel about those kinds of tests? You know classroom and then the big state standardized tests.  
 S: Personally, they're not important to me...personally.
- 215 I: Which ones?  
 S: Either one cause we gotta learn that test...  
 I: Alright, shifting gears a little bit. Do you, in general, do you think the adults here are nice and care about you?  
 S: In general, yeah.
- 220 I: When I say why or why not, ...any particular experiences or impressions that you've gotten here, while you've been here about how people have treated you?  
 S: Uh, the students, not so good. Nobody likes each other here, so it's aimless.  
 I: Nobody what?  
 S: Nobody like each other. Student-wise, nobody likes each other. The teachers
- 225 make a good impression. A bunch of teachers make me smile, make my day, have a good day, make me want to go to their class.  
 I: So do you think there's people here that want to get to know you, that work to get to know you...in their class?

- S: No.
- 230 I: No? But they're nice.
- S: Yeah.
- I: Do you think, in general, that the, when I say adults – teachers, administrators, and other adults you run into contact with – that they are here to help you? Or that they're willing to help you?
- 235 S: Yeah. They seem very willing.
- I: Do you feel like there's people in the building that notice when you do something well or are successful at something?
- S: Yeah, definitely. I constantly get compliments when I'm in Welding from Mr. G\_\_\_\_\_. And he wants me to go to competitions, but I haven't went to compete. I like to
- 240 win, but I don't like to compete.
- I: Well, that's an interesting problem there. How do you feel about this school as a whole?
- S: As a whole, ...
- I: Kind of overall. How do you feel about \_\_\_HS?
- 245 S: It could be better.
- I: Like it? Not like it? You feel like you have a place here?
- S: I don't have a place here.
- I: No?
- S: No.
- 250 I: Do you feel safe?
- S: Yeah, I feel safe.
- I: Do you like coming here?
- S: Nah, I like to sleep in. I'd rather not come here.
- I: So...would that be your answer for anywhere, or is it just because it's here?
- 255 S: Probably just cause it's school in general. Not necessarily the type of school, just school in general.
- I: So why, you said you don't feel like you have a place, why not?
- S: Cause this is a town full of preppy people and redneck people. I'm neither, so I feel like I don't have a place here. I don't fit in to the social standards. I have a small
- 260 group of people made up a mixed group of everybody, and then I still don't fit in with my own group.
- I: So...if I were to look at a statistical...not analysis, but if I were to take some of your grades, uh, definitely your survey answers that you gave when you did that online survey, and just purely look at those things as numbers and research, research would most
- 265 likely suggest that you are probably not engaged at school and engaged in your school experience, and your survey answers indicated to some degree that you're not necessarily engaged here at school, and you've answered several things that could be pieces of that puzzle, but why do you think, you know, just kind of step back and think about that question as a whole, why do you think that is?
- 270 S: ...Well, like I said, it's the work's not interesting, and that it's, there's a limit on how much I can focus, and I'm easily distracted, so if there's a 50 minute lecture going on, I'm gonna find something else to do with my time. I guess it's just how much attention I have, and how long I can not be occupied with something interesting. If it's not interesting, I don't care about it

## APPENDIX I

**Initial Coding for Student Interviews**

The following are the tables for each of the thirteen student interview transcriptions used for citing transcription lines for initial coding and the beginning phases of axial coding and forming categories for final analysis (see Appendix H).

Items in bold indicate major answers provided from the last question regarding why the student thinks he/she is/is not engaged.

**Should Be Engaged and Are**

## Student 1

<b>Line #</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes/Initial Categories</b>	<b>Content from Initial Desc Data</b>	<b>Content from Mid-Term</b>
243,244	assess for gauge of learning/performance	assessment	consistently good grades	all A's
244,245	assess for info and intervention		involved through Yearbook staff	still involved
249-251	confidence on assessment if prepared		average standardized test scores	
251-253	less confident when doesn't feel like knows the material		avg to good attendance	good attendance
257,258	negative perception of standardized tests		one previous conflict w/another female student	good behavior
259-267	teachers can't fully prepare students for stand tests		expressed high behavioral eng, moderate level of affective eng, and mod to high cognitive eng	teachers report observations of satisfactory to high levels of engagement in class
254-256	teachers relay info for preparedness			
231-233	completes homework	classes		
221	involved/interested in classes			



226-228	involved/interested in classes			
207-209	knows what's going on in classes			
223-226	understands purpose/relevance of material			
229,230	understands purpose/relevance of material			
102	family communication	close family		
106	family support			
57,58	visual learner	different learning styles		
246-248	involved/aware of performance	grading		
239,240	positive perception of course grading			
243	positive perception of course grading			
241-243	tests and quizzes are main			
20	long term goals	has goals		
28-30	long term goals			
36	long term goals			
117	long term goals			
317	long term goals			
4	set goals as a means			
9,10	set goals as a means			
22,23	set goals as a means			
115	set goals as a means			
317,318	set goals as a means			
21	short term goals			
3	tangible goal			
39-42	willing to sacrifice			
37,38	willing to work			
123	good attitude	high parent expectations		
126,127	good behavior			

79,80	both parents at home	home/family		
99	close family			
101,102	close family			
84,85	no particular cultural influence			
179,180	transition to HS issues	HS social problems		
182,183	transition to HS issues			
185,186	transition to HS issues			
50-52	control of emotions	individual		
35,36	determined			
61	persistence			
66,67	persistence			
200,201	persistence			
253	persistence			
48	pushes through frustration			
186,187	resiliency/grit			
251,252	resiliency/grit			
54	self-aware			
211-214	self-aware			
34	self-motivated			
103-106	self-motivated			
114	self-motivated			
24-27	sense of control/autonomy			
135-138	taking on responsibility			
318-322	wants positive reputation/notoriety			
67-69	willing to try something new			
12	work ethic			
206	work ethic			
113	some students act out in reaction to emotion	negative peer behavior		
94,95	accountable to parents	parents		
95-97	accountable to parents			

139-141	communication w/teachers			
119-121	high parent expectations			
142-145	parent ability to help			
107-112	parent discipline evident in student behavior			
93,94	parent encouragement/guida nce			
129-134	parental involvement			
141	parental involvement			
15,16	parental motivation			
34,35	parental motivation			
80,81	parental motivation			
82,83	parental motivation			
27,28	parental support			
81,82	parental support			
199,200	parental support			
315	parental support			
87-89	parents - HS education			
149,150	friend changes	peer/friends		
8,9	HS social problems			
180-182	HS social problems			
192-194	HS social problems			
216,217	HS social problems			
218,219	negative peer behavior			
220	negative peer behavior			
146-149	negative peer/friend pressure/influence			
17,18	positive friend influence/support			
106,107	positive friend influence/support			
154-158	positive friend influence/support			

163-165	positive friend influence/support			
167-170	positive friend influence/support			
152-154	positive friend influence/support\peers with goals			
274,275	positive interactions w/teachers	positive opinion of classes/teachers		
296,297	feeling of belonging	school climate/culture		
301,302	feels safe			
287-295	neg peer behavior as it affects school climate			
303-306	neg peer behavior as it affects school climate			
290	positive environment			
290-292	school promotion of activities			
275-277	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
280,281	acknowledgement/interactions by adults			
268-270	caring adults in school			
272,273	courtesy			
204,205	teacher support			
282,283	teacher support			
195-199	academic transition to HS struggles	school/academic		
20	grades as goal			
74,75	grades as goal			
114,115	grades as goal			
234-238	grades as goal			
315,316	grades as goal			
54-57	instructional differences			
210,211	instructional differences			

175,176	involved in activities			
177	involved in activities			
299,300	involved in activities			
7,8	like early grade levels			
173-175	like early grade levels			
182	like early grade levels			
191,192	like early grade levels			
215,216	positive opinion of classes/teachers			
220	positive opinion of classes/teachers			
277-279	positive opinion of classes/teachers			
1,2,3	school is important			
202,203	school support			
58,59	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	self-aware		
70-73	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed			
44-46	more likely to ask for help from s/o comfortable with	other		
16,17	positive reinforcement			
177,178	positive reinforcement			
284-286	positive reinforcement			

## Student 2

<b>Line #</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes/Initial Categories</b>	<b>Content from Initial Desc Data</b>	<b>Content from Mid-Term</b>
165	confidence on assessment if prepared	assessment	not economically disadvantaged	
136,137	completes homework	classes	takes Honors & AP courses	continuing in Honors & AP
130,131	involved/interested in classes		consistently good grades	all A's and 1 B
123,124	knows what's going on in classes		good standardized test scores	
132-135	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"		student perception of high level of behavioral eng, mod to high level of affective eng, and mod to high level of cognitive eng	teachers report observations of high levels of engagement in class
157,158	likes course quizzes/tests	course assessments	involved in various activities	still involved
128,129	doesn't like busy work	different learning styles	good attendance	good attendance
127,128	doesn't like just lecture		good behavior	good behavior
121,123	group work			
129	group work			
129	prefers to active learning			
43,44	visual learner			
148,149	involved/aware of performance	grading		
151-153	involved/aware of performance			
154-156	involved/aware of performance			

141-143	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing			
144-147	understands grading practices			
8	long term goals	has goals		
12,13	long term goals			
19-23	long term goals			
98,99	long term goals			
197-199	<b>long term goals</b>			
6	set goals as a means			
12,13	set goals as a means			
197,198	<b>set goals as a means</b>			
18,19	short term goals			
197,198	<b>tangible goal</b>			
32,33	willing to sacrifice			
28,29	willing to work			
52,53	both parents at home	home		
54,55	no particular cultural influence			
39-42	control of emotions	individual		
37,38	determined			
49-51	determined			
98,99	determined			
3	enjoys being busy/involved			
8	enjoys being busy/involved			
197	<b>enjoys being busy/involved</b>			
41	focus			
30,31	persistence			
46-48	persistence			
49-51	persistence			
49-51	pushes through frustration/difficulty			
39-42	resiliency/grit			
7,8	self-aware			
43,44	self-aware			
46-48	self-aware			

120-122	self-aware			
127,128	self-aware			
151,152	self-aware			
24-26	self-motivated			
16-17	sense of control/autonomy			
11,12,13	sets high standards/expectations for self			
108	sets high standards/expectations for self			
78,79	taking on responsibility			
32-34	time management			
14,15	wants positive reputation/notoriety			
35,36	willing to ask for help			
62	work ethic			
98,99	work ethic			
108	work ethic			
160,161	confidence in preparation for course assessments	likes course quizzes/tests		
158,159	easier to focus on			
90,91	frustrated with others don't try	negative peer behavior		
78,79	communication w/teachers	parents		
64-67	high parent expectations			
70-73	high parent expectations			
80-82	parent ability to help			
62	parent work ethic			
76	parental involvement			
62,63	parental motivation			
62,63	parental support			
56,57	parents - post-sec education			
64-67	parents taught good habits			



86,87	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	peer/friends		
24-27	positive friend influence/support			
87	positive friend influence/support			
107,108	social aspect of HS			
109,110	consistency in schools attended	previous school/academic experiences		
196	<b>history of liking school</b>			
105,106	like early grade levels			
114,115	no perception of previous struggles			
98	set goals early			
120,121	push through struggle in math	pushes through frustration/difficulty		
185,186	feeling of belonging	school climate/culture		
187,188	feels safe			
189,190	likes coming to this school			
173-176	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
179-181	acknowledgement/interactions by adults			
166,167	caring adults in school			
177,178	teacher support			
14,15	grades as goal/motivator	school/academic		
106,107	grades as goal/motivator			
108	grades as goal/motivator			
138,139	grades as goal/motivator			
3	likes school			
196,197	<b>likes school</b>			

184	positive opinion of classes/teachers			
183,184	school support			
106,107	student became more serious in middle school	set goals early		
164	gets nervous about standardized tests	standardized assessments		
164,165	time limit on them is stressful			

## Student 3

<b>Line #</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes/Initial Categories</b>	<b>Content from Initial Desc Data</b>	<b>Content from Mid-Term</b>
239-241	confidence on assessment if prepared	assessment	not economically disadvantaged	
76-78	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	big picture of success is independence/self-sufficiency	involved in activities	still involved in activities - band
81-84	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently		takes Honors and AP courses	taking Honors & AP courses
189	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently		good attendance	good attendance
214-217	completes homework	classes	consistently good grades; high standardized test scores	good grade
206,207	does not like monotony in class		good behavior	good behavior
209,210	does not like monotony in class		student perception of mod to high behavioral eng, mod to high affective eng, & mod to high cognitive eng	teachers report observations of high levels of engagement in class
233,234	gets feedback from teachers			
208,209	involved/interested in classes			
198-200	knows what's going on in classes			
205,206	likes to learn application of content			
211-213	understands purpose/relevance of material			

245,246	assessments are applications of learning	course assessments		
243-245	need to study outside of class to optimize learning			
109-111	religion	cultural influence		
202,203	prefers active learning	different learning styles		
13-15	enjoys being part of a team/similar group	enjoys being busy/involved		
11,12	is involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys			
57-59	is involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys			
226-229	doesn't like when one grade has large effect	grades should be weighted proportionately		
223-229	grades should be weighted proportionately	grading		
230-232	involved/aware of performance			
221-223	positive perception of course grading			
38-41	altruistic motives/goals	has goals		
8,9	long term goals			
23-25	long term goals			
36-38	long term goals			
50	long term goals			
8,9	set goals as a means			
23-25	set goals as a means			
36-38	set goals as a means			
52,53	short term goals			
74,75	willing to sacrifice			
70,71	willing to work			
93-95	willing to work			
101,102	both parents at home	home		

116	family is "well off" economically/as a whole			
115,116	family is busy/involved			
117-122	things going on at home can cause distraction			
93-95	ability to improve/adapt	individual		
33-36	big picture of success is independence/self-sufficiency			
85-88	control of emotions			
57-59	determined			
81-84	determined			
194-197	determined			
194-197	focus			
204,205	likes to learn new things			
67-69	motivated/inspired by others			
57-59	persistence			
72,73	persistence			
81-84	Persistence			
45-47	positive mindset			
96-99	positive mindset			
122,123	positive mindset			
183,184	positive mindset			
45-47	pushes through frustration/difficulty			
60-63	pushes through frustration/difficulty			
186,187	pushes through frustration/difficulty			
45-47	resiliency/grit			
122,123	resiliency/grit			
90,91	self-aware			
66	self-motivated			
127,128	self-motivated			
194-197	self-regulation			
291	<b>self-regulation</b>			
42-45	sense of			

	control/autonomy			
19-21	sets high standards/expectations for self			
127,128	sets high standards/expectations for self			
170,171	sets high standards/expectations for self			
180-182	sets high standards/expectations for self			
290	<b>sets high standards/expectations for self</b>			
132-135	taking on responsibility			
189-191	time management			
57-59	work ethic			
173,174	work ethic			
186,187	work ethic			
194-197	work ethic			
290	<b>work ethic</b>			
246,247	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	likes course quizzes/tests		
247	has confidence in preparation for course assessments			
292,293	<b>being an active learner helps understanding &amp; confidence</b>	<b>likes to learn new things</b>		
2,3	neutral opinion of school	opinion of school		
4	values school as an opportunity			
8	values school as an opportunity			
36	values school as an opportunity			
125-127	high parent expectations	parents		
144-147	parent ability to help			
142,143	parental involvement			
135,136	parental support			

139-141	parental support			
113,114	parents - post-sec training/education			
149-152	positive friend influence/support	peer/friends		
161,162	positive friend influence/support			
152-155	peers with goals	positive friend influence/support		
158-161	peers with goals			
268-270		positive reinforcement		
175,176	consistency in schools attended	previous school/academic experiences		
166-168	elementary as good foundation			
90,91	learns easily			
60, 61	religion as a motivator	religion		
275,276	feeling of belonging	school climate/culture		
277,278	feels safe			
271-274	likes coming to this school			
279-281	likes coming to this school			
261,262	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
268-270	acknowledgement/interactions by adults			
257-259	caring adults in school			
263-265	teacher support			
4,5	different learning styles	school/academic		
52,53	grades as goal/motivator			
183	grades as goal/motivator			
218-220	grades as goal/motivator			

257-259	school support			
171-173	gained confidence and drive in MS	set goals early		
168-173	student became more serious in middle school			
22,23	pride in doing best	sets high standards/expectations for self		
184-186	struggle of workload			
186,187	struggle of workload			
252,253	thinks standardized assessments are easy	standardized assessments		
249-252	thinks assessments should have various levels	thinks standardized assessments are easy		
254-256	thinks assessments should have various levels			



**Should Be Engaged and Are Not**

Student 4

<b>Line #</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes/Initial Categories</b>	<b>Content from Initial Desc Data</b>	<b>Content from Mid-Term</b>
159,160	advanced courses, increased workload/expectations	academic transition to HS struggles	not economically disadvantaged	
186-188	advanced courses, increased workload/expectations		involved in activities	still involved in activities
258,259	assess for gauge of learning/performance	assessment	takes Honors and AP courses	taking Honors & AP courses
253-256	assess for information and intervention		good attendance	good attendance
271, 272	confidence on assessment if prepared		consistently good grades; high standardized test scores	good grade
68-71	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	big picture of success is independence/self-sufficiency	good behavior	good behavior
153,154	adjusting to being new in MS - socially	changed schools/systems	student perception of mod to high behavioral eng, mod affective eng, & low cognitive eng	teachers report observations of high levels of engagement in class
172,173	adjusting to being new in MS - socially			
235-237	completes homework	Classes		
205,206	does not like monotony in class			
216,217	does not like monotony in class			
203,204	doesn't like/see point in excessive work/HW			

253-256	gets feedback from teachers			
339-342	<b>hard to be engaged if not interested</b>			
226-228	involved/interested in classes			
199	knows what's going on in classes			
249,250	knows what's going on in classes			
209-212	makes it difficult when teachers are disorganized			
233,234	<b>some teachers just teach &amp; don't explain "why"</b>			
342	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"			
232,233	understands purpose/relevance of material			
259-261	course tests cause stress	course assessments		
264,265	need to study outside of class to optimize learning			
96,97	religion	cultural influence		
214,215	prefers active learning	different learning styles		
147-151	active, hands-on learning experiences	elementary as good foundation		
19	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in	enjoys being busy/involved		
24,25	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in			
27-31	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in			

52,53	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in			
246,247	involved/aware of performance	Grading		
250-252	involved/aware of performance			
242,243	positive perception of course grading			
244,245	understands grading practices			
10,11,12	long term goals	has goals		
35	long term goals			
37,38	long term goals			
49,50	long term goals			
51-53	long term goals			
10,11,12	set goals as a means			
35	set goals as a means			
49,50	set goals as a means			
73	set goals as a means			
35,36	short term goals			
48,49	short term goals			
37	tangible goal			
64-66	tangible goal			
64-66	willing to sacrifice			
60,61	willing to work			
85,86	willing to work			
114-116	good work ethic	high parent expectations		
94,95	both parents at home	Home		
42,43	ability to improve/adapt	Individual		
80	control of emotions			
58,59	determined			
74,75	determined			
87,88	determined			
73,74	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested			
19-21	likes to learn new things			

22-24	likes to learn new things			
56-58	motivated/inspired by others			
110,111	motivated/inspired by others			
62,63	persistence			
73	persistence			
77	resiliency/grit			
77	self-aware			
249,250	self-aware			
56-58	self-motivated			
45,46	sense of control/autonomy			
10,11,12	sets high standards/expectations for self			
35,36	sets high standards/expectations for self			
191	sets high standards/expectations for self			
119-121	taking on responsibility			
163,164	time management			
68-71	willing to ask for help			
58,59	work ethic			
87,88	work ethic			
114	work ethic			
162	work ethic			
263,264	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	likes course quizzes/tests		
20-22	learning/figuring things out keeps down stress	likes to learn new things		
109,110	desire to make proud/impress parents	motivated/inspired by others		
5,6	likes school	opinion of school		
291	likes school			
7,8	school is important			

10	values school as an opportunity			
125,126	communication w/teachers	parents		
92	high parent expectations			
114-116	high parent expectations			
128-130	parent ability to help			
104-106	parent work ethic			
110	parent work ethic			
119	parental involvement			
121	parental involvement			
124	parental involvement			
126,127	parental involvement			
56-58	parental motivation			
190	parental support			
99-102	parents - post-sec training/education			
143,144	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	peer/friends		
137-139	own stress feeds off stress of those around			
132-135	positive friend influence/support			
191-193	positive friend influence/support			
191	positive friend influence/support			
141,142	peers with goals	positive friend influence/support		
191,192	peers with goals			
287,288		positive reinforcement		
172	changed schools/systems	previous school/academic experiences		
152,153	elementary as good foundation			
155	history of liking school			

83	learns easily			
147	like early grade levels			
74,75	if something he/she really wants/is interested in	pushes through frustration/difficulty		
85,86	if something he/she really wants/is interested in			
294,295	feeling of belonging	school climate/culture		
292,293	feels safe			
298,299	positive environment			
287,288	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
274,275	caring adults in school			
279,280	caring adults in school			
277,278	courtesy			
278,279	teacher support			
279,280	teacher support			
206,207	different learning styles	school/academic		
12	grades as goal/motivator			
239,240	grades as goal/motivator			
284,285	school support			
83	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	self-aware		
191,192	finding balance	self-regulation		
43	pride in doing best	sets high standards/expectations for self		
4,5	struggle of mtg high goals/expectations			
48,49	struggle of mtg high goals/expectations			
155,156	struggle of mtg high goals/expectations			

181,182	struggle of mtg high goals/expectations			
332,333	<b>struggle of mtg high goals/expectations</b>			
334,335	<b>struggle of mtg high goals/expectations</b>			
3,4	struggle of workload			
31-33	struggle of workload			
48,49	struggle of workload			
80,81	struggle of workload			
137-139	struggle of workload			
155,156	struggle of workload			
177,178	struggle of workload			
184-186	struggle of workload			
290	struggle of workload			
297,298	struggle of workload			
332,333	<b>struggle of workload</b>			
335-339	<b>struggle of workload</b>			
268-270	feels more prepared b/c of adv courses	standardized assessments		
272	higher value on ACT/SAT than state tests			
268	negative perception of standardized tests			
119-121	more independent	taking on responsibility		
124,125	more independent			
40-43	feeling sense of accomplishment	view of success		
222-224	feeling sense of accomplishment			
342-344	<b>drive fueled by interest level</b>	work ethic		

## Student 5

<b>Line #</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes/Initial Categories</b>	<b>Content from Initial Desc Data</b>	<b>Content from Mid-Term</b>
127-134	realization of having to work more	academic transition to HS struggles	not economically disadvantaged	
137-141	previous struggle in science		somewhat involved in activities (band)	still somewhat involved in activities (band)
16-19	has controlling/pushy parent(s)	accountable to parents	takes Honors and AP courses	taking Honors & AP courses
88-95	has controlling/pushy parent(s)		good attendance	good attendance
96-100	has controlling/pushy parent(s)		consistently good grades; good to high standardized test scores	good grades - A's & B's
192-194	confidence on assessment if prepared	assessment	good behavior	good behavior
151-152	knows what's going on in classes	classes	student perception of low to mod behavioral eng, mod affective eng, & low to mod cognitive eng	3 teachers report observations of high levels of engagement in class; AP Eng Teacher rated him mod for "seems interested", "seems to care about grades", "persists on challenging tasks", "is self-motivated", and rated him low on "demonstrates appropriate effort for task"
163-164	involved/interested in classes			



165-169	understands purpose/relevance of material			
170-171	completes homework			
185-191	gets feedback from teachers			
185-191	peer review/feedback			
69-71	religion	cultural influence		
153-162	prefers active learning	different learning styles		
7,8,9	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in	enjoys being busy/involved		
67-68	both parents at home	family		
75-78	family is "well off" economically/as a whole			
75-78	close family			
85-87	family support			
101-106	family support			
172-175	grades show level of mastery/ understanding	grading		
176-181	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing			
182-184	involved/aware of performance			
4,5,6	set goals as a means	has goals		
4,5,6	long term goals			
7,8,9,	long term goals			
28-31	short term goals			
28-31	long term goals			
37,38	willing to work			
41,42	willing to sacrifice			
172-175	set goals as a means			
79-84	things going on at home can cause distraction	home		
10,11,12	motivated/inspired by others	individual		

23-27	not very involved/a part of school activities			
32-36	motivated/inspired by others			
39,40	Persistence			
43-45	willing to ask for help			
46-51	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested			
52-56	control of emotions			
52-56	positive mindset			
60-63	willing to ask for help			
79-84	personal struggle w/mental or physical issue			
96-100	taking on responsibility			
142-145	willing to ask for help			
146-150	pushes through frustration/difficulty			
153-162	pushes through frustration/difficulty			
Note	personal struggle w/mental or physical issue			
153-162	gets tiring after long time	involved in activities		
57-59	if pays attention and works	learns easily		
195-198	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	likes course quizzes/tests		
32-36	somewhat lazy and not self-motivated	motivated/inspired by others		
199-205	can't gauge intelligence/work ethic on single test	negative perception of standardized tests		
1,2,3	likes school (HS)	opinion of school		
4,5,6	school is important			
4,5,6	values school as an opportunity			

120-126	likes school (HS)			
237-239	likes school (HS)			
72-74	parents - post-sec training/education	parents		
88-95	high parent expectations			
96-100	parental involvement			
101-106	parental involvement			
107-110	parent ability to help			
111-114	functions/makes decisions independently	peer/friends		
115-117	functions/makes decisions independently			
188-119	functions/makes decisions independently			
206-214		positive reinforcement/ recognition		
120-126	history of liking school	previous school/ academic experiences		
120-126	like early grade levels			
120-126	awkward middle school stage			
135-136	consistency in schools attended			
137-141	learns easily			
237-239	awkward middle school stage			
226-228	likes coming to this school	school climate/culture		
229-234	feeling of belonging			
235-236	feels safe			
142-145	teacher support	school support		
185-191	teacher support			
206-214	caring adults in school			
215-222	acknowledgement/int eractions by adults			

28-31	grades as goal/motivator	school/academic		
153-162	positive opinion of classes/teachers			
172-175	grades as goal/motivator			
206-214	school support			
20-22	struggle of mtg high goals/expectations	sets high standards/expectations for self		
247-257	<b>struggle of mtg high goals/expectations</b>			
199-205	negative perception of standardized tests	standardized assessments		
13-15	feeling sense of accomplishment	view of success		
13-15	being content			
60-63	drive fueled by interest level	work ethic		
64-66	goal to work harder and do better			
127-134	goal to work harder and do better			
247-257	<b>goal to work harder and do better</b>			

## Student 6

<b>Line #</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes/Initial Categories</b>	<b>Content from Initial Desc Data</b>	<b>Content from Mid-Term</b>
28-40	being "talked down to"	causes for feeling unmotivated & disengaged from school	not economically disadvantaged	
28-40	not getting the proper feedback, guidance, support		not involved	not involved
287-292	not getting the proper feedback, guidance, support		mostly B/C student	2 A's, 1 B, & a failing grade in Eng II noting a couple missing assignments
235-242	doesn't like asking for help in front of class	classes	avg to good attendance	good attendance
250-257	engaged in class/task if interested or good at it		avg standardized test scores	
243-249	hard to be engaged if not interested		disciplinary issues last yr resulting in in-school suspensions, out of school suspensions, and, ultimately placement at Alternative School; this year, she has improved w/no referrals so far	still no referrals

263-270	has improved at completely homework		student perception of mod to high behavioral eng, mod affective eng, & low to mod cognitive eng	teachers report observations of moderate levels of engagement in class w/the exception of Art which reported mod to high (she mentioned being interested & realizing she was good at art)
233-234	knows what's going on in classes			
287-292	perceives doesn't get constructive feedback from teachers			
258-262	understands purpose/relevance of material			
293-297	course tests cause stress, feel pressure	course assessments		
298-306	course tests cause stress, feel pressure			
293-297	doesn't feel he/she is a good test taker			
83-85	no particular cultural influence	cultural influence		
68-72	group work	different learning styles		
78-80	both parents at home	family		
90-103	changes in dynamics, structure			
117-123	changes in dynamics, structure			
124-135	changes in dynamics, structure			
61-67	defensive of family			
353-372	<b>feelings of not being wanted or shame from parents</b>	family problems, conflict		
282-286	involved/aware of performance	grading		

274-281	neg infl - perception of strict, punitive grading			
274-281	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing			
11,12-16	long term goals	has goals		
35-40	long term goals			
177-190	long term goals			
11,12-16	not confident about being able to achieve goals			
35-40	set goals as a means			
41-44	set goals as a means			
177-190	set goals as a means			
11,12-16	short term goals			
35-40	tangible goal			
49,50	willing to sacrifice			
45,46	willing to work			
136-144	good attitude	high parent expectations		
136-144	good behavior			
136-144	good work ethic			
90-103	family problems, conflict	home		
104-116	family problems, conflict			
353-372	<b>family problems, conflict</b>			
104-116	things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress			
124-135	things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress			
353-372	<b>things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress</b>			
61-67	bottles emotions up, does not always control well	individual		

333-339	bottles emotions up, does not always control well			
353-372	causes for feeling unmotivated & disengaged from school			
51-53	determined			
41-44	motivated/inspired by others			
58-60	persistence			
54-57	pushes through frustration/difficulty			
68-72	self-aware			
41-44	self-motivated			
51-53	willing to ask for help			
24-27	work ethic			
51-53	work ethic			
17-21	learn from others' mistakes	motivated/inspir ed by others		
207-313	can't gauge intelligence/work ethic on single test	negative perception of standardized tests		
1,2-6	values school as an opportunity	opinion of school		
145-151	early on but not as student has gotten older	parental involvement		
152-157	communication w/teachers	parents		
158-161	parent ability to help			
17-21	parental support			
152-157	parental support			
86-89	parents - HS education			
171-176	friend changes	peer/friends		
162-170	friends motivate			
177-190	friends motivate			
171-176	negative peer/friend pressure/influence			
343-348	strong peer/friend ties at school			



330-323		positive reinforcement/ recognition		
215-223	felt isolated	previous academic struggle(s)		
215-223	had modifications			
191-198	awkward middle school stage	previous school/academic experiences		
205-206	consistency in schools attended			
202-214	previous academic struggle(s)			
353-372	<b>previous behavioral problems</b>			
191-198	transition to HS struggles			
340-342	feeling of belonging	school climate/culture		
333-339	feels safe			
343-348	likes coming to this school			
320-326	acknowledgement/int eractions by adults	school support		
7,8-10	caring adults in school			
314-319	caring adults in school			
314-319	feels teachers are selective in who they help			
104-116	teacher support			
7,8-10	different learning styles	school/academic		
271-273	grades as goal/motivator			
7,8-10	school support			
327-329	school support			
353-372	<b>trying to do better and stay out of trouble</b>	self-regulation		
199-204	gained confidence and drive in MS	set goals early		

263-270	previous struggles w/time mgmt. & completing wk	time management		
282-286	academic failures early on	transition to HS struggles		
22-23	feeling sense of accomplishment	view of success		
47,48	drive fueled by interest/enjoyment level	work ethic		
73-77	goal to work harder and do better			
224-232	goal to work harder and do better			
282-286	goal to work harder and do better			

### Should Not be Engaged and Are

Student 7

Line #	Initial Codes	Axial Codes/Initial Categories	Content from Initial Desc Data	Content from Mid-Term
58-62	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently	big picture of success is independence/self-sufficiency	economically disadvantaged	
320-335	does not like monotony in class	Classes	involved in ROTC, football	still involved
74-89	engaged in class/task if interested or good at it		mostly avg grades w/a few low course grades	avg to good grades (best grades in ROTC & Princ of Manf
74-89	hard to be engaged if not interested/don't find important		low to avg state test scores	
343-352	hard to be engaged if not interested/don't find important		good attendance but days/times out not excused	good attendance
317-319	involved/interested in classes		good behavior	good behavior
295-297	knows what's going on in classes		expressed mod behavioral eng, moderate level of affective eng, and mod cognitive engagement	teachers report observations of mod to good levels of engagement in class
343-352	neg perception of class if not fun/doesn't understand			Eng teacher noted low score for "persists on challenging task" & noted he usually tries hard but sometimes gets frustrated and has a hard time focusing
305-316	understands purpose/relevance of			

	material			
393-397	course tests cause stress, feel pressure	course assessments		
393-397	doesn't feel he/she is a good test taker			
11-16	hands-on, physically active	different learning styles		
42-44	hands-on, physically active			
298-304	hands-on, physically active			
305-316	prefers active learning			
223-234	enjoys being part of a team/similar group	enjoys being busy/involved		
1-10	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in			
11-16	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in			
272-279	changes in dynamics, structure	family		
115-119	economically disadvantaged			
90-93	only mom at home			
272-279	pos influence/support of military grandfather			
108-114	unreasonable/inappropriate expectations	family problems, conflict		
383-392	involved/aware of performance	grading		
362-382	neg infl - perception of strict, punitive grading			
362-382	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing			
22-27	altruistic motives/goals	has goals		
33-41	altruistic motives/goals			
50-54	altruistic motives/goals			

183-204	altruistic motives/goals			
205-222	altruistic motives/goals			
516-527	<b>altruistic motives/goals</b>			
42-44	long term goals			
1-10	set goals as a means			
94-107	set goals as a means			
516-527	<b>set goals as a means</b>			
33-41	short term goals			
28-32	tangible goal			
42-44	tangible goal			
159-170	tangible goal			
516-527	<b>tangible goal</b>			
55-57	willing to sacrifice			
50-54	willing to work			
129-142	good work ethic	high parent expectations		
94-107	family problems, conflict	home		
69-73	control of emotions	individual		
28-32	determined			
63-68	determined			
429-456	determined			
223-234	enjoys being busy/involved			
290-294	focus			
45-49	motivated/inspired by others			
183-204	motivated/inspired by others			
28-32	positive mindset			
90-93	positive mindset			
429-456	positive mindset			
498-507	positive mindset			
508-515	<b>positive mindset</b>			
63-68	resiliency/grit			
235-255	resiliency/grit			
498-507	<b>resiliency/grit</b>			
45-49	self-motivated			

120-128	self-motivated			
498-507	<b>self-regulation</b>			
11-16	sense of control/autonomy			
28-32	sense of control/autonomy			
516-527	<b>taking on responsibility</b>			
152-158	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient	lack of parental support/involvement		
280-284	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient			
143-151	is discouraging			
407-428	can't gauge intelligence/work ethic on single test	negative perception of standardized tests		
407-428	hard to focus, too long			
1-10	values school as an opportunity	opinion of school		
129-142	lack of parental support/involvement	parents		
143-151	lack of parental support/involvement			
152-158	lack of parental support/involvement			
159-170	lack of parental support/involvement			
115-119	parents - HS education			
120-128	friends motivate	peer/friends		
490-497	friends motivate			
171-182	has small group of good friends			
171-182	negative peer behavior			
183-204	positive friend influence/support			
285-289	positive friend influence/support			
490-497	strong peer/friend ties at school			

183-204	peers with goals	positive friend influence/support		
259-271	struggle with focus, attention	previous academic struggle(s)		
235-255	changed schools/systems	previous school/academic experiences		
205-222	did not like school early on			
256-258	previous academic struggle(s)			
205-222	transition to HS made more motivated, serious			
223-234	transition to HS made more motivated, serious			
476-489	likes coming to this school	school climate/culture		
429-456	feels teachers are selective in who they help	school support		
353-361	grades as goal/motivator	school/academic		
508-515	grades as goal/motivator			
320-335	positive opinion of classes/teachers			
285-289	school support			
407-428	negative perception of standardized tests	standardized assessments		
407-428	teachers can't fully prepare students for stand tests			
22-27	more independent	taking on responsibility		
120-128	more independent			
129-142	more independent			
429-456	has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected/supported	teacher support		

469-475	has specific teacher(s)/ adult that has connected/supported			
383-392	academic failures/low grades early on	transition to HS struggles		
11-16	drive fueled by interest/enjoyment level	work ethic		
74-89	drive fueled by interest/enjoyment level			
33-41	goal to work harder and do better			
205-222	goal to work harder and do better			
290-294	goal to work harder and do better			
353-361	goal to work harder and do better			
383-392	goal to work harder and do better			
429-456	goal to work harder and do better			
498-507	<b>goal to work harder and do better</b>			
17-21	likes a challenge			



## Student 8

Line #	Initial Codes	Axial Codes/Initial Categories	Content from Initial Desc Data	Content from Mid-Term
315-318	confidence on assessment if prepared	assessment	economically disadvantaged; minority	
268-272	engaged in class/task if interested or good at it	classes	not involved in any major activities	still not involved
309-312	gets feedback from teachers		mostly avg grades w/a couple low course grades	avg to good grades (best grades in Biology & PE)
268-272	involved/interested in classes		avg state test score	(Biology teacher very involved)
273-282	neg perception of class if not fun/doesn't understand		poor attendance previous yr; has improved so far this year, but absences still unexcused	better attendance, but still not good (often has to get a ride or walk to school)
273-282	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"		has referrals for tardies to school & class	good behavior
319-322	course tests cause stress, feel pressure	course assessments	expressed mod/mod-high behavioral eng, moderate level of affective eng, and mod cognitive engagement	teachers mostly report moderate to good levels of engagement in class - 2 rated low in referrals b/c of tardies
315-318	doesn't feel he/she is a good test taker			Geometry tchr reports mostly lower levels (struggles in math)
121-130	race/ethnicity	cultural influence		
121-130	religion			
359-363	group work	different learning styles		

7-12	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in	enjoys being busy/involved		
33-38	involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys/is interested in			
97-115	changes in dynamics, structure	family		
398-405	<b>family support</b>			
97-115	has a lot of responsibility at home			
97-115	mom had at young age			
93-94	only mom at home			
295-304	doesn't always understand grading practices	grading		
305-306	involved/aware of performance			
213-216	altruistic motives/goals	has goals		
28-32	long term goals			
7-12	set goals as a means			
28-32	set goals as a means			
147-152	set goals as a means			
189-194	set goals as a means			
4-6	short term goals			
43-45	willing to work			
156-161	good behavior	high parent expectations		
156-161	good grades			
246-254	can't always stay after when needs help b/c of ride	home		
195-206	family problems, conflict			
147-152	not wanting to be at home motivates to come to school			
78-82	change/transition is difficult	individual		
65-69	control of emotions			
78-82	determined			

39-42	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested			
262-267	more likely to ask for help from s/o comfortable with			
50-55	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently			
83-88	motivated/inspired by others			
59-62	Persistence			
24-27	resiliency/grit			
78-82	self-aware			
33-38	self-motivated			
56-62	self-motivated			
70-77	self-regulation			
75-77	self-regulation			
220-230	self-regulation			
121-130	taking on responsibility			
121-130	wants positive reputation/notoriety			
398-405	<b>willing to try something new</b>			
398-405	<b>work ethic</b>			
353-357	likes school (HS)	opinion of school		
4-6	school is important			
353-357	wants more schoolwide activities			
359-363	wants more schoolwide activities			
156-161	parent encouragement/guidance	parents		
398-405	<b>parent(s)/guardian taught good habits</b>			
167-172	parental involvement			
175-180	parental involvement			
131-137	parents - HS education			

7-12	friends motivate	peer/friends		
195-206	functions/makes decisions independently			
189-194	negative peer/friend pressure/influence			
189-194	positive friend influence/support			
147-152	social aspect of HS			
213-216	peers with goals	positive friend influence/support		
349-352		positive reinforcement/recognition		
236-237	changed schools/systems	previous school/academic experiences		
4-6	did not like school early on			
231-235	did not like school early on			
238-241	previous academic struggle(s)			
220-230	previous behavioral problems			
220-230	transition to HS made more motivated, serious			
231-235	transition to HS made more motivated, serious			
367-368	feels safe	school climate/culture		
369-371	likes coming to this school			
342-343	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
242-245	teacher support			
246-254	teacher support			
333-341	feels like some teachers/people in bldg misjudge	school/academic		

384-389	<b>feels like some teachers/people in bldg misjudge</b>			
287-294	grades as goal/motivator			
70-77	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	self-aware		
398-405	<b>confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed</b>			
46-49	finding balance	self-regulation		
220-230	trying to do better and stay out of trouble			
195-206	HS social problems	social aspect of HS		
323-328	thinks standardized assessments are easy	standardized assessments		
97-115	more independent	taking on responsibility		
344-348	has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected/supported	teacher support		
15-23	big picture of success is independence/self-sufficiency	view of success		
15-23	feeling sense of accomplishment			
39-42	drive fueled by interest/enjoyment level	work ethic		

## Student 9

Line #	Initial Codes	Axial Codes/Initial Categories	Content from Initial Desc Data	Content from Mid-Term
178-180	content to do most of work & get passing grade	classes	economically disadvantaged	
159-160	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important		average to good grades	1 A, 2 C's, & 1 very low C
154-155	knows what's going on in classes		was involved in ROTC	shows missing work
169-171	understands purpose/relevance of material		good overall attendance, but 2 unexc absences	has 3 unexc abs & 5 unexc tardies
197-198	has confidence in preparation for course assessments	course assessments	good behavior	good behavior
129-131	group work	different learning styles	transferred from and back to this HS during 9th grade yr	
152-153	group work		expressed mod/moderate behavioral eng, mod/mod-high level of affective eng, and mod level of cognitive eng	teachers mostly report moderate to good/high levels of engagement in class
240-245	<b>enjoys being part of a team/similar group</b>	enjoys being busy/involved		Eng teacher - she participates when interested; very intelligent, respectful; but seems to be "on the outside looking in..."
96-100	family is busy/involved	family		
84-85	independent/"sticks to self" at home			
86-88	independent/"sticks to self" at home			

77-83	mom had at young age			
71-72	only mom at home			
181-184	needs to be partially based on effort	grading		
181-184	prefers chance to receive partial credit vs. all or nothing			
30-32	altruistic motives/goals	has goals		
27-29	set goals as a means			
41-42	willing to sacrifice			
37-38	willing to work			
90-93	good behavior	high parent expectations		
90-93	good grades			
22-25	ability to improve/adapt	individual		
59-62	change/transition is difficult			
54-56	control of emotions			
121-125	likes to learn new things			
39-40	mature, level-headed			
194-196	mature, level-headed			
43-44	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently			
33-36	motivated/inspired by others			
7-12	music and art as source of motivation/interest			
48-51	persistence			
22-25	resiliency/grit			
33-36	self-motivated			
101-104	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient	lack of parental support/involvement		
204-205	hard to focus, too long	negative perception of standardized tests		

216-217	likes school (HS)	opinion of school		
77-83	parent did not complete HS	parents		
108-112	has small group of good friends	peer/friends		
108-112	positive friend influence/support			
113-114	positive friend influence/support			
115-120	positive friend influence/support			
118-120	positive friend influence/support			
86-88	social aspect of HS			
1-6	strong peer/friend ties at school			
223-225	strong peer/friend ties at school			
240-245	<b>strong peer/friend ties at school</b>			
208-209	positive interactions w/teachers	positive opinion of classes/teachers		
213-215		positive reinforcement/recognition		
140-143	changed schools/systems	previous school/academic experiences		
121-125	history of liking school			
57-58	learns easily			
148-149	no perception of previous struggles			
126-128	things got more difficult in MS			
137-139	was picked on when younger			
41-42	if something he/she really wants/is interested in	pushes through frustration/difficulty		



218-219	feeling of belonging	school climate/culture		
220-221	feels safe			
223-225	likes coming to this school			
240-245	<b>positive environment</b>			
208-209	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
206-207	caring adults in school			
223-225	caring adults in school			
211-212	school support	school/academic		
57-58	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	self-aware		
132-134	HS social problems	social aspect of HS		
199-203	negative perception of standardized tests	standardized assessments		
199-203	teachers can't fully prepare students for stand tests			
121-125	realization of having to work more	transition to HS struggles		
13-14	being content	view of success		
30-32	being content			
163-165	likes a challenge	work ethic		

### Should Not Be Engaged and Are Not

Student 10

Line #	Initial Codes	Axial Codes/Initial Categories	Content from Initial Desc Data	Content from Mid-Term
32-35	being "talked down to"	causes for feeling unmotivated & disengaged from school	economically disadvantaged; at home w/single parent	
106-115	feels like no one believe in him/her		very low grades w/some course failures	failing Eng & US History, a C in Wellness, & a 69 in Cosmetology
171-174	moved/changed schools a lot	changed schools/systems	low standardized test scores	shows several missing assignments
58-61	doesn't like asking for help/do things in front of class	classes	poor attendance w/many unex absences	2 unex absences, 3 unex tardies, & 5 days of skipping 1 or more classes
194-200	doesn't like asking for help/do things in front of class		had office referrals for skipping class & disruptive conduct from friend/peer issues	no referrals at this time
216-219	doesn't like asking for help/do things in front of class		expressed low/moderate behavioral eng, moderate level of affective eng, and low to mod levels of cognitive eng	US Hist & Cosm teachers report low engagement levels, mod to good eng levels in Wellness, & good/high eng levels in Eng
203-205	likes class(es) that have perceived use/application			overall good ratings for "Is respectful to staff"

194-200	neg perception of class if doesn't like/doesn't understand			Eng teacher notes student is working hard for her, but is concerned w/attendance
192-193	not very aware of/involved in what's going on in class			
206-208	not very aware of/involved in what's going on in class			
209-213	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"			
241-247	doesn't feel he/she is a good test taker	course assessments		
233-235	doesn't usually prepare/feel prepared			
239-240	doesn't usually prepare/feel prepared			
203-205	hands-on, physically active	different learning styles		
216-219	distracted/forgets	doesn't do homework		
216-219	doesn't understand			
95-99	feelings of not being wanted or shame from parents	<b>family problems, conflict</b>		
<b>295-299</b>	<b>feelings of not being wanted or shame from parents</b>			
106-115	negative/discouraging comments from parent(s)			
<b>287-294</b>	<b>negative/discouraging comments from parent(s)</b>			
<b>295-299</b>	<b>negative/discouraging comments from parent(s)</b>			
162-168	changes in dynamics, structure	family/home		
85-87	only one parent at home			

228-229	involved/aware of performance	grading		
224-227	neg infl - perception of strict, punitive grading			
22-26	not confident about being able to achieve goals	goals		
1-5	set goals as a means			
49-50	willing to sacrifice			
51-53	willing to sacrifice			
45-48	willing to work			
162-168	family problems, conflict	home		
95-99	things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress			
100-105	things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress			
175-179	things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress			
65-66	bottles emotions up, does not always control well	individual		
6-8	doesn't know if or what interested in			
38-41	doesn't know if or what interested in			
62-64	easily frustrated and likely to give up			
194-200	easily frustrated and likely to give up			
6-8	music and/or art as source of motivation/interest			
22-26	negative mindset			
32-35	negative mindset			
75-79	negative mindset			
220-223	negative mindset			

233-235	negative mindset			
<b>287-294</b>	<b>negative mindset</b>			
22-26	no real sense of control of life or future			
27-28	no real sense of control of life or future			
38-41	no real sense of control of life or future			
<b>287-294</b>	<b>no real sense of control of life or future</b>			
38-41	no real/tangible goals			
11-13	not very involved/a part of school/other activities			
54-57	won't really ask for help			
95-99	is discouraging	lack of parental support/involvement		
42-44	somewhat lazy and not self-motivated	motivated/inspired by others		
162-168	feelings of depression	negative mindset		
241-247	low self-confidence			
<b>287-294</b>	<b>low self-confidence</b>			
152-157	feels more pressure & judging in HS	negative peer behavior		
162-168	feels more pressure & judging in HS			
262-266	feels more pressure & judging in HS			
136-141	very affected by friend/peer issues	negative peer/friend pressure/influence		
175-179	very affected by friend/peer issues			
262-266	very affected by friend/peer issues			
1-5	school is hard	opinion of school		
116-18	lack of parental support/involvement	parents		

119-120	lack of parental support/involvement			
92-94	parent(s) did not complete HS			
124-127	parent(s) unable/don't know what to do to help			
128-135	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	peer/friends		
136-141	negative peer/friend pressure/influence			
142-151	negative peer/friend pressure/influence			
128-135	positive friend influence/support			
69-72	perceived problem with learning	previous academic struggle(s)		
75-79	perceived problem with learning			
80-84	perceived problem with learning			
169-170	changed schools/systems	previous school/academic experiences		
142-151	like early grade levels			
152-157	like early grade levels			
188-191	trying to push through	resiliency/grit		
267-268	feeling of belonging	school climate/culture		
269-270	feels safe			
265-266	neg peer behavior as it affects school climate			
184-187	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
252-254	acknowledgement/interactions by adults			
184-187	caring adults in school			
248-249	caring adults in school			
250-252	caring adults in school			

255-257	teacher support			
220-223	grades as goal/motivator	school/academic		
184-187	school support			
250-252	school support			
265-266	school support			
32-35	HS social problems	social aspect of HS		
142-151	HS social problems			
152-157	HS social problems			
142-151	transition to HS issues			
182-183	transition to HS issues			
188-191	trying to distance self from neg people/situations/infl			
241-247	negative perception of standardized tests	standardized assessments		
14-19	doing what you have to get by	view of success		
14-19	no clear picture/idea for success			
20-21	no clear picture/idea for success			

## Student 11

<b>Line #</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes/Initial Categories</b>	<b>Content from Initial Desc Data</b>	<b>Content from Mid-Term</b>
203-204	completes homework	classes	economically disadvantaged; minority; lives back & forth w/grandparents & mother (who had him at young age)	
192-195	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important		mother has been in & out of prison; he has been in trouble outside of school as well	failing Eng & a low C in Biology; no grades reported in other courses
196-197	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important		low grades w/some previous course failures	shows several missing assignments
182-191	likes class(es) that have perceived use/application		low standardized test scores	3 unex absences, 3 ex check outs, & 1 days of skipped class
205-209	satisfaction/motivation in completing work/doing it well		poor attendance w/many unex absences previous yr but showing improvement in 1st semester of this school year	no referrals at this time
198-202	some teachers just teach & don't explain "why"		had office referrals for skipping class, disruptive conduct, tardies, disrespect of others, profanity, insubordination - received ISS & OSS	Biology & Media Prod teachers report mod to good levels of engagement; Music, low to mod eng levels; Eng, some good levels but mostly low.



91-94	race/ethnicity	cultural influence	expressed mod behavioral eng, moderate level of affective eng, and moderate levels of cognitive eng	3 high ratings for "Is respectful to staff"
85-90	religion		at some points in interview, seems/ gives impression of saying what he thinks he "should" say; does not exhibit evidence of engagement	Eng teacher notes student is well-behaved & polite, but is concerned about absences & being able to master material
182-191	hands-on, physically active	different learning styles		
231-237	crams for short-term retention	doesn't usually prepare/feel prepared		
26-28	defensive/protective of family	family/home		
14-18	family as source of motivation			
26-28	family as source of motivation			
114-117	family support			
71-78	lives with guardian other than parent(s)			
223-224	involved/aware of performance	grading		
225-230	positive perception of course grading			
216-222	prefers tangible, in hand feedback			
10-13	altruistic motives/goals	has goals		
1-6	set goals as a means			
44-47	willing to sacrifice			
40-41	willing to work			
42-43	willing to work			

169-172	friends are very important, like family	has small group of good friends		
107-110	good behavior	high parent expectations		
<b>29-32</b>	<b>bottles emotions up, does not always control well</b>	<b>individual</b>		
54-56	bottles emotions up, does not always control well			
173-178	more likely to try to work through difficulty independently			
36-39	motivated/inspired by others			
10-13	music and/or art as source of motivation/interest			
19-23	no real/tangible goals			
10-13	not very involved/a part of school/other activities			
50-51	persistence			
101-104	positive mindset			
19-23	sense of control/autonomy			
107-110	wants positive reputation/notoriety			
48-49	willing to ask for help			
169-172	willing to ask for help			
173-178	willing to ask for help			
118-124	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient	lack of parental support/involvement		
153-157	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient			
246-248	hard to focus, too long	negative perception of standardized tests		

179-181	doesn't always pay good attention in all classes	not very aware of/involved in what's going on in class		
260-264	likes school (HS)	opinion of school		
1-6	school is important			
1-6	values school/learning as an opportunity			
8-9	values school/learning as an opportunity			
60-61	values school/learning as an opportunity			
288-290	values school/learning as an opportunity			
14-18	parent(s) did not complete HS	parents		
97-100	parent(s) did not complete HS			
125-128	parent/guardian ability to help			
129-134	negative peer/friend pressure/influence	peer/friends		
129-134	very guarded about friends/being hurt by friends			
135-144	very guarded about friends/being hurt by friends			
258-259		positive reinforcement/ recognition		
158-160	consistency in schools attended	previous school/ academic experiences		
145-152	like early grade levels			
161-163	no perception of previous struggles			
145-152	transition to HS struggles			

62-64	if something he/she really wants/is interested in	pushes through frustration/difficulty		
267-268	feeling of belonging	school climate/culture		
265-266	feels safe			
269-271	likes coming to this school			
260-264	positive environment			
254-255	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
249-253	caring adults in school			
205-209	grades as goal/motivator	school/academic		
210-215	grades as goal/motivator			
249-253	school support			
256-257	school support			
68-70	confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed	self-aware		
44-47	finding balance	self-regulation		
238-243	negative perception of standardized tests	standardized assessments		
19-23	no clear picture/idea for success	view of success		
36-39	goal to work harder and do better	work ethic		
65-67	goal to work harder and do better			
101-104	goal to work harder and do better			

## Student 12

<b>Line #</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes/Initial Categories</b>	<b>Content from Initial Desc Data</b>	<b>Content from Mid-Term</b>
135-139	may take emotions/anger out on others	bottles emotions up, does not always control well	economically disadvantaged	
24-26	depression, difficult situations	causes for feeling unmotivated & disengaged from school	avg to low grades w/some course failures	failing Alg IIB & Marketing, a C in Eng, & a 94 in Welding II
11-14	not being involved or "in the flow" of things		low to avg standardized test scores	shows several zeros & missing assignments
190-191	content to do most of work & get passing grade	classes	good overall attendance but no excuses for missed days/time	good attendance w/1 ex absence & 1 ex check out
185-186	doesn't do homework		had office referrals for skipping class, tardies, & failure to attend discipline assignment	no referrals at this time
7-10	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important		expressed low/moderate behavioral eng, low level of affective eng, and low levels of cognitive eng	overall good ratings from teachers for "Is respectful to staff," "gets along with peers," & "has good attendance"
53-56	hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important			otherwise, low levels reported by Alg & Marketing teachers, average ratings from Eng, but high levels from Welding

264-274	<b>hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important</b>			Eng teacher notes student is working hard for her, but is concerned w/attendance
165-166	knows what's going on in classes			
179-184	likes class(es) that have perceived use/application			
167-173	neg perception of class if doesn't like/doesn't understand			
176-178	not very aware of/involved in what's going on in class			
167-173	shuts down if disagrees with/doesn't like teacher			
205-208	doesn't usually prepare/feel prepared	course assessments		
72-73	no particular cultural influence	cultural influence		
15-16	hands-on, physically active	different learning styles		
53-56	hands-on, physically active			
53-56	prefers active learning			
149-157	feels had 2 ineffective/indifferent teachers	difficulties in math starting in MS		
188-189	distracted/forgets	doesn't do homework		
67-68	both parents at home	family/home		
62-66	close family			
79-81	family support			
62-66	independent/"sticks to self" at home or isn't home much			
197-200	does not keep up with grades/performance	grading		
203-204	does not keep up with grades/performance			

192-196	positive perception of course grading			
27-29	short term goals	has goals		
36-37	willing to sacrifice			
33-35	willing to work			
38-39	willing to work			
86-88	good behavior	high parent expectations		
86-88	good grades			
89-91	good work ethic			
57-59	change/transition is difficult	individual		
38-39	determined			
46-49	determined			
57-59	determined			
42-45	easily frustrated and likely to give up			
40-41	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested			
53-56	less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested			
264-274	<b>less likely to keep trying if is hard and not interested</b>			
15-16	music and/or art as source of motivation/interest			
257-261	not very involved/a part of school/other activities			
50-52	self aware			
30-32	self-motivated			
21-23	sense of control/autonomy			
50-52	sense of control/autonomy			
82-85	sense of control/autonomy			
40-41	won't really ask for help			
203-204	won't really ask for help			

92-96	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient	lack of parental support/involve ment		
97-99	has had to become more indep/self-sufficient			
167-173	impacts class performance/behavior	negative peer behavior		
128-134	views self as less patient, nice now (w/peers)	negative peer/friend pressure/influence		
11-14	changed/became less relevant after not invl/motiv by ROTC	opinion of school		
124-127	doesn't like having to get up to come to HS			
252-253	doesn't like having to get up to come to HS			
3-6	feels like HS is redundant & pointless			
7-10	feels like HS is redundant & pointless			
254-256	feels like HS is redundant & pointless			
241-245	neutral opinion of school			
7-10	values/views school/learning as means/opportunity			
124-127	values/views school/learning as means/opportunity			
92-96	early on but not as student has gotten older	parental involvement		
74-75	parent(s) did not complete HS	parents		
100-103	parent(s) unable/don't know what to do to help			
115-117	functions/makes decisions independently	peer/friends		
118-119	functions/makes decisions			



	independently			
257-261	has small group of good friends			
104-106	negative peer/friend pressure/influence			
104-106	positive friend influence/support			
111-114	supportive, loyal friends	positive friend influence/support		
236-240		positive reinforcement/recognition		
149-157	difficulties in math starting in MS	previous academic struggle(s)		
146-148	perceived problem with learning			
69-71	changed schools/systems	previous school/academic experiences		
140-145	changed schools/systems			
120-123	like early grade levels			
140-145	previous academic struggle(s)			
123-124	things got more difficult/opinion changed in MS	previous school/academic experiences		
250-251	feels safe	school climate/culture		
220-224	neg peer behavior as it affects school climate			
246-247	no sense of belonging			
257-261	no sense of belonging			
224-226	acknowledgement/interactions by adults	school support		
217-219	caring adults in school			
224-226	caring adults in school			
230-231	courtesy			
167-173	teacher support			
227-229	teachers do not			

	engage w/student/try to get to know			
232-235	school support	school/academic		
209-211	gets nervous about/lots of pressure on standardized tests	standardized assessments		
212-216	negative perception of standardized tests			
158-160	has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected/supported	teacher support		
179-184	has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected/supported			
236-240	has specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected/supported			
17-20	doing what you have to to get by	view of success		
60-61	goal to work harder and do better	work ethic		
161-164	goal to work harder and do better			

## APPENDIX J

## Final Themes and Generalizations

These tables represent the final emergent themes and generalizations from all collected descriptive data (Appendix C, E, & G), both sets of Teacher Report Forms (Appendix E & G), Student Interviews (Appendix H), and Student End-of-Term Questionnaires (Appendix F). This final data is sorted by engagement group and then category of influence on engagement as discussed in Chapter 2.

Items in italics represent themes identified as negative or potentially negative influences on students' levels of engagement. Items in bold represent themes that emerged from answers to the final interview question which directly asked students why they felt they were or were not engaged.

**Group 1 – Should Be and Are**

<b>Final Themes and Generalizations</b>	
<b>Individual Characteristics</b>	<b>Academic Culture</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Has specific goals (goal setting): short-term, long-term, tangible goals, <b>goal(s) as means</b></li> <li><b>-Wants positive reputation/notoriety</b></li> <li>-Self-aware</li> <li>-Confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed</li> <li><b>-Ability to self-regulate</b> - control of emotions, time management, focus</li> <li>-Positive mindset</li> <li>-Resiliency</li> <li>-Determination; persistence; pushes through frustration/difficulty</li> <li>-Sense of control/autonomy</li> <li>-Independence; self-sufficiency; <i>more likely to try to work through difficulty independently</i></li> <li>-Taking on responsibility</li> <li><b>-Good work ethic</b>; willing to work/sacrifice</li> <li>-Self-motivated</li> <li><b>-Sets high standards/expectations for self</b></li> <li><i>-Workload of meeting high expectations for self can be stressful</i></li> <li><b>-Enjoys being busy/involved</b></li> <li>-Is involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Views school as an opportunity; is important</li> <li>-Positive perception of classes and teachers</li> <li>-Aware/involved/interested in classes</li> <li>-Understands purpose/relevance of material</li> <li>-Wants to know/likes to learn the “why” and application of content (<i>teacher not facilitating this perceived as negative</i>)</li> <li>-Completes work and homework</li> <li>-Prefers different instructional/learning styles: active learning, group work, visual learning; <i>does not like monotony in class, just lecture, busy work</i>)</li> <li><b>-Being an active learner helps understanding &amp; confidence</b></li> <li>-Understanding/positive perception of course grading</li> <li><i>-Prefers chance for partial credit vs. all or nothing</i></li> <li><i>-Does not like when one grade has large effect</i></li> <li>-Involved/aware of course performance</li> <li><b>-Grades as goal/motivator</b></li> <li><i>-Workload of classes and meeting high expectations can be stressful</i></li> <li>-Perceived adequate preparation (from teacher and by self) for course assessments</li> <li>-Confidence on assessments when prepared</li> <li>-Does not think standardized tests are difficult</li> <li><i>-Negative perception of standardized tests: gets nervous, time limit is stressful, teachers cannot</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>fully prepare students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Function of assessment is for information on learning/performance and to identify areas in which student may need help</li> <li>-Positive perception of this school and overall environment; feels safe, sense of belonging</li> <li>-<i>Negative peer behavior as it affects school climate</i></li> <li>-Acknowledgement by/interactions with adults</li> <li>-Teacher/adult support; caring adults in school</li> <li>-Involved in activities</li> </ul>
<b>Sociocultural</b>	<b>Educational Capital</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Positive friend influence/support</li> <li>-Peers/friends with goals</li> <li>-Benefit of being involved in something; enjoys being part of a team/similar group</li> <li>-<i>Negative perception of peer behavior/influence; social issues – especially transitioning to HS</i></li> <li>-Both parents at home</li> <li>-Family supportive, involved; good communication</li> <li>-<i>Things going on at home can cause distraction</i></li> <li>-1 student noted religion as a factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>-Overall liking of school</b></li> <li>-Consistency in schools attended</li> <li>-Elementary school as a good foundation; liked early grades</li> <li>-Perception of learning easily</li> <li>-Became more serious/starting setting goals in middle school</li> <li>-Gained confidence and drive in middle school</li> <li>-Parents have some type of post-secondary training/education</li> <li>-High parent expectations; accountable to parents</li> <li><b>-Parental support;</b> involvement; motivation</li> <li>-Parent ability to help – problems, information, resources, goal planning</li> <li>-Parent communication with teachers</li> <li>-Parents modeled good habits/work ethic</li> </ul>
<b>Descriptive</b>	<b>Teacher Report</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Not economically disadvantaged</li> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-High grades</li> <li>-Mostly Honors/ Advanced level courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High levels of engagement in classes</li> </ul>

## Group 2 – Should Be and Are Not

Final Themes and Generalizations	
Individual Characteristics	Academic Culture
<p>-<b>Struggle/high level of stress from meeting high goals/self-expectations</b></p> <p>-Stress of finding balance with workload, activities and friends (1 student very involved)</p> <p>-Stress and/or other outside issues affect attitude and/or effort</p> <p>-Personal struggle with mental/physical issue (2)</p> <p>-Goals/goal-setting (<i>may not be clearly defined or lack of confidence</i>): short-term, long-term, tangible, goal(s) as means</p> <p>-View of success – feeling sense of accomplishment (indicated most), being content</p> <p>-Self-aware: 2 students perceive to have control of emotions while 1 reported bottling up emotions and not always controlling them well</p> <p>-Work ethic; willing to work/sacrifice</p> <p><b>-Drive fueled by interest level</b></p> <p><b>-Recognizes need/wants to work harder, do better, and/or stay out of trouble;</b> <i>previous struggle with time management/completing work; self admittedly lazy; some things have come easily, not used to having to work hard</i></p> <p>-Determination, persistence</p> <p>-Willing to ask for help; <i>1 student reported feeling uncomfortable doing it in front of others</i></p> <p>-More likely to push through frustration/difficulty if is of want or of interest</p> <p>-Becoming more independent</p> <p>-Motivated/inspired by others (<i>negative when dependent on others for motivation</i>)</p> <p>-Involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys and/or interested in</p> <p>-<i>Getting tired from being overly involved in one particular activity</i></p> <p>-Positive reinforcement/recognition</p>	<p>-Overall positive perception of school</p> <p>-School is important; values school as an opportunity</p> <p>-Likes to learn new things; learning/figuring things out keeps down stress</p> <p><b>-Wants teacher to explain the “why” and application of content (teacher not facilitating this perceived as negative)</b></p> <p>-Overall involved/aware/interested in classes</p> <p>-Understands purpose/relevance of material</p> <p>-Completes homework; has improved in completing homework</p> <p>-Recognition of different learning styles</p> <p><b>-Course workload and working to meet high expectations of advanced level courses can be stressful</b></p> <p>-Length of time spent in school</p> <p>-Wants larger selection in course offerings</p> <p><b>-Hard to be engaged if not interested or if does not feel “good at it”</b></p> <p><b>-Being “talked down to”</b></p> <p><b>-Perception of not getting the proper feedback, guidance, support (noted by 1 student)</b></p> <p>-Prefers chance for partial credit vs. all or nothing; grades can be viewed as punitive</p> <p>-Gets information/feedback from teachers</p> <p>-Overall feeling of involvement/awareness of course performance</p> <p>-Grades as goal/motivator</p> <p>-Course tests cause stress, feels pressure, distracted; perception of not being a good test taker (<i>negative mindset</i>)</p> <p>-Confidence on assessment if prepared</p> <p>-Identified the need to study outside of class to learn/be prepared</p> <p>-Function of assessment is for information on learning/performance and to identify areas in which student may need help</p> <p>-<i>Negative perception of standardized tests; felt cannot gauge intelligence/work ethic on single test</i></p> <p>-More importance placed on ACT over state tests</p> <p>-Overall positive perception of school/ school environment: feels safe, sense of belonging</p> <p>-School support</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Acknowledgement/interactions by adults</li> <li>-Teacher support; caring adults in school</li> <li>1 student not involved in any activities</li> <li>1 student only in band:</li> <li>-<i>Would like more accessibility to extra-curricular activities</i></li> </ul>
<b>Sociocultural</b>	<b>Educational Capital</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>Negative peer/friend influence and issues</i></li> <li>-<i>Peers need to be more respectful to each other and, in general, more involved in school activities</i></li> <li>-Positive friend influence/support/motivation</li> <li>-Peers/friends with goals</li> <li>-Functions/makes decisions independently (noted more than once by 1 student)</li> <li>-Both parents at home</li> <li>-<b><i>Family problems, conflict</i></b></li> <li>-<b><i>Things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress</i></b></li> <li>-<b><i>Feelings of shame with parents</i></b></li> <li>-<i>Has a controlling/pushy parent</i></li> <li>-<i>Stress and/or other outside issues affect attitude and/or effort</i></li> <li>-Notes religion as a factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>Previous academic struggle – had modifications, felt isolated, low work ethic</i></li> <li>-<i>Social adjustments in middle school</i></li> <li>-<i>Transition to HS issues: previous behavioral problems, academic failures, realization of having to work more, previous struggle in science</i></li> <li>-History of liking school: especially early grades, one student noted gaining confidence/drive in MS</li> <li>-2 students reported perceiving to learn easily</li> <li>-Parents have at least HS diploma with 2 students reporting parents with college education</li> <li>-High parent expectations: good attitude, behavior, work ethic (1 student reports more focus on behavior/attendance and not also grades and work ethic)</li> <li>-Parent(s) model good work ethic</li> <li>-Parent involvement/support/motivation – (one student noted parent involvement decreased as she got older)</li> <li>-Parent communication with teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Descriptive</b>	<b>Teacher Report</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good attendance</li> <li>-Good behavior</li> <li>-Mostly good grades</li> <li>-Lower grades in more challenging classes and/or <i>class perceived as less interesting</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mostly good to high levels of engagement perceived by teachers in classes</li> <li>-One student had lower levels reported in his Advanced level course</li> <li>-One student had higher levels in classes she perceived as more interesting and/or in which she felt she had more ability while levels were low in her other classes (Appendix H, Student #6, lines 252-256)</li> </ul>

### Group 3 – Should Not Be and Are

Final Themes and Generalizations	
<p><b>Individual Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Has specific goals (goal setting): short-term (i.e. to graduate), long-term, <b>tangible goals</b>, purpose, <b>altruistic motives/goals</b> (wants to help others), <b>goal(s) as means</b></li> <li><b>-Confidence in ability to try and learn/succeed</b></li> <li>-View of success – being content, independence, sense of accomplishment</li> <li><b>-Ability to self-regulate</b>; control of emotions, adaptability (noted for 1 student specifically), finding balance, trying to do better and stay out of trouble</li> <li><i>-Change/transition is difficult</i></li> <li>-Self-aware, mature, level-headed; confident in ability to try and learn/succeed</li> <li>-Sense of control/autonomy; more likely to work through difficulty independently</li> <li><b>-Taking on responsibility</b>; more independent</li> <li>-Knows what he/she is interested in</li> <li>-Involved in/motivated by things he/she enjoys and/ or is interested in</li> <li><b>-Positive mindset</b></li> <li><b>-Resiliency</b></li> <li><i>-Effort in school can depend on mood</i> but keeps working; persistence</li> <li><b>-Work ethic</b>; willing to work, sacrifice</li> <li>-Determination; works hard regardless of view of teacher or interest level; likes a challenge</li> <li>-Self-motivated; drive fueled by interest/ enjoyment level</li> <li>-Also motivated/inspired by others</li> <li><b>-Goal to work harder and do better</b></li> <li><b>-Willing to try something new</b></li> <li><b>-Enjoys being part of a team/similar group</b></li> <li>-Benefit of being involved in something</li> <li>-Positive reinforcement/recognition</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Generally positive perceptions of school, <b>school environment</b>, classes, and peers</li> <li>-Views school as an opportunity; is important</li> <li>-Enjoys/engaged in learning <i>if it is interesting and useful or student perceives he/she is good at the task(s)/topic</i>; likes to learn new things</li> <li>-Mostly perceives to be involved/interested/aware of what is going on in classes</li> <li>-Mostly understands purpose/relevance of the material in classes</li> <li><i>-Hard to be engaged if not interested and/or does not find to be important</i></li> <li><i>-Negative perception of class if it is not fun and/or student feels they do not understand</i></li> <li>-Likes/recognizes different instructional/learning styles: group work, hands-on, active learning, not monotonous</li> <li>-Involved/aware of course performance</li> <li><i>-Prefers chance for partial credit vs. all or nothing; credit for effort, grades can be viewed as punitive</i></li> <li>-Grades as goal/motivator</li> <li><i>-Course tests cause stress, feels pressure; perception of not being a good test taker (negative mindset)</i></li> <li>-Confidence on assessments when prepared</li> <li><i>-Negative perception of standardized tests: hard to focus, too long; felt cannot gauge intelligence/ work ethic on single test (1 felt they were easy)</i></li> <li><i><b>-Feels like some teachers/people in bldg misjudge and/or are selective in who they help</b></i></li> <li>-Overall sense of good teacher support: have specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected with/ supported</li> <li>-School support</li> <li>-Acknowledgment/interaction by adults; caring adults in the building</li> <li>-Positive perception of this school and overall environment; feels safe, sense of belonging</li> <li><i>-Wants more fun, interesting, school-wide involvement activities</i></li> <li>-1 student involved in ROTC</li> </ul>

<b>Sociocultural</b>	<b>Educational Capital</b>
<p>-<i>Economically disadvantaged</i></p> <p>-All report only mother as guardian at home (2 students – positive early influence of involved grandparent)</p> <p>-2 report mother had them at a very young age</p> <p><b>-Family support</b></p> <p>-<i>Have been changed in family dynamics, structure; family problems, conflict</i></p> <p>-General sense of parent/guardian guidance/encouragement/awareness (except 1 student)</p> <p>-<i>Lack of parental involvement</i> – have become more independent and self-sufficient (1 student reported not always being able to stay for help when needs it due to ride situation)</p> <p>-Independent/”sticks to self” at home; has a lot of responsibility at home; 1 student reported that not wanting to be home motivates to come to school</p> <p>-<i>Social aspect of HS: social problems, negative peer behavior, negative peer/friend influence</i></p> <p><b>-Strong peer/friend ties at school;</b> small group of good friends</p> <p>-Positive friend influence/support</p> <p>-Friend support/ motivation; friends with goals</p> <p>-Students need to be connected to a group with similar interests, for positive affect, and motivation</p> <p>-1 student noted religion as a factor</p>	<p>-General sense of parent/guardian guidance/encouragement/awareness, especially early on (except 1 student)</p> <p><b>-Parent(s)/guardian(s) taught good habits</b></p> <p>-Parents expect good behavior, work ethic, grades</p> <p>-<i>Lack of parental involvement</i> as older – have become more independent and self-sufficient</p> <p>-1 student expressed specific lack of parental support/ involvement – has had to be fairly independent and self-sufficient (<i>can be discouraging</i>)</p> <p>-2 students reported parents that graduated HS; 1 said parent(s) did not</p> <p>-Students have changed schools/systems</p> <p>-Did not like school early on (only 1 instance of history of liking school)</p> <p>-<i>Previous struggles: academic, behavior, focus/attention, was picked on when younger, became more difficult in middle school</i> (1 student reported no perception of previous struggles and perceived to learn easily)</p> <p>-Transition to HS made more motivated, serious: 1 report of academic failures/low grades early on, realization of having to work more</p>
<b>Descriptive</b>	<b>Teacher Report</b>
<p>-<i>Economically disadvantaged</i></p> <p>-Mostly good attendance</p> <p>-Good behavior</p> <p>-Average to good grades</p>	<p>-Class grades tend to coincide with reported levels of engagement in class (average to good)</p>



### Group 4 – Should Not Be and Are Not

Final Themes and Generalizations	
<b>Individual Characteristics</b>	<b>Academic Culture</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Goal to graduate, goal as means</li> <li>-Long-term goals include military and cosmetology school</li> <li>-No overall sense of real/tangible goals</li> <li>-View of success: no clear picture/idea for success, doing what has to be done to get by</li> <li><b>-No real sense of control of life or future;</b> although, 2 students did perceive a sense of control/autonomy</li> <li><b>-Low self-confidence; not confident about being able to achieve goals; 1 student feels like no one believes in her</b></li> <li>-Perception of learning struggles – comprehension/focus</li> <li><b>-Negative mindset</b></li> <li><b>-Depression, difficult situations</b></li> <li>-Stress and/or other outside issues affect attitude and/or effort</li> <li><b>-Bottles emotions up, does not always control well; may take emotions, frustration out on others</b></li> <li>-Easily frustrated and likely to give up</li> <li><b>-Less likely to keep trying if something is hard and not interesting</b></li> <li><b>-Hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important</b></li> <li>-There was a little sentiment of determination, persistence, confidence, and trying to push through difficulty (if of importance, interest, or value); as well as need to work harder and do better and working to find balance</li> <li>-Music and/or art as source of motivation/interest</li> <li>-Does not necessarily know if or what interested in -Is not involved/a part of school or other activities; feels somewhat detached</li> <li>-Interests include hands-on learning/activities</li> <li>-Values learning and skills that are applicable and will get students jobs</li> <li>-Willing to work, sacrifice</li> <li>-Combination of willingness to ask for help or not depending on student and circumstance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Views school/learning as means/opportunity</li> <li><i>-Do not like having to get up to come to school</i></li> <li><i>-Perceives much of HS academic classwork as redundant, not interesting, not important past the basics, and geared toward passing tests</i></li> <li>-Motivated to work and/or pay attention in class if perceived as interesting</li> <li>-Interested in/prefers hands-on, active learning/activities</li> <li><i>-Not very aware/involved in what is going on in class</i></li> <li>-Wants teacher to explain the “why” and application of content</li> <li><i>-Negative perception of class if does not like it and/ or does not understand content/tasks</i></li> <li>-Like classes that have perceived use/application</li> <li>-Values learning and skills that are applicable and will get students jobs</li> <li><b>-Hard to be engaged if not interested/doesn't find important</b></li> <li><i>-Does not do homework; distracted/forgets, does not understand (1 student claimed to complete HW)</i></li> <li><i>-Does not usually prepare and/or feel prepared for course assessments</i></li> <li>-Some sentiment of keeping up with/awareness of course grades/ performance (not very confident)</li> <li>-Positive perception of course grading</li> <li>-Grades as goal/motivator</li> <li><i>-Negative perception of state standardized tests; hard to focus, too long</i></li> <li><i>-School environment (climate or physical) and peer behavior (judging) affect feelings and attitude toward school</i></li> <li><b>-Being "talked down to"</b></li> <li>-Overall sense of good teacher support: have specific teacher(s)/adult that has connected with/ supported</li> <li><i>-1 student felt teachers overall do not try to engage with/get to know students</i></li> <li>-Acknowledgment/interaction by adults; caring adults in the building</li> <li>-School support and overall positive/neutral view of school; all feel safe, 2 of 3 expressed</li> </ul>

	sense of belonging while 1 did not
<b>Sociocultural</b>	<b>Educational Capital</b>
<p><i>-Economically disadvantaged</i></p> <p><b>-Family problems/conflict; changes in dynamics, structure</b></p> <p>-2 students home with 1 parent/guardian; 1 student home with both</p> <p><b>-Feelings of not being wanted or shame from parents</b></p> <p><b>-Negative/discouraging comments from parent(s)</b></p> <p><b>-Depression, difficult situations</b></p> <p>-1 student is very protective of his family, expresses family as source of motivation</p> <p>-Another student said he did have family support but that he is not home much, independent</p> <p><i>-Things going on at home can cause distraction, emotional stress</i></p> <p><i>-Social aspect of high school: transition to HS social issues, social problems (drama, conflict, perceived bullying), feels more pressure and judging in HS</i></p> <p><i>-Negative peer/friend behavior/influence: affected by friend/peer issues, impacts class performance/ behavior, perceived impact on patience/courtesy with others</i></p> <p>-Positive friend influence/support: friends are very important, like family; small group of good friends; supportive, loyal friends</p> <p><i>-Stress and/or other outside issues affect attitude and/or effort</i></p> <p><i>-School environment (climate or physical) and peer behavior (judging) affect feelings and attitude toward school</i></p> <p>-1 student noted race and religion</p>	<p>-Parent(s) did not complete high school</p> <p>-Parent expectations: good behavior (1 note of good grades and 1 for work ethic)</p> <p><i>-Parent(s) unable/do not know what to do to help</i></p> <p><i>-Lack of parental support/involvement; has had to become more independent/self-sufficient, had support early on but not as got older</i></p> <p>-Changed/moved schools/systems</p> <p>-Liked early grades in school</p> <p><i>-Perception of learning struggles – comprehension/focus, things got more difficult/ opinion changed in middle school, 1 reported math struggles starting in MS, transition to HS struggles</i></p>
<b>Descriptive</b>	<b>Teacher Report</b>
<p><i>-Economically disadvantaged</i></p> <p>-2 students with <i>poor attendance</i>, a few disciplinary issues (skipping, suspension) and low or failing grades</p> <p>-1 student with good attendance and behavior with 3 failing grades but a high final average for Welding II</p>	<p>-Majority of class grades tend to coincide with reported levels of engagement in class</p> <p>-Moderate to good scores for “gets along with peers” and “is respectful to staff”</p> <p>-Mostly low scores in “seems interested in school”, “is self-motivated” (2 of 3 students)</p> <p>-Low to moderate scores in other areas</p>

## APPENDIX K

## IRB Approval Letter



11/23/2015

Investigator(s): Shannon Duncan and Dr. Barbara N. Young  
Department: Educational Leadership  
Investigator(s) Email: [smd2b@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:smd2b@mtmail.mtsu.edu)

Protocol Title: "What are the student perceptions of outside influences on levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement?"  
Protocol Number: 16-2113

Dear Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board or its representative has reviewed the research proposal identified above and has determined that the study poses minimal risk to participants or that you have satisfactorily worked to minimize risks, and you have satisfactorily addressed all of the points brought up during the review.

Approval is granted for one (1) year from the date of this letter for 20 participants.

Please note that any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918. Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this change.

You will need to submit an end-of-project form to the Office of Compliance upon completion of your research located on the IRB website. Complete research means that you have finished collecting and analyzing data. **Should you not finish your research within the one (1) year period, you must submit a Progress Report and request a continuation prior to the expiration date.** Please allow time for review and requested revisions. Failure to submit a Progress Report and request for continuation will automatically result in cancellation of your research study. Therefore, you will not be able to use any data and/or collect any data. Your study expires **11/23/2016**.

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to complete the required training. **If you add researchers to an approved project, please forward an updated list of researchers to the Office of Compliance before they begin to work on the project.**

All research materials must be retained by the PI or faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion and then destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

Sincerely,

William Langston  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
Middle Tennessee State University