An examination of the student culture of a comprehensive high school

Jan Westerman-Beatty
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An examination of the student culture of a comprehensive high school

by

Jan Westerman-Beatty

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Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
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For the Graduate College

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1995
For J. D.

*It takes two to speak the truth.*

—Thoreau
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

America's high schools have been under attack for more than a decade, barraged by criticism and calls for reform. Large comprehensive high schools have experienced much direct criticism. Ernest Boyer, Director of the Carnegie Foundation, in 1983 released High School, a study of public high schools that cited the institution for, among other things, lack of a clear mission, failure to provide a quality education for all students, and absence of a core curriculum. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) issued two reports on high schools in the 1980s: The Shopping Mall High School (1985) and The Last Little Citadel (1986) targeted several weaknesses of high schools, especially the failure to actively engage students in serious learning. Other reports criticized high schools for failing to create an environment in which students could experience a sense of belonging, and for failing to teach students the skills necessary to make a successful school-to-work transition after graduation (Goodlad, 1984; Lightfoot, 1983; Sizer, 1984).

High schools across the nation attempted to respond. School days and school years were lengthened in the hope that more learning time would result in achievement that would exceed that of German and Japanese students. High schools increased graduation requirements, added honors and Advanced Placement courses to the curriculum, and tightened controls on students. Nevertheless, criticism continued. Critics called for high schools to abandon "grandpa's curriculum" and to replace it with student-centered courses designed to enable students to compete in a global market, to replace the Carnegie unit and seat time with more effective and relevant measures of student learning, and to ensure that
the daily schedule facilitates these changes. In 1994, NASSP sponsored another study of American high schools designed "to document the changes that high schools are undertaking to improve their productivity and effectiveness in serving the needs of youth and the nation" (Cawelti, p. 5). Over 3,300 public and private high schools responded to a survey designed to provide information about restructuring efforts in five areas: curriculum/teaching, school organization, community outreach, technology, and monetary incentives. The study found that many high schools are "deeply involved in restructuring activities" (p. 65). However, only seven schools reported general use of seven key indicators (site based management, outcome based education, alternative assessment techniques, interdisciplinary teaching, block scheduling, business/industry alliances, and technology) of a comprehensive restructuring effort. That such a small number of high schools have addressed all of the key indicators "suggests the difficulty of implementing and sustaining major changes in the structure and function of educational institutions" (p. 65). Similar conclusions were drawn from Muncey and McQuillan's 1993 study of Sizer's innovative Coalition for Essential Schools project, a national reform effort that is comprehensive in nature but based on restructuring. The study found that eight high schools, all charter members of the Coalition, had experienced little change because their cultures were highly resistant to change. As a result of findings such as these, the focus of high school reform has shifted. Educators are focusing on school culture in an attempt to reform America's high schools.

Organizational culture has received significant attention in the last decade. Books such as those authored by Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Peters and Waterman (1982) helped people interested in organizational effectiveness
understand that organizations have unique cultures and that these cultures can
advance and support organizational goals or hinder efforts to change and hamper
organizational productivity. Schein (1992) notes that "culture as a set of basic
[shared] assumptions defines for us what to pay attention to, what things mean, how
to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in various kinds of
situations" (p. 22). School culture is important because it influences the
organizational behavior of staff members and students.

Students, teachers, parents, and community members represent the major
stakeholders comprising the entire culture of a high school. Student culture is a
significant but often ignored part of the high school culture. If educators understand
student culture--students' shared assumptions, what they believe to be important,
how and why they react emotionally and physically as they do--they can make
better decisions about the educational process and school improvement. Knowledge
of student culture enables educators to rethink how they are doing things and to
promote student learning in high schools. Mitchell and Willower (1992) explain the
importance of understanding student culture:

If research on organizational culture in schools is to be tied to school
improvement, it is clear that it has to include the students. Student
motivation and identification with the organization and its educational aims
are critical problems in schools, as virtually all educators are acutely aware.
(p. 7)

Phillip Cusick in Inside High School: The Student's World (1973) and Sarah
Lawrence Lightfoot in The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture
(1983) describe the student culture of two recent decades. Educators in the 1990s
need information about student culture that relates to students' engagement in school work in order to help them improve schools. Metz noted in 1978:

In the United States, there is much civic discussion of what the public schools ought to be doing, but much less discussion of what they are doing. Yet in a society convinced of the value of the scientific method, it does not seem necessary to argue that description should precede prescription. We need to know what the schools do, why they do it, and with what consequences before we prescribe what they should do differently. (p. ix)

Today, educators still need to know what schools do, why they do it, and how these decisions impact students. In short, educators need to understand schools' culture before any prescriptions are written. More importantly, educators need to understand the high school through the eyes of students if they are to make decisions that benefit all learners.

**Statement of the Problem**

Seeing high school through the eyes of students necessitates understanding the context within which they live. America's culture, particularly the culture of America's teens, has changed. Howe and Strauss (1993) describe the generation of young women and men born between 1962 and 1982, after the Baby Boomers and before the Babies-on-Board of the 1980s. High schoolers of the 1990s are part of this generation, the most ethnically, culturally, economically, and socially diverse in American history (p. 7). They are members of "the only generation born since the Civil War to come of age unlikely to match their parents' economic fortunes; and the only one born this century to grow up personifying (to others) not the advance, but the decline of their society's greatness" (p. 7). These young people embody both despair and a different kind of hope.
As a group, they aren't what older people wish they were, but rather what they themselves know they need to be: street-smart survivalists clued into the game of life the way it really gets played, searching for simple things that work in a cumbersome society that offers little to them. (p. 11)

Howe and Strauss have labeled these young people "13ers," or the "13th generation", because they are the thirteenth generation to be Americans, and because the number 13 is "a gauntlet, a challenge, an obstacle to be overcome" (p. 17). In the closing years of the twentieth century, their reputation symbolizes America's loss of purpose (p. 23), "The image is . . . [of] an eraser-headed kid with reflective shades, a backwards ball cap, and high-top sneakers, his Walkman tuned to heavy metal, a $300 price tag dangling from his designer leather jacket" (p. 23). And 13ers know all this. "Part of being a 13er is to wonder always: What is it that I've done to cause so many people to be angry or unhappy?" (p. 24)

Despite the fact that increasing student engagement and achievement is the goal of all school reform, attempts to reform high schools generally have ignored these changes in student culture and involved students minimally, if at all. Furthermore, none of the reforms considers the problem of introducing new ways into existing social systems (Deal, 1993, pp. 7-8). Reform efforts that focus through the lens of culture do consider how to best introduce changes. These efforts recognize the importance of culture in providing meaning, stability, certainty, and predictability; in emphasizing shared vision and goals; in implementing shared decision making; in community building; and in promoting or hindering organizational goals and productivity. Knowledge of the student culture of the school is necessary for school improvement efforts to succeed.
This study focuses on the student culture of a large comprehensive high school to provide educators with information concerning how students think about school in general and schoolwork in particular. Understanding the most important ways of thinking among students in a comprehensive high school can provide administrators and teachers with information that enables them to understand why students behave, especially why they learn, the way they do. Furthermore, understanding the school-related organizational influences that impact the student culture allows educators to shape these influences to support the school's mission of improving student engagement and achievement.

**Purposes of the Study**

This study is intended to examine the student culture in a comprehensive high school. Only school-related phenomenon are studied because these are factors that teachers and administrators can control. Societal factors such as family make-up or socio-economic status are important but not within the purview of school personnel to influence and are not included in the study. Specifically, this study is designed to accomplish the following purposes:

1) To identify the ways of thinking within the student culture of a large comprehensive high school;

2) To determine the relative strength of specific student culture elements within a large comprehensive high school;

3) To describe the extent to which school membership and authentic work are present within the student culture of a large comprehensive high school;

4) To describe the student culture (overarching ways of thinking) within a large comprehensive high school; and
5) To determine the extent to which organizational systems factors—such as policies, rules, procedures, opportunities for involvement, school goals and mission, decision making and problem solving, and leadership— influen the student culture of a large comprehensive high school.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study investigated student culture and the organizational factors that influence the student culture in a large comprehensive high school. The review of literature includes: 1) the research model that provided the theoretical framework for the study, including student culture and school reform, the student engagement in academic learning model, and the organizational systems model; and 2) qualitative case study research methodology used in this study.

Research Model

The overarching framework for this study of high school student culture is shown in Figure 2.1. The framework includes culture; Newmann, Wehlage, and Lamborn’s model (1992) of student engagement; and an adaptation of Sweeney’s model of organizational systems (1993). The student engagement model selected to guide this study includes two major factors: school membership and authentic work. The organizational systems model includes six organizational factors: purpose/strategy, structures, environment, ecology, culture, and processes. The research model is dynamic. The systems and factors which comprise the model interact with each other and ultimately affect the student culture. The high school organizational systems factors interact with each other and influence student engagement factors and the ways of thinking—including norms, beliefs, and values—within the student culture. The ways of thinking within the student culture and the student engagement factors influence each other and the student culture, which in turn influences the organizational systems factors.
Figure 2.1 Student culture, student engagement, ways of thinking within the student culture, and high school organizational systems
Following is a description of the elements of the research model and how they influence student culture.

**Student Culture and School Reform**

For decades, anthropologists and sociologists have studied the cultures of ethnic and other groups. Their ethnographic research has contributed many definitions of culture and has identified the culture of societies and communities as important factors in determining group members' behavior. Recently, researchers have applied the research methods of anthropologists and sociologists to the culture of organizations, including schools, with important and intriguing results. Many researchers currently agree that organizations have cultures and have documented the importance and/or influence of culture on the organizations' effectiveness and productivity (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Denison, 1990; Kilmann, Saxton, & Serpa, 1985; Ouchi, 1981; Sackmann, 1990; Schneider, 1990; Schein, 1992; Sweeney, 1991).

Schein (1992) posits that a critical aspect of culture is the idea that groups or organizations hold certain things in common. These things include: 1) observed behavioral regularities when people interact; 2) group norms; 3) espoused values; 4) formal philosophy; 5) rules of the game; 6) climate; 7) embedded skills; 8) habits of thinking, mental models, and/or linguistic paradigms; 9) shared meanings; 10) "root metaphors" or integrating symbols (pp. 8-10). He also identifies two critical elements of the concept of sharing: 1) Culture implies some level of "structural stability"; and 2) Patterning or integration lends stability. Schein sees culture as a complex, holistic pattern: "Culture somehow implies that rituals, climate, values, and behaviors bind together into a coherent whole. This patterning or integration is the essence of what we mean by 'culture'" (p. 10).
While no one definition of culture is universally accepted, Schein's (1992) definition of the culture of a group or organization melds many concepts and emphasizes the significance of shared basic assumptions held by group members: "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 12). He suggests that 'the most useful way to think about culture is to view it as the accumulated shared learning of a specific group, including behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects of the group members' total psychological functioning" (p. 10).

Reichers and Schneider (1990) note that culture researchers distinguish between Smircich's concept of culture as something an organization is and Schein's idea that culture is something an organization has. The first definition is exploratory and descriptive. The second promotes the investigation of causes and effects (p.22). Reicher and Schneider also observe that "running through all definitions of culture is a common set of shared meanings or understandings about the group/organization and its problems, goals, and practices" (p. 23).

Killmann, Saxton, and Serpa define culture as "the shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and norms that knit a community together" (1985, p. 5). These closely connected concepts give evidence of a group's agreement, implicit or explicit, about how to make decisions and how to do things within the organization (Kilmann, Saxton & Sherpa, 1985).

Denison (1990) defines organizational culture as the underlying values, beliefs, and principles that serve as a foundation for an organization's management system and practices, and the behaviors that typify and reinforce those basic
principles. Examining the effectiveness of an organization necessitates understanding that the values, beliefs, and meanings that underlie the organizational culture are its primary source of motivated and coordinated activity (Denison).

Once culture is defined, it can be analyzed at several different levels, a level being the degree to which the cultural phenomenon is visible to an observer. Schein (1992) describes three levels of culture: 1) artifacts; 2) espoused values; and 3) basic underlying assumptions (p. 17). Artifacts exist at the surface level of culture and include everything an observer can see, hear, and feel when encountering members of the culture. Artifacts include the visible products and behavior of the group as well as the organizational processes which routinize behavior. What is most important about this level of culture is that it is very easy to observe and very challenging to decipher. Attempting to infer deep assumptions solely from artifacts is dangerous because the analyst's own interpretations become projections of personal feelings and reactions (pp. 17-18).

The second level of culture, espoused values, consists of a group's stated strategies, goals, and philosophies. At this conscious level, values predict a great deal of the behavior that can be observed at the artifact level. However, if these values are not based on prior learning, they may predict only what people will say in various situations and not align with what people will do. Espoused values that are congruent with the group's underlying assumptions can, when articulated, help bring a group together as well as provide group identity and a sense of mission. However, even espoused values that are congruent with underlying assumptions may be only rationalizations or future aspirations. Parts of the culture are still not explained until basic assumptions are uncovered (Schein, 1992, pp. 19-21).
The third and deepest level of culture, basic assumptions, holds the key to deciphering the culture's pattern and predicting future behavior correctly. Basic assumptions are the unconscious, "taken-for-granted" beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of a group. They are the ultimate source of values and action for group members. The strength and power of a culture develops when these assumptions are shared and reinforced. Deciphering the pattern of basic assumptions that operates within a group unlocks the essence of its culture and is necessary to interpret artifacts correctly and to decide how much confidence to place in espoused values. Basic assumptions are extremely difficult to change, because group members do not confront or examine these beliefs and feelings. Learning something new means group members have to dredge up, examine, and change some of their most ingrained ways of thinking. This process is very difficult because it destabilizes group members' worlds and creates great anxiety (Schein, 1992, pp. 21-26).

The importance of culture in schools and its impact on students emerged from the early school effectiveness research. Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, and Ouston with Smith (1979), and Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, and Wisenbaker (1979) conducted two landmark studies. In a longitudinal study of 12 urban secondary schools, Rutter et al. (1979) found that "ethos" positively contributes to students' performance in the more successful schools. Ethos was defined as "the set of values, attitudes and behaviours which will become characteristic of the school as a whole" (p.179). Rutter et al. also commented that the tendency for organizations to develop their own culture applies to secondary schools (p. 184). A conclusion of the study was that the variations in outcomes
among the schools studied "were systematically and strongly associated with the characteristics of schools as social institutions" (p. 295).

The research conducted by Brookover et al. in 91 randomly chosen Michigan elementary schools was designed to study the effects of the school system's social characteristics on students' learning outcomes. The researchers found that, "We believe that the social system of the school explains these differences in outcomes and these failures, and further, that the school social systems currently provided are designed to produce exactly this range of outcomes" (p. 148).

Deal (1985) made the critical link between school culture and student performance when he interpreted many of the school effectiveness characteristics related to performance in cultural terms: "by influencing behavior, culture affects productivity—how well teachers teach and how much students learn" (p. 611). Understanding student culture then, could assist practitioners in helping students learn more and better.

Schools, like all organizations, have a unique culture (Kilmann, 1984; Maehr & Buck, 1993). Maehr and Buck assert that each school "has a certain 'feel,' a 'character,' or a 'personality,' of its own" (p. 41). This culture moves an organization to act by providing meaning and direction (Kilmann, 1984; Deal, 1993). School culture can encourage behaviors that enable members to accomplish the school's mission, or it can coerce members into dysfunctional behavior that subverts the school's mission. School culture determines how, what, and whether students learn. "While all schools claim to be about student learning, they in fact stress different purposes and goals and vary in the way they construct their mission. Importantly, they define the nature and meaning of learning in differing ways" (Maehr & Buck, 1993, p. 42).
Schein (1992) offers several reasons for studying culture. Two of these are especially relevant to the study of student culture. 1) Cultural analysis reveals subcultural dynamics within organization, and 2) Organizational learning, development, and planned change cannot be understood without considering culture as a primary source of resistance (pp. xii-xiv). The beliefs, values, and ways of thinking within the student culture of a high school work toward stability. Understanding what constitutes the student culture of a high school enables educators to construct reform plans that include students and account for the culture's stabilizing influences. Mitchell and Willower, (1992) in studying the culture of "an especially 'good' high school," emphasize the importance of understanding student culture: "If research on organizational culture in schools is to be tied to school improvement, it is clear that it has to include the students. Student motivation and identification with the organization and its educational aims are critical problems in schools, as virtually all educators are acutely aware" (p. 7).

Several studies of the student culture in secondary schools have produced important and useful findings. One such study is Cusick's research of a single high school in the early 1970's from the perspective of some of its students. Cusick (1973) worked from the assumption that "students develop perspective in relation to their environment" and found that their activities and involvement revolve around their "friendship patterns," which grew out of neighborhood associations (p. 3). Students who were studied spent most of their time in school "hanging out" with their friends in small groups. Also, the students' pattern of activities had "little or nothing to do with the academic or productive sector of school and were only minimally related to the school's maintenance sector [rules and regulations]" (p. 205). Finally, Cusick demonstrated that students' small group affiliations "can and do strongly effect
other aspects of the school organization, such as the teachers' classroom behavior, the vice-principal's actions, and the behavior of other students" (pp. 204-205). Cusick suggests that the importance of friends and groups to students in school is attributable to the friends and groups providing "so much of what the organization denies" (p. 206). He also notes that the small group activities did not interfere with the formal school processes (p. 206).

Willower and Smith (1987) examined two northeastern secondary (7-12) schools to find indicators of culture unique to each school. They asked if an organizational culture existed that extended beyond the shared meanings within the student and teacher groups. Students at both schools reported that "what meant most to them at school was being with their friends" (p. 92). Athletics also were of great importance to students. The researchers assert that "a special organizational culture tied to academic goals is not likely to be found in normal circumstances. It has to be a deliberate creation" (pp. 93-94). They also caution not to assume that "a strong organizational culture will serve multiple educational purposes unambiguously. School cultures that stress academics could stint critical thinking or social skills. Further, strong cultures have a tendency to stress conformity and limit individual initiative" (p. 94). The best course of action for schools is to develop cultures that are "open and educative" (p. 94).

Mitchell and Willower (1992) studied "an especially 'good' high school" to determine whether a "genuine organizational culture that cut across [student and teacher] groups might be found in schools" (p. 7). They found that "there was a shared culture that cut across groups [students and teachers] at Jamestown High School. It centred on the importance of 'academics' and it was abetted by school spirit associated with pride in both a good school and in the school's athletic teams"
The researchers noted that what was meant by academics was not clear. Students emphasized grades, and teachers emphasized learning and effort. Both groups believed that students' academic performance affected their future. Students were involved only partially in the whole organizational culture of the school. While they made a commitment to academics and school spirit, friendships with peers were a central part of their school lives (p. 13). Mitchell and Willower offer a preliminary theory of reinforcing elements in school culture that are necessary to overcoming separate and conflicting student and teacher subcultures. They argue that students must be included in the organization if school improvement is to occur, and that if students are to share a significant part of the school culture, they must "internalize certain adult expectations regarding school work. This is more likely to occur when they face similar expectations from other sources, and when there are elements in the student subculture that reinforce those expectations" (p. 15). The chance that a school can develop a school culture shared by both students and teachers seems positive when the research of Eve (1975) is considered. He found that adolescents do appear to maintain a value system separate from that of their teachers, but that their system is derived mainly from that of the prevalent adult system and differs primarily in the degree to which adolescents approve certain adult values (p. 165).

The Institute for Education in Transformation at the Claremont Graduate School (1992) reported in *Voices From the Inside* the findings of a team of researchers who visited four representative urban/suburban California public schools over 18 months. The team interviewed representatives of every group of school stakeholders, including K-12 students, to allow them to talk about their school experiences in an effort to identify the deep and basic problems of schooling.
Seven major issues were identified from the data: 1) relationships; 2) race, culture and class; 3) values; 4) teaching and learning; 5) safety; 6) physical environment; and 7) despair, hope and the process of change (pp. 12-16).

Students who were interviewed identify the need to have someone care about them at school, particularly teachers. They also need to see their friends at school (Institute, 1992, p. 19). Many students are angered by expressions of prejudice at school and feel they can be less racist than adults (p. 27). Students need opportunities to discuss values, especially across ethnic cultures (p. 30). Students are concerned with the teaching process. They feel that they are asked to learn irrelevant things that are not connected to their lives. Those circumstances in which they learn best are described as fun, relevant, student-chosen, and thought-provoking (p. 32). Schools are seen as unsafe places, where students specifically fear violence (p. 33). When the physical environment is unsatisfactory, students complained (p. 35). All of these problems contribute to students' feelings of despair and, in some cases, to their poor performance. The students interviewed feel a dramatic change in schooling is needed (p. 37).

The Claremont report contends that people interested in transforming schools must do three things: 1) Change the focus of the national dialogue about the problems of public education to spotlight the preceding seven issues; 2) Re-examine policies, practices and proposed solutions from the viewpoint of these seven issues; and 3) Develop effective participatory processes to include all school members at each school site so they can discuss their own problems and solutions (Institute, 1992, p. 17).

Tye (1985) studied the 13 rural, suburban, and urban high schools included in Goodlad's 38-school project, A Study of Schooling. She reported on each school in
depth and then answers several overarching questions. One of these was, "How do schools shape students' behavior?" Tye first describes the physical uniformity of the American high school. She also notes that high schools have a control orientation. The physical arrangement of most buildings, the schedule, and the school program are all designed to keep students under control (p. 334). A third observation is that most American high schools separate students into tracks. Students seem to accept the system that divides them as "right and proper" despite the problems both "high" and "low" track students can experience (p. 335). The tracking system encourages students to think of their peers "in terms of categories," which may keep them separated (p. 335).

Students in Tye's study identified going to school to get a good job to be the most important function of school (p. 337). Tye explains the dangers of students' belief that the reason to go to school is to get a good job and earn money as an adult.

... the belief that the reason a person goes to school is to be able to get a good job and earn more money as an adult has robbed our society of two important values. First of all, it deprives young people of the feeling that what they are doing now is important. All the rewards are seen to be somewhere in the future. Secondly, it deprives society of the understanding that learning has value in itself and not just as a saleable commodity. This greatly reduces the range of knowledge that is considered worth having, and creates a population of narrowly-educated citizens. (pp. 337-338)

Understanding the culture of students and linking it to achievement can help educators reform high schools in which students' efforts are focused on getting a good job rather than on learning, in which students feel they learn irrelevant things, and where they feel disconnected and even in despair. The connection of culture
and performance that is accepted in the business arena must also be accepted in schools. A strong, cohesive culture may be even more important to schools than in business, because the product (student learning) is much more complicated and less concrete (Deal, 1993, p. 20). Deal (1992) illustrates the effect of culture on student performance by "looking beyond the research into the patterns of a typical school and asking, "Why should students attend class, come on time, or stay in school if they do not identify with its values? How can we expect students to commit themselves to schoolwork when the student subculture rewards popularity, deviance, or athletic prowess?" (p. 10)

The concept of student engagement addresses Deal's questions. Student engagement in academic work is "the student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992, p. 12). An engaged learner is necessary for the "meaningful cognitive demands of education" to be attained (p.14). What affects student engagement and achievement is not simply a list of what is in the curriculum, what happens in class, or what gets tested. "Instead, the effects of any specific school activity are best understood as cultural phenomena; that is, as outcomes that evolve through complex webs of institutionally sanctioned meanings, values, and incentives or disincentives for particular kinds of behavior" (Newmann, 1992, p. 182). From a student's point of view, a sense of school membership is a fundamental cultural need. All students want to be included, so educators must listen, try to understand students' meanings, and tailor responses that incorporate students' viewpoints, interests, and concerns (p. 183). Students need to be included in the
entire school community; a communal culture that includes both students and teachers is very powerful (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988).

Sergiovanni (1994) also sees students as important stakeholders in any school's effort to provide a quality education. He approaches school improvement from the perspective of community building:

Real change can only come as the result of the commitments of both the minds and hearts of the total school community--teachers, parents, students, administrators, and school boards. Reform should be based on careful identification of deeply and commonly held values. Change can only be achieved through people's acceptance of responsibility to further their goals through their words and their actions. (p. 1)

Schools need to create for students

the kind of ties that bond students together and students and teachers together and that bind them to shared ideas and ideals. When students share the responsibility for developing norms and when their commitment to these norms is expected, they know they belong. They get the message that they are needed. They feel a sense of ownership in the classroom. They experience community. These ties are the antidote to the loss of community that many students are experiencing in their everyday lives. (pp. 120-121)

A strong and cohesive student culture whose members share commitment to learning and school involvement provides the basis for improving high schools' productivity and effectiveness. Educators need to understand their students' unique culture and include them in reform efforts, particularly in the development of shared values and mission.
Student Engagement

Student engagement in academic work is defined as "the student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, p. 12). The two factors of student engagement, school membership and authentic work, exert influence on and are influenced by the student culture in a school. Student engagement in academic work is fundamental to student success, because "to enhance achievement, one must first learn how to engage students" (p. 3).

Newmann, Wehlage, and Lamborn (1992) describe three high school students who convey a sense of engagement and involvement in their schools. These students say that they are challenging themselves in school, that they work hard, that they are happy, and that they are involved in school activities. Their attitudes and behaviors contrast sharply with those of many of their classmates, who are more like the apathetic students Sizer and Goodlad described a decade before. Sizer (1984) characterized American high school students as "all too often docile, compliant, and without initiative" (p. 54). Goodlad (1983) portrayed students in the same way, saying they present "a general picture of considerable passivity" (p. 113). Apathetic, compliant, passive students, however, can become engaged and involved in school.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the relationships among students' need for competence, their sense of school membership, their involvement in authentic work, student engagement in academic work, and the whole of school culture. The need for competence underlies students' sense of school membership and engagement in authentic work. The factors of school membership and authentic work are supported by the findings of studies described below.
Student Culture
Overarching Ways of Thinking

Norms
Beliefs
Values

Student Engagement in Academic Work

School Membership
Clarity of Purpose
Fairness
Personal Support
Success
Caring

Authentic Work
Extrinsic Rewards
Intrinsic Rewards
Sense of Ownership
Connection to the "Real World"
Fun

Need for Competence

Figure 2.2 Student culture and student engagement
Sense of school membership as it relates to academic work is influenced by organizational conditions that impact students' motivation to succeed in school. These include the school's clarity of purpose, a sense of fairness, personal support, success, and caring. Powell, Farrar and Cohen (1985) documented the lack of a clear mission in American high schools and its negative effect on student performance. The power of a clear mission that is shared by school members was identified in school effectiveness research (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston with Smith, 1979) and is advocated as an important aspect of successful school reform (Sergiovanni, 1994). Fairness can be undercut by a variety of school and teacher practices. Students of low socio-economic status (SES) who are poor achievers have been shown to suffer from subtle discrimination. Teachers convey less interest in these students and lower their expectations and quality of instruction for them. They also are the targets of more teacher disapproval (Gamoran & Berends, 1987; Goodlad, 1984; Oakes, 1990). Laffey (1982) found that those students who expected the most from school and who anticipated success tended to be the most involved in their schoolwork (p. 70). Steinberg (1990) reviewed three studies that showed the importance of personal support and caring in helping students connect with school. "Students need and want teachers who care about them personally and who convey respect for their capabilities—as students and as future workers and citizens" (p. 23).

Student's involvement in authentic work, the second factor influencing student engagement, also is influenced by organizational conditions that are necessary to get students to attempt to succeed in school. These include extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, a sense of ownership, connection to the "real world," and fun. Student engagement in authentic work increases when students value the
rewards (Grades do not motivate students who go to work after graduation.), believe that academic performance will earn them rewards, and understand that their hard work will result in success (Bishop, 1989). Extrinsic rewards decrease intrinsic motivation in many circumstances, especially when rewards are contingent on performance (Deci, 1975, p. 158). In addition to feeling rewarded by schoolwork, students need to experience a sense of ownership in their work. They need clear alternatives and personal choices to participate in learning activities that are within their ability (DeCharms, 1984). Students need to experience work that is connected to the "real world." Schoolwork must have value beyond instruction; include clear, prompt feedback; provide for collaboration; and allow flexible use of time if students are to involve themselves in it (Resnick, 1987). Steinberg (1990) found that at-risk high school students considered school a boring diversion from their important interests (p. 21). Students said they would be motivated when teachers used a variety of resources, sent home positive notes, and praised students (p. 22).

Students who are engaged in academic work have a need for competence and thus make an effort to learn and take pride in more than grades, in actually comprehending material and making it a part of their lives. Engaged students take academic work seriously, do not allow themselves to be bored, preserve their self-respect, and find success in school. They participate in a cycle of studying, producing work, and learning from errors. In the classroom, engaged students discuss, debate, dissect, experiment, write, and report; they do the work. In short, they invest themselves in school work.

The importance of engaging students in their work is evident when the results of not doing so are examined. Students who are not engaged disrupt classes, cut them, and do not complete work. Too many drop out of school. Others, perhaps
a larger number of disengaged students, quietly attend class and dutifully but unenthusiastically complete their work. These students do not come close to reaching their educational potential or using the opportunities schools hold for them. Sadly, everyone suffers from their lack of engagement, for they are in danger of becoming disengaged members of the work force and society itself (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992, pp. 13-14).

**Organizational Systems Factors**

As organizations, schools are made up of many mutually interdependent systems of social interaction. Currently, three competing perspectives categorize organizational system thinking: rational systems, natural systems, and open systems (Hoy & Miskel 1987, p. 16). Organizations are considered "formal instruments" designed to achieve certain goals under the rational systems perspective. Goal specificity and formalization determine organizational behavior, which is seen to be very logical and controlled (p. 17). In contrast, the natural systems perspective considers organizations to be social groups with adaptation and survival as the chief concerns. Goals are regarded as unimportant, as are the formal structures needed to realize them (p. 17). The open systems perspective views organizations as influenced by and dependent upon their environments. A cycle of input, transformation, and output is facilitated by feedback to the system. Change is not always a result of the feedback, however. Feedback only provides opportunities for change. Successful open systems tend toward equilibrium and are concerned with both structure and process (pp. 17-18).

As an interdependent group of people engaged in systematic pursuit of common purposes, goals, or actions, modern organizations are dynamic and complex (Luthans, 1989). Senge (1990) and others (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, &
Smith, 1994) have described how an enormous set of complex and continually-changing factors interact to create problems that can be solved only by applying systems thinking. Clearly, large high schools are organizations.

Figure 2.3 depicts Sweeney's organizational systems model (1993) adapted for high school students. The model is based on an open systems perspective of organizations and is designed to promote understanding of and to explain and predict regularities in organizational behavior. It illustrates the six interdependent categories of organizational factors that must be considered in understanding high school culture from the students' perspective. These categories include: 1) purpose/strategy, 2) environment, 3) structures, 4) processes, 5) culture, and 6) ecology. These six categories organize the infinite number of forces, called organizational systems factors, which can influence the organization and its members. Student productivity, job satisfaction, and client (including student) satisfaction are the intended outcomes of the organization. This study identified organizational systems factors that affect the student culture of a comprehensive high school.

The model shows that the high school organization's vision, mission, goals, and work technology reflect the purpose and strategy. These interact with the environment and with structures, processes, and the culture in an ecological system that is dynamic and subject to entropy. No "straight-line" relationships exist between factors, which constantly interact to influence clients' and employees' productivity and satisfaction.

The environment influences the vision, goals, mission, and technology of the organization. The goals, mission, and work technology of the organization influence the environment, structures, processes, and the human system (culture) that must
achieve the organizational purposes. These purposes, in turn, are influenced by those same structures, processes, and human system (culture). Structures influence the environment, processes, and the human system (culture), and in like manner, are influenced by each of these three factors. Each of the six elements are constantly interacting and changing because of the interdependent, ecological nature of the elements.
The purpose/strategy factor of the model is comprised of the organization's vision, goals, mission, and function/work technology. These elements are interdependent and provide students with the focus and motivation to reach the school's goals and their own outcomes. Students must share the same vision, commit to the same mission, and work toward the same goals as their teachers, parents, and community members if they are to be successful (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Mitchell & Willower, 1992). It is critical for students to be involved in schoolwork (function/work technology) that engages them and that aligns with the school's mission and goals (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992; Willower & Smith, 1987).

Structures should be designed to support the purpose/strategies of shared vision, mission, and goals and the aligned function/work technology. Structures are the ways in which an organization divides and coordinates its work. These structures can be formal or informal. Students' lives within the organization are affected daily by the school's formal processes, policies, rules, procedures, and involvement opportunities. MacNeil (1986) contends that in reality, there is tension between these two factors. The school's goal of educating students often conflicts with its responsibility to control students. Informal structures arise because of the formal structure and are not included in the model.

Processes in organizations define choice, effort, and the persistence of behaviors. Students are affected chiefly by decision making, problem solving, and leading processes. These are the aspects of the organization that provide opportunities to exercise a voice and help shape the purpose/strategy facets of the school.

The culture factor encompasses the organization's human system. Literature explaining and supporting student culture is provided above.
The environment factor of organizations refers to the "outside" influences on the organization. These physical and social influences realistically cannot be separated from the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Global, national, and state influences impact schools. Students are impacted most directly by the environment of their local community and its culture.

Ecology as an organizational factor consists of the organization's interdependency with its environment. Schools are influenced by their environments and, in turn, exert influence upon them. Schools receive feedback, which can create stability or disorder.

Qualitative Case Study Methodology

This case study followed guidelines for qualitative research methodology established by Forsythe (1994) and Robbins (1995). For a review of literature concerning qualitative case study, see Forsythe. For a review of literature concerning qualitative methodology, see Robbins.

Summary

Culture definitions emphasize that this concept is holistic, involves shared values and beliefs, that it gives meaning and a sense of mission, causes action, and creates a pattern. Culture can be analyzed at three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions.

Studies of high school students and student culture have shown the following: 1) Having friends at school is of primary importance to students; 2) Activities and involvement center on friends; 3) Students' peer relationships do affect the organization; 4) Athletics are of great importance to students; 5) It is not usual to find a student culture strongly tied to academic goals; 6) Strong cultures stress uniformity and limit individuality; 7) Schools need to develop cultures that
are open and educative; 8) Students participate only in part of the entire school culture; 9) Even at a "good" high school, friends are still a larger part of students' lives than academics and school spirit; 10) Students must be included in the organization if school improvement efforts are to succeed; 11) Students and teacher value systems within a school differ, but primarily in the degree to which students approve certain values; 12) Students helped identify seven major problem areas: relationships; race, culture, and class; values; teaching and learning; safety; physical environment; and despair, hope, and the process of change; 13) Three things must be done if schools are to be transformed: a) The focus of the national dialogue about the problems of public education must be changed to spotlight the preceding seven issues; b) Policies, practices and proposed solutions must be re-examined from the viewpoint of these seven issues; and c) Effective participatory processes to include all school members at each school site must be developed so they can discuss their own problems and solutions; 14) High schools have a control orientation; 15) Students harbor a dangerous belief that the reason to go to school is to get a good job and earn money as an adult.

Student engagement is defined as "the student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote" (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, p. 12). Two factors influencing student engagement are school membership and authentic work. Student culture impacts student engagement. Which elements of student culture have the most influence on engagement depend upon the specific school culture.

Organizations, including schools, have been determined to have cultures that affect members' performance. Schools have unique cultures or personalities that
cause their members, including students, to act in certain ways.

Qualitative research methodology for this study follows guidelines established by Forsythe (1994) and Robbins (1995), whose work can be consulted for reviews of literature.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in a research study of the student culture of a large comprehensive high school. Specifically, the chapter describes the case study and qualitative methods used in the research; how participation was secured; the school and its students; methods of data collection; and methods of data analysis, including triangulation.

Yin (1989) asserts that the type of research questions asked, the investigator's control over events, and the focus on contemporary or historical phenomena drive the design of a study's research methods. The questions assist the researcher in determining whether to conduct an experiment, construct a survey, analyze archives, compose a history, or write a case study.

This study of the student culture in a large comprehensive high school can be classified as a case study, an investigation into "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are unclear and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, 1989, p. 23). Patton (1990) notes that case studies "become particularly useful where one needs to understand some special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information—rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question" (p. 54).

Because the study focused on student culture, ethnography was employed. Fetterman (1989) defines ethnography as "the art and science of describing a group or culture" and notes that ethnographers write about "patterns of human thought and behavior" (p. 11). Qualitative methods were used to conduct the ethnographic
study. Such methods offer the researcher the advantage of investigating an issue in depth and detail in order to increase understanding (Patton, 1990, p. 14). Morse (1994) states the case for qualitative methods eloquently:

The laboratory of the qualitative researcher is everyday life and cannot be contained in a test tube, started, stopped, manipulated, or washed down the sink. Variables are not controlled, and until qualitative researchers get close to the end of a study, they may not even be able to determine what those variables are. Therefore, theory development, description, and operationalization are often the outcomes. They are the products of the research process, rather than the means, and the tools used while conducting research. (p. 1)

The ethnographer's task is to develop grounded theory that describes concepts from the perspective of the people and social organization being studied. The soul of most such ethnographic research methods lies in adopting the emic, or insider's perspective (Fetterman 1989; Patton 1990). Fetterman (1989) contends that "the emic perspective compels the recognition and acceptance of multiple realities," which are "crucial to an understanding of why people think and act in the different ways they do" (p. 31). The researcher becomes the instrument for the study, since the primary tool used is the interview. The specific qualitative data collection techniques employed in this study were small group interviews, individual interviews, observation, physical scans, and artifact analysis. In addition, a survey provided statistical data useful in "comparison and statistical aggregation of data" (p. 14). Triangulation, the focusing of several research methods on one point, was employed to strengthen the study's design. Data from student small group interviews, individual interviews, and a survey were triangulated.
This investigation is part of a case study of a large comprehensive urban high school, hereafter called Anycity High School (AHS) conducted by Dr. James Sweeney, Professor at Iowa State University. Dr. Sweeney has been studying school climate for ten years and recently focused his research on culture in K-12 schools. Six high schools in Anycity, Iowa, and five others across America and Canada indicated an interest in participating in a culture audit. Anycity High School, which serves a diverse population of over 1,700 students, was one of the schools that expressed interest in participating in the study.

The Anycity High School case study is designed to explore the major facets of a complete culture of a high school:

1) Staff work culture, conducted by Dr. James Sweeney, Ms. Sandra Barnes, research associate, and Mr. John Robbins, Iowa State University doctoral student;

2) School/community culture, conducted by Ms. Laura Studer, Iowa State University doctoral student; and

3) Student culture, conducted by Ms. Jan Westerman-Beatty, Iowa State University doctoral student.

The researcher conducted an on-site investigation of the student culture of a large comprehensive high school from November 1993 to May 1994. The study was designed to describe the student culture within a large comprehensive high school, to identify the ways of thinking within the student culture, to describe the extent to which school membership and authentic work are present in the student culture, and to determine the organizational systems factors that influence the student culture. The processes used to secure participation in the study of the student culture of Anycity High School, the school and its students, procedures for the study, data collection, data analysis, and triangulation are described in this chapter.
Securing Participation in the Study

Marshall and Rossman (1989) emphasize the need for the researcher to plan "for appropriate entry through formal and informal gatekeepers in an organization" (p. 63). Because much of the success of field research lies with the researcher's acceptance into the field and the participants' willingness to cooperate, Dr. Sweeney first secured the participation of the Anycity Schools at a meeting with the high school principals on February 10, 1993. A written summary about the culture audit was explained, and specific questions about the purpose of the culture audit, the benefits to the schools, and the procedures for conducting the study were answered. The principals requested that an additional presentation be made to a group of teachers representing each high school so they would better understand the culture audit.

On March 3, 1993, teacher representatives from each Anycity high school met with Dr. Sweeney, several graduate assistants, and this researcher. The purpose of the culture audit, the benefits to the schools, and the procedures for conducting the study were discussed. Two teachers from Anycity High School attended this meeting. They were charged with making a recommendation to their School Improvement Team about the school's participation in the culture audit. The teachers made their presentation to the School Improvement Team members, who endorsed Anycity High School's participation in a complete culture audit. A member of the School Improvement Team then communicated this decision to the faculty, informing the teachers that the study would include an audit of their school's staff work culture, parent/community culture, and student culture. Students were not involved in the decision to proceed with the study.
To establish dates for the student culture study, the researcher telephoned the principal of Anycity High School. The principal approved 20 dates, five days each in November 1993, December 1993, February 1994, and April 1994, for interviewing and observation. He also submitted a letter approving the study to the Iowa State University Graduate Office (Appendix A). Permission slips were delivered to Anycity High School during the first week of November. A letter confirming the study dates and requesting student permission slips be distributed and students scheduled, and a conference room be reserved was mailed on November 8 (Appendix B). Follow-up telephone calls to the principal's secretary indicated that a sufficient number of students had returned permission slips for small group interviews and had been scheduled for the times the researcher had requested. The researcher began the study at Anycity High School on November 16, 1993.

The School

Anycity High School is one of six high schools in an urban Midwestern public school district. This high school serves a diverse population of students, as data from the district's Minority Enrollment Report (September 17, 1993) indicate. Of the 1,743 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 during the 1993-94 school year, 155 or 8.9 percent are African American, 83 or 4.8 percent are Asian American, 43 or 2.5 percent are Hispanic, and five or .3 percent are American Indian. Minority students make up 16.4 percent of Anycity High School's total enrollment. Caucasian students number 1,457, or 83.6 percent of the school's student population.

In 1993-94, most students attended Anycity High School "day school" for seven periods from 7:50 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Typically, they spend four to six periods every day in classes, so most students earn credit in four to six classes each semester. However, by the end of each semester, about 130 students, seven percent of the
student body, attended "night school" classes from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Anycity High School building because they violated the school's new, more restrictive attendance policy. (An attendance office report for the 1991-92 school year indicates that over half the students attending AHS during the 1992-93 school year missed ten or more days of school; one quarter of these students missed over 20 days of school). Night school students earn credit in a maximum of three classes each semester. Most night students attend school so they can earn some credits before re-enrolling in day school the next semester.

Recently, less than six percent of AHS students have withdraws from school before graduation; in 1992-1993, 3.9 percent of students withdrew. AHS students have a wide variety of plans for their lives after high school, as the "proposed destinations" of 1992 AHS seniors, reported in a guidance office survey, illustrate. Four-year colleges were the intended destination of 33.6 percent of the students; 29.7 percent reported they would attend two-year area schools or community colleges. Another 8.6 percent of the 1992 seniors planned to attend business schools or trade schools, study nursing/other specializations. Five (5.0) percent of the 1992 seniors intended to enter the military. Apprenticeships were the goal of 3.0 percent of these seniors; 1.7 percent intended to go into professional/technical management. The remaining 18.4 percent of the Class of 1992 intended to enter the work force directly in jobs ranging from service occupations to clerical positions to unskilled labor.

In addition to representing diverse ethnicities and holding diverse plans for the future, the AHS student body also has a diverse socio-economic status (SES). A significant percentage of students fall at the low end of the range, with most students coming from middle to low SES, blue-collar homes. Several statistics from the 1989 NCA Self Study explain students' backgrounds. Three hundred and sixty-
two of the students (20.7 percent) received free or reduced-price school lunches in 1993-94. One-third (29.2 percent) of students' families lived below the poverty level. Among students' parents, 37.3 percent had graduated from high school; 20.3 percent had graduated from college. In addition to coping with a lack of material wealth, many students also deal with home situations in which both biological parents are not present. A random survey done for the 1989 NCA Self Study showed that 23.9 percent of students were affected by divorce; 4.2 percent by separation; and 5.1 percent by death or desertion of a parent.

A significant number of Anycity High School students come to school each day from less than ideal home situations. Yet the school has long held a widespread reputation for strong tradition and alumni loyalty. Anycity High School's Alumni Association claims to be the oldest and largest such organization in the United States. Each spring, the Association hosts a banquet that serves as a huge "class reunion" and a celebration for that year's graduating class. More than 1,000 graduates attend. The students who serve the banquet learn how they will form more links in Anycity High School's chain of tradition and loyalty. Students and alumni alike recall the school's early reputation for athletic success; they struggle now to restore that prowess.

The high school building itself reflects the tradition for which the school is known. Founded in 1861, Anycity High School was located in several places in the city before the current building was erected in 1911. Set well back from the street, the 1911 building is fronted with stately trees and turn-of-the-century style lighting along wide sidewalks. The building has undergone three major additions (1955, 1966, and 1973), none of which match the style or grandeur of the original gray stone Greek classical building. These large additions include a plain red brick gymnasium
on the southeast and a contemporary stone and glass classroom addition on the southwest, overlooking a freeway. A cascade of wide stone steps leads to three doors in the original building's main entrance. Carved into the stone above the middle door is Anycity High School's motto, selected in a contest: "For the service of humanity." Directly inside are worn floors of red, black, and white marble supporting gold walls. The north and south walls are covered with boards listing Anycity High School students who served or were honored in World Wars I and II, a plaque commemorating the original building's completion, a large shield with the motto, and a carving of the Gettysburg Address.

Today Anycity High School encompasses over 355,000 square feet and includes nearly 100 classrooms, gyms, a swimming pool, a cafeteria and kitchen, and office space.

Data Collection

Use of Human Subjects

The Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research examined methodology used in this research project to ensure that the rights of the human subjects were preserved, that the benefits associated with the project outweighed the possible risks, that the confidentiality of the human subjects and the data they provided were ensured, and that informed consent was acquired through appropriate procedures. Approval was granted, and a Statement of Informed Consent combined with a Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Letter was distributed. When students' failure to return the forms with a parent signature halted interviewing, the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee agreed to allow students to sign their own forms, provided they participated voluntarily. This procedure worked very well.
Students were informed about the purpose of the study, its confidentiality, and their right to terminate participation before each small group session or individual interview. Documentation of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee's approval of the study is included in Appendix C. A sample of the student consent form is found in Appendix D.

Procedures

Marshall and Rossman (1989) stress that in qualitative studies, "data collection and analysis go hand in hand to promote the emergence of substantive theory grounded in empirical data" (p. 113). Analysis begins when the researcher enters the site to collect data and continues until the written report is completed. The design of this study incorporated the concept of simultaneous data collection and analysis in the planning for data collection in two rounds. Initial data collection focused on gathering information about the student culture at Anycity High School in order to allow probing, addition, refinement, and validation in subsequent data collection.

The study primarily used small group (typically three to seven students) and individual interviews. Both types of interviews are important because participants respond in their own words and express their own perspectives, which are keys to enabling the researcher to adopt the emic perspective that is so critical to ethnography. Small group interviews are an extremely effective way to collect qualitative data. In the same time an individual interview takes, the researcher can obtain information from five people instead of one. Small group interviews increase sample size significantly, and they offer quality control because participants' responses check and balance each other so that extreme views tend to be mitigated.
Also, the group's dynamics help maintain focus on the most important issues throughout the interview (Patton, 1990, pp. 335-336).

Individual interviews with key actors, those participants who are "more articulate and culturally sensitive than others," provide rich, thick information that augments the data provided by the small group interviews (Fetterman, 1989, p. 58). Key actors provide concrete details about how the culture works and help the researcher synthesize observations (p. 60). Such individuals also validate data gleaned from small groups, further the researcher's understanding of why something is important, and offer new, alternative perspectives.

The original research plan specified 20 days on-site at Anycity High School, 10 days during each semester of the 1993-94 school year. The researcher planned to conduct small group and individual interviews, to make observations of a variety of events, to complete physical scans of the building, and to collect artifacts in two rounds of ten days each. Round One of the study was planned for November and December 1993. Round Two was planned for February and April 1994. Round Two data collection was designed to probe and confirm data collected from Round I interviews. Round One data were used to develop interview questions for Round II. Observations were scheduled when interviews were not being conducted.

Changes were made in the plan for a variety of reasons. In December 1993, because many parent permission slips were not being returned, four of the five interview dates were rescheduled for January. To alleviate the problem caused by the failure to return permission slips, the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee consented to allow students to sign their own slips provided their participation was voluntary. This new procedure worked very well. When the researcher became ill for three weeks in January, interviews were rescheduled for February. Some of
these were conducted; others were again rescheduled when the researcher unexpectedly had to return to her school. The researcher conducted one more day of interviews in March to complete Round One and obtained the assistance of a trained interviewer to complete Round Two interviews in May. Ms. Sandy Barnes, the doctoral candidate who assisted with Dr. Sweeney's culture audit of ten high schools, conducted six small group interviews and six individual interviews during Round Two. A total of 17 days were spent on-site.

The Anycity High School principal served as the on-site coordinator. Telephone calls and faxes enabled the researcher and principal to coordinate the selection of students and determine the interview schedules. The principal arranged for the distribution of consent forms to students, scheduled students for interviews, and arranged for the use of a private conference room. He also arranged for the administration of surveys in May 1994.

The collection of data is described below for each of the two rounds of field work. Details about small group interviews, individual interviews, observations, physical scans, artifact analysis, and survey administration are included in the description of the round during which they were used.

**Round One**

Round One data collection included small group interviews, individual interviews, observations, physical scans, and artifacts. Small group interviews were designed to provide data about students' ways of thinking that would serve as the foundation for other research techniques and are described first in the following section.
Small Group Interviews

Students who participated in Round One small group interviews were selected purposefully. Patton (1990) observes that qualitative research "focuses in depth on relatively small samples . . . selected purposefully" (p. 169). The selection of information-rich cases is the key to successfully gathering qualitative data. Typical case sampling was employed in arranging Round One small group interviews because this sampling method allowed description and illustration of what is typical of the students' culture to those not familiar with it (p. 173). Participants were high school students capable of talking about their culture. Anycity High School English classes and study centers enroll nearly all students, so these classes were selected as the source of students for small group interviews.

Before Round One small group interviews began in November 1993, 400 consent forms were distributed to freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior students in English classes. These classes were selected because nearly all Anycity High School students take English classes, many of which are required. Thus, a variety of students from these classes could talk about their culture and help the researcher form a picture of the "typical" student culture. Thirty-six students who returned forms were scheduled for small group interviews in November. One student opted out of the small group interview process because she had homework to complete. Fifty-eight students, all from day school, were involved in Round One interviews in December and February, after the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee gave permission for students to sign their own consent forms. Thirty-six of these 58 students were from day school and 22 from night school. A total of 94 students, 72 from day school and 22 from night school, were interviewed in small groups during Round One.
A typical Round One small group interview was conducted with three to seven students from one or perhaps two grade levels. Within these groups, most students were from one grade level, for example, all ninth graders, since they were scheduled for interviews from their English classes or study centers. Some groups included students from two grade levels, such as ninth and tenth or eleventh and twelfth, but few groups included students from three or more grade levels, such as ninth, tenth, and twelfth graders. Most Round One groups were a relatively even mixture of males and females and included African American, Asian American, and Hispanic students.

Prior to conducting Round One small group interviews, an interview guide was developed (Appendix E). The small group interview guide ensured that basically the same information was obtained from each group of students interviewed. Key prompts, questions and topics were developed to elicit data that would address the research questions. A procedure also was outlined. Within such a framework, the researcher remained free to expand discussion of a specific subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish rapport with the students while maintaining the focus of the study.

For each small group interviewed during Round One, the researcher explained the purposes of the study, described what students could expect their participation to be like, and defined culture as "the way we do things or what we believe around here." Students' questions about their participation in the study were answered, they all signed consent forms, and the interviews began. Students first were asked to respond to the following prompt designed to elicit opinions about their culture: "Around here, students . . . ." Each student was then given an opportunity to respond to the prompt. Their responses were recorded on newsprint.
Once each student who wanted to offer an idea had done so, discussion of cultural aspects was opened to anyone who wanted to participate and these responses were added to the newsprint list. When students had listed everything they felt was important, they were asked to provide reasons why each of the cultural aspects listed was important. These reasons were listed on a separate sheet of newsprint. At this point, groups frequently clarified or added information about the cultural aspects they had listed.

After cultural aspects and reasons for their importance were recorded, students were asked to indicate whether each cultural aspect was positive or negative. Each group came to informal consensus about this topic. Typically, one or two students would suggest a response and brief discussion would occur. Before the researcher recorded either a positive or negative response, she summarized the group's discussion and asked if she understood the decision. Some groups asked that both a positive and negative response with a brief explanation of each be recorded for one or two cultural aspects. For example, the cultural aspect, "Students value getting a good education here," was identified several times as positive because some students held this value and also as negative because more students should value this idea. The positive or negative response was recorded on the original newsprint next to each cultural aspect.

Next, students in small groups provided the researcher with an estimate of the percentage of Anycity High School students who engaged in each of the cultural aspects listed. The same procedure used to determine the positive or negative character of each cultural aspect was employed to generate percentages. The researcher also recorded this information on the newsprint next to each cultural aspect. Students then were asked to individually indicate the strength (relative
importance) of each cultural aspect by thinking about a scale of one to five, with 5 representing very strong and 1 representing not strong. Usually, students used their fingers to indicate a number but sometimes chose to respond verbally. These numbers were recorded on the newsprint next to the cultural aspect they measured. Most groups had time to provide names of individual students who "really knew about the school" or were important in the school so these students could be scheduled for individual interviews.

Students' responses were recorded on newsprint, with reasons placed on a separate sheet. The newsprint for each group was numbered, and the grade level and sex of each participant also was recorded. The researcher completed a small group summary form at the end of each interview (Appendix F). This form enabled the researcher to capture immediate impressions and note the salient points of each small group interview. At the end of each day, a daily summary report was completed (Appendix G).

Following the completion of the Round One small group interviews of 94 students, the researcher transcribed the newsprint to computer data files, one file per small group, and printed the results. By reading this data and the small group summary sheets, the researcher identified major cultural aspects and noted other ideas that would be important to explore in Round Two interviews.

**Individual interviews**

Students interviewed individually in Round One were selected by snowball sampling, which is designed to locate information-rich cases (Patton, 1990, p. 176). Students in small groups were asked to identify potential key actors, those students who knew a great deal about Anycity High School or who the researcher should be sure to interview. These students' names were listed, and they were scheduled for
interviews by the principal's secretary. Individual interviewees also provided
names of key actors; new names were placed on the list of students to be scheduled
for interviews.

During Round One, 20 students from day school and one from night school
were individually interviewed. Only one night school student was interviewed
because of time constraints.

An interview guide also was used during Round One individual interviews
(Appendix H). This guide ensured that relatively consistent information was
obtained from each student interviewed. Key prompts, questions, and topics were
developed to elicit data that would address the research questions and both probe
and validate information reported by small groups. A procedure also was outlined.
Within such a framework, the researcher was free to expand discussion of a specific
subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish rapport with the
student while maintaining the focus of the study.

During Round One, the researcher explained the purposes of the study,
described what students could expect their participation to be like, and defined
culture as "the way we do things or what we believe around here." The researcher
also asked each student for permission to audiotape the interview; no one withdrew,
asked not to be taped, or requested that the tape be stopped, although each
participant was informed of these options. Students' questions about their
participation in the study were answered, they all signed consent forms, and the
interviews began.

Students interviewed individually during Round One were asked to respond
to the same prompt as the small groups: "Around here, students . . ." Initially,
individuals also were asked to label each cultural aspect as positive or negative, to
suggest the percentage of students who participated in each cultural aspect, and to
determine the strength of each cultural aspect. These labeling activities were
eliminated after the researcher conducted three or four interviews and observed that
interviews of 40 minutes—one per class period—were producing essentially the same
information as the small group interviews. Interviews were shortened to 20 minutes
—two per class period—and refocused on eliciting information to the "Around here,
students . . ." prompt and to probing what small groups had reported.

Students first were asked to respond to the prompt by listing cultural aspects.
The researcher summarized these when the student indicated that she or he felt the
important ideas had been discussed. Frequently, cultural aspects were clarified or
information was added at this point. The student then was asked to discuss reasons
why each cultural aspect was important in the school. Finally, the researcher said,
"Here are some things students in small groups have been saying are important to
students at Anycity High School. As I list each one, tell me if you agree or disagree
that this is important to students here." The researcher then listed three to five
cultural aspects that had emerged from the small group data and listened to the
interviewee's responses and probed for reasons the student agreed or disagreed if
these were not volunteered. When time permitted, interviewees were asked to name
other students who knew a lot about Anycity High School and should be
interviewed.

In addition to audiotaping these interviews, the researcher also took notes on
special forms during each interview (Appendix I). An individual interview
summary form was completed after each interview (Appendix J). A number for
each interviewee along with the student's grade and sex were placed on the note
sheets.
Observations

During Round One of data collection, the researcher observed events at Anycity High School to determine if there were physical or behavioral manifestations that either identified or clarified cultural aspects or conflicted with them. Observations of events were completed during class periods when the researcher did not have interviews scheduled or before and after the school day. The researcher observed student activity before school, during lunch, in the vice principals' offices, during a student government meeting, in choir, and at a recognition assembly. Notes were recorded on an observation form (Appendix K).

Physical Scans

Physical scans of the building itself were made to provide detail for the rich, thick description necessary for reporting an ethnographic study. These scans also were done during Round One when interviews were not scheduled. Many of areas in the building were scanned: the conference rooms used for interviews, the hallways, the library, the outside and inside main entrances, the main entrance hall, a wall designating the Alumni Hall of Fame members, and classrooms. Notes were recorded on forms and filed (Appendix L). Notes were not included in analysis but were used to write descriptions of the building for Chapter Three.

Artifacts

Artifacts were collected prior to and during Round One primarily to provide data that would validate cultural aspects emerging from the small group data or that would contribute new cultural aspects. Artifacts also provided another source of date for triangulation with the small group and individual interview data. The researcher collected a variety of print material to examine. Included were a yearbook, student newspapers, handbooks, daily and weekly announcements, the
School Improvement Plan Belief Statements, Building Objectives for 1993-94, a student handbook, a curriculum guide, and the most recent NCA self-study and commentary. Notes about each artifact were kept on a form (Appendix M).

**Round Two**

Data collected during Round Two came from small group and individual interviews conducted in May 1994 and a survey administered that same month. The purpose of this round of data collection was to probe and validate important cultural aspects emerging from Round One small group interviews; to further understanding of these cultural aspects; and to determine who adhered to which cultural beliefs.

**Small Group Interviews**

Homogeneous sampling was used in selecting participants for Round Two small group interviews so that the ideas of a variety of subgroups would be represented (Patton, 1990, p. 173). All students interviewed in Round Two were different from those interviewed in Round One. The researcher, with input from the principal, specified the types of groups. These groups were composed of males; females; talented and gifted students; Hispanic, African American, and Asian American students; student government representatives; students from each grade 9-12; male athletes; female athletes; students from the ninth grade "house"; special education students; and students who attended Central Campus to take a variety of specialized courses not offered at Anycity High School. Students from each group were asked to volunteer for small group interviews. Volunteers were then scheduled to come for interviews from study centers.

Most Round Two small group interviews included three to seven students. A total of 131 students participated in Round Two interviews: 114 students from day
school, and 17 students from night school. The researcher interviewed 106 students, and a trained assistant interviewed 25. A total of 225 students were interviewed over 17 research days in small groups during Rounds One and Two.

The interview guide for these small groups was developed after studying responses of the small groups interviewed in Round One (Appendix N). The 11 questions posed to the Round Two small groups asked students to identify specific cultural aspects of Anycity High School as a place to learn; to respond to Round One small group data concerning students' thinking about the new attendance policy, the school's reputation, and the effect of this reputation on school spirit; and to talk about why these things were that way.

For each small group interviewed during Round Two, the researcher explained the purposes of the study, described what students could expect their participation to be like, and defined culture as "the way we do things or what we believe around here." Students' questions about participation in the study were answered, they all signed consent forms, and the interviews began. The researcher asked the first question, "What makes a good day at Anycity High School?" and asked each student in the group for a response before the question was opened to discussion. Student's responses were recorded on newsprint next to a number and key words corresponding to the question on the interview guide. The process of using in-turn response before open discussion was followed with each question. Students were asked if they wished to add any information about each question before the researcher moved on to the next one. When students had discussed all 11 questions, the researcher gave them time to look at their responses and to clarify or add information. Most groups were satisfied with the responses already listed.
Students' responses to all 11 questions were recorded on newsprint. The newsprint for each group was numbered, and the grade level and sex of each participant also was recorded. At the end of each small group interview, the researcher again completed a small group summary form (Appendix F).

Following the completion of the Round Two small group interviews, the researcher transcribed the newsprint to computer data files, one file per small group. The analysis of this data is discussed below, and the findings are presented in Chapter Four.

Individual Interviews

Students individually interviewed in Round Two were identified through the snowball sampling done in Round One. These students were scheduled for interviews by the principal's secretary.

During Round Two, 13 day school students were individually interviewed. Seven students were interviewed by the researcher and six by a trained interviewer.

An interview guide was developed for Round Two individual interviews (Appendix O). This guide enabled the researcher and the trained interviewer to maintain consistent procedures and to obtain similar information. The questions were developed after examining the small group data obtained in Round One interviews.

For each student interviewed during Round Two, the researcher explained the purposes of the study, described what the student could expect participation to be like, and defined culture as "the way we do things or what we believe around here." The researcher also asked each student for permission to audiotape the interview. No students withdrew, asked not to be taped, or requested that the tape be stopped; each participant was informed of these options. Students' questions
about their participation in the study were answered, they all signed consent forms, and the interviews began.

Students interviewed individually during Round Two were asked to respond to nine questions designed to explore and confirm themes that emerged during Round One small group interviews. For each of the nine questions, the interviewer stated the questions and asked the student to respond, probing for more information or asking for clarification when appropriate. The interviewer briefly summarized the student's response to each question and gave the student an opportunity to add information before going on to the next question. Nearly all students had time to respond to each of the nine questions. Whenever time permitted, the interviewer summarized the student's responses and asked if he or she would like to add anything before closing the interview. Interviews usually lasted 20 minutes.

The researcher and trained interviewer took notes on special forms (Appendix I). Each interview was audiotaped as well. An individual interview summary form was completed after each interview (Appendix J). A number was assigned to each interview, and the student's grade and sex were written on the note sheets.

Survey

A survey was administered during Round Two to provide additional data to triangulate with the data collected in interviews. The results of the survey were triangulated with the data from the small group and individual interviews.

The Partners in Education Student Survey (PESS) designed by Dr. Jim Sweeney for high school students was completed in early 1994 (Appendix P). This instrument measures student engagement through the use of 65 items grouped into nine dimensions of student engagement with a 6-point Likert scale response ranging
from 1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree. The researcher also requested demographic data about respondents, including grade level, gender, and ethnicity. The nine dimensions and their reliability coefficients are listed in Table 3.1. Norms currently are unavailable, but RISE reports no problems with the reliability coefficients for the eight surveys in the database at the time of this writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Factor</th>
<th>Reliability Coefficient</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Work</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Orientation</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Relationships</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esprit</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the PESS for high school students became available, the researcher contacted the principal of Anycity High School to offer the opportunity to use the survey. He consented, provided that he could schedule the survey when it would be least intrusive. Five hundred copies of the survey were delivered to Anycity High School in April. The researcher requested that the surveys be administered to a cross-section of students. The survey was administered to 132 Anycity High School students during May. The principal asked teachers to volunteer to give students the survey. One day school teacher of geometry and introductory math and the night school teachers
volunteered to administer the survey. Sixty-two students in the day school teacher's classes completed the survey during class. These students were nearly evenly split among ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades; only one senior completed the survey. Seventy night school students volunteered to complete the survey as they finished their course work and left school for the year. It should be noted that 80 percent of these students failed to indicate their grade in school. The ethnicity of the 132 respondents is show in Table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage of Survey Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the 132 students who completed the survey may have been included in small group or individual interviews. Results of the survey are discussed in Chapter Four.

**Summary of Data Collection**

Data about the student culture were collected from several sources during the 17 days on which data were collected at Anycity High School. Students provided information through participation in small group or individual interviews and a survey. A total of 391 students, 22.4 percent of the AHS student population participated in the research study. Two hundred fifty-nine students were
interviewed: 225 students in small groups and 34 individually. In addition, 132 students responded to the PESS high school survey of student engagement. Observations of several events, physical scans of the building, and artifacts supplied valuable but less significant information about the student culture of Anycity High School.

Data Analysis

As stated earlier, data analysis begins with the researchers' entry into the research site. The formation of categories for analysis of qualitative data starts with the review of literature and the formation of the theoretical framework of the study. Data analysis for this study included qualitative data from the small group and individual interviews, observations, and artifacts as well as the statistical data from the survey. Qualitative and quantitative data were triangulated to provide the most complete picture for this study.

Qualitative Data Analysis Strategies

The qualitative data for this study included the student interview data recorded on newsprint and summaries from small group interviews, transcriptions and summaries from student individual interviews, notes from observations, and notes about artifacts. Small group interview newsprint data and individual interview transcriptions were recorded in numbered individual computer files on the word processing program Microsoft Word for analysis and coding. The researcher's field notes kept throughout the study were analyzed along with the other data.

Data from small group and individual interviews underwent an inductive process that analyzed individual pieces of data to identify connections among or common themes in the information. Words, phrases, or sentences which shared
common meanings were grouped and organized into categories. These categories were then labeled with words or phrases that explained the connection shared by the information within each group. This inductive process was first used with the small group data and then with the individual interview, observation, and artifact information. The addition of each source of data provided a check to see if the new generalizations supported those from data previously analyzed. The inductive procedure began when each data source became available and continued until all data had been analyzed.

Round One

Small Group Interviews

Round One small group data were intended to provide the researcher with information about the common ways of thinking among AHS students and the student culture (overarching ways of thinking among students). The transcripts of the Round One small group interviews were analyzed by inductively sorting individual concepts within each transcript. Data had been recorded on newsprint in phrases or single words volunteered by student participants. These words and phrases were recorded in a separate computer file for each group as a separate line followed by a return for the word processing software to recognize as a paragraph, an individual piece of information. A transcript of each small group's responses was printed. When all small group data had been transcribed, the researcher read all of the printed transcripts and made a list of descriptive labels that the data suggested. A total of 48 such labels emerged (Appendix Q).

A number, such as "1/" was placed at the beginning of each piece of data to indicate the prompt or question asked to generate the data. Small letters indicating the type of interview group, gender, and grade level of each group tagged each piece
of data with demographic information (Appendix R). For example, "1/acipl15." means that the prompt, "Around here, students . . . " elicited the data from small group ("a") of mixed ethnicity ("c"), all male ("i"), and mixed grade levels ("p"). The small group was number 15. When all pieces of data had been marked for question and group information, the researcher merged the data using Microsoft Word's "Cut" and "Paste" commands and prepared to add descriptive labels.

The researcher read the first piece of data and selected a category. A label, such as "TEACHER," which described the essence of this first piece of data, was inserted after the question number, such as "1/TEACHER/acipl15." The researcher then read the rest of the data and tagged similar pieces of data with the same label. Then the next piece of unmarked data was read and labeled. Again, the rest of the unmarked data was read and marked with the second category. This process continued until all data had been labeled. Data which fit more than one category were duplicated and labeled with all applicable descriptions. Notes, such as "*reason," were placed at the end of data pieces needing clarification. The information was printed when this marking was complete. Round One small group data and Round Two small group data were coded and sorted separately.

The software's "Sort" command was then used to group the data by categories. A hard copy of the small group interview data sorted by category was printed. The researcher then reviewed these categories to determine whether categories needed to be expanded or collapsed in order to best describe the data. As a result, 26 categories emerged (Appendix S).

Round One student small group interview data were analyzed, coded, and categorized first in the analysis process. When this part of the analysis was completed, patterns in the data were studied, and a decision was made to use the
small group interview data categories in the analysis of the other Round One data sources: individual student interviews, observations, and artifacts. However, conflicting information and new data categories also were sought when analyzing the other data sources.

Of course, the review of literature and the theoretical framework for this study suggested categories appropriate for analysis of data. These categories, which influenced the inductive process of determining descriptive labels for data during analysis, were compared to those that emerged naturally from the data in making inferences and drawing conclusions about the theoretical constructs of this study. Categories from the literature about student engagement include competence, caring, success, personal support, fairness, clarity of purpose, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, sense of ownership, connection to the "real world," and fun. Categories from the literature about organizational cultures include policies, rules, procedures, physical structures, schedules, opportunities for involvement, goals and mission, decision making, communicating, leading, monitoring, evaluating, and problem solving. Analysis of the data resulted in the use of the labels caring, fairness, and fun.

**Individual Interviews**

A secretary transcribed the audio tape of each Round One interview into an individual file in the computer word processing program, *Microsoft Word*. Each computer file contained the number of the student interview and the grade level and sex of the student interviewed. The secretary printed each interview and saved each one to a floppy disk for the researcher to code during analysis. An example of a transcribed individual interview is provided in Appendix T.
The computer transcripts of the Round One individual interview audiotapes were analyzed by coding and sorting big "chunks" of data, usually sentences or small paragraphs, within each transcript. These chunks of data were coded for identification and meaning, using the category labels that emerged from the small group data analysis. Several chunks of data were coded with more than one meaning category. When no audio tape was available, the researcher's notes were entered as a computer file and coded for identification and meaning.

Data from the individual interviews of students were used to validate and triangulate the student small group data. Transcripts of these interviews were analyzed using the categories that emerged from Round One small group interview analysis. Data incongruent with categories developed from small group data analysis were to be assigned to new groups, but none that had not already been categorized emerged.

Observations

Observation data was used in conjunction with small group interview data. Notes about each event were made on observation sheets and then analyzed separately. The categories that emerged from small group data analysis were used to analyze observation data. These categories were noted on the observation sheets and checked against the Round One small group interview data categories. The researcher looked for matches with the small group data categories and watched for observation categories that did not fit with the small group categories. Data incongruent with the categories derived from small group interviews were to be assigned new categories, but none emerged, so no new categories had to be added.
Artifacts

Artifacts were analyzed by looking for words and content that fit the identified small group data categories and that revealed themes and patterns of the students' culture. As each artifact was examined, salient data were recorded on a document analysis form (Appendix M). Notes were taken and coded by source and assigned categories identified in the small group interview analysis. Data different from the categories derived from small group interviews were to be given new categories, but none emerged, so no new categories were needed.

Round Two

Small Group Interviews

Round Two small group interview data was intended to provide the researcher with insight into students' thinking about school and their culture. The transcripts of the Round Two small group interviews were analyzed in much the same way as the transcripts of Round One data. Data had been recorded on newsprint in phrases or single words volunteered by student participants. These words and phrases were recorded in a separate computer file for each group as a separate line followed by a return for the word processing software to recognize as a paragraph, an individual piece of information. The researcher read the transcript of each interview and coded the data in it by using a key word or phrase from the question or probe, such as GOOD for "What makes a good day at AHS?"

The researcher followed the same procedure for coding and sorting the Round Two small group interview data as she had used for Round One small group data.
Individual Interviews

Audiotapes of Round Two individual interviews again were transcribed by a secretary into an individual computer file on Microsoft Word. Each computer file contained the number of the student interview and the grade level and sex of the student interviewed. The secretary once more printed each interview and saved each one to a floppy disk for the researcher to code during analysis.

The researcher used the same procedure for coding Round Two computer transcripts as had been used to code Round One individual interview transcripts. Chunks of data, usually one to five sentences in length, within each transcript were coded for identification and meaning using category labels keyed to the questions. Some chunks of data were coded with more than one meaning category. When no audio tape was available, the researcher's notes were entered as a computer file and coded for identification and meaning.

Quantitative Data Analysis Strategies

Statistical techniques for data analysis were selected in accordance with the research questions. The survey data were analyzed using StatView (Version 4.0) for the Macintosh computer. This study included primarily descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and means.

Partners in Education Student Survey

A nine-dimension (student engagement, school membership, authentic work, sense of ownership, future orientation, peer relationships, esprit, student efficacy, and extra-curricular activities), 65-item survey using a 6-point Likert response ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree (Appendix P) was used to measure student engagement. These data provided a source of data to triangulate with the data gathered from the small group and individual student interviews.
Frequency distributions of the survey data were used to identify the percent of students responding at each point on the Likert scale and to compute the percent of students indicating agreement (a response of 4, 5, or 6) with the statements in the survey.

Analysis of the survey showed that day students' responses to the survey differed significantly from night students' responses on every item (Appendix U). Because the student culture of AHS is determined by the vast majority of students (1,600) who attend day school and the night students clearly are different, interview and survey data used to determine findings and implications of the study were based only on day students' responses. A series of tables including frequencies, means, and standard deviations for each of the items in the survey of day school students are included in Appendix V.

**Triangulation of Data Sources**

Triangulation, the focusing of several research methods on one point, was employed to strengthen the study's design. Triangulation of the study's different data sources assisted with validation and ensured that all research questions were addressed. The researcher examined the emergent patterns of each source of data to determine where there was commonalilty across the data sources, to ascertain reasons for the importance of cultural aspects, and to identify divergent ideas. Ways of thinking common to AHS students were identified primarily by triangulating data from small group interviews, individual interviews, and the PESS. Data from the observations, physical scans, and artifacts did not prove to be of key importance but contributed to the rich detail needed to form the most valid, reliable, and complete picture of the student culture of Anycity High School.
The categories identified in analysis of Round One data were important and were used to categorize Round One individual interview data. The triangulation of all sources also was used to identify other emergent cultural aspects and reasons the cultural aspects are important. Data from each source were examined for the ways in which they were congruent or not congruent with that from the small group interviews. The researcher used the different data sources to check for common themes and for new information that did not fit previously established categories. In addition, the different light of statistical data was focused on the dimensions of student engagement in the Anycity High School student culture. By focusing these different data sources and methods of analysis on the student culture of Anycity High School, the researcher was able to produce a rich description of the students' ways of thinking, the extent to which school membership and authentic work are present in the student culture, and the organizational systems factors that influence the student culture.

Preliminary findings and perceptions of the description of the student culture were shared with the principal and most of the teachers at a staff development workshop held during June 1994. This process enabled the researcher to validate preliminary conclusions.

Findings are presented in Chapter Four.

**Data Analysis Related to the Research Questions**

The research questions were addressed by using the data gathered during the study at Anycity High School. Table 3.3 depicts the research questions and the research techniques used to examine each question. A discussion of each research question and the research techniques follows.
Table 3.3 Research questions, theoretical factors, and research techniques used to examine each research question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Factor Examined</th>
<th>Small Group Interview</th>
<th>Individual Interview</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ways of Thinking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strength of Ways of Thinking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School Membership</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authentic Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student Culture</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Influence of Organization</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systems Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) What are the ways of thinking within the student culture of a large comprehensive high school?

2) What is the relative strength of specific ways of thinking within the student culture of a large comprehensive high school?

These two questions were addressed through small group and individual interviews of students during Round One of data collection; through the administration of the PESS; through observations of students in corridors, the cafeteria, the vice principals' offices, meetings, and assemblies; and through examination of artifacts, such as handbooks, the course offering guide, student
newspapers, and a yearbook. Analysis of this data established students' most pervasive and strongest ways of thinking at Anycity High School.

Cultural elements emerged from data gathered by interviewing students in small groups and individually. They were asked to respond to the prompt, "Around here, students . . ." These responses were coded (friends, academics, education, groups, pride, school spirit, teachers, caring, etc.) and sorted so that frequencies could be determined and supporting quotes could be located easily. The first list of cultural elements was analyzed and elements collapsed under one code. Like terms were grouped and given a code reflecting their meaning. The resulting list of 26 cultural elements (Appendix S) then was checked against notes from observations and artifact analysis. This comparison revealed that the observations and artifact analysis supported the cultural elements identified by students. No new cultural elements emerged from observations or artifact analysis.

The common (most pervasive) ways of thinking and their relative strength were determined by triangulating the open-ended interview data and the survey data. Using data from small group and individual transcripts, statements reflecting students' ways of thinking about the most frequently identified cultural elements were written. The frequency with which small group and individual students mentioned each way of thinking was recorded in a table. Percentages indicating the strength of each way of thinking were then added to the table. These percentages were computed from students' small group ratings of the strength of cultural elements' on a 1-5 scale. The percentages represent students giving the cultural element a score of 3 (somewhat strong), 4 (strong), or 5 (very strong.). Then the PESS data were examined to determine which survey statements and results supported the statements of the common ways of thinking. This method of
triangulation was used to determine if the survey data, which measures concepts determined a priori, corroborated the statements of the ways of thinking, which emerged inductively from the open-ended interviews. Those statements from the survey that very closely matched the sentiments expressed in the ways of thinking statements were determined to support the ways of thinking. These survey statements were added to the table with their percentages. Five common ways of thinking emerged from the interview data, and three were found to be supported by survey statements and responses. The five common ways of thinking within the AHS student culture are discussed in Chapter Four.

3) To what extent are school membership and authentic work present in the student culture of a large comprehensive high school?

School membership and authentic work are factors that influence student engagement in academic work, a component of school culture. Quantitative data from the PESS provided evidence of the extent to which school membership and authentic work are found in the student culture of Anycity High School. Percentages of students who responded at each point on the survey's Likert scale, 1-6, were calculated for all statements in the dimensions of school membership and authentic work. School membership percentages for each scale point were placed on a continuum with 1 being the endpoint "disconnected" and 6 being the endpoint "connected." Scores of 4, 5, or 6 are considered connected. Scores of 1, 2, or 3 are considered disconnected. Authentic work percentages for each scale point were placed on a continuum with 1 being the endpoint "contrived" and 6 being the endpoint "real world." Scores of 4, 5, or 6 are considered real world. Scores of 1, 2, or 3 are considered contrived. Interview data concerning the type of schoolwork students called interesting was examined and included when it was found to
support the authentic work survey data. Interview data were analyzed to see if students' perceptions supported the school membership and authentic work survey results. Quotes illustrating the thinking of students who reported they are disconnected or connected, and who report that their work is contrived or that they engage in real world work were selected.

4) What is the student culture of a comprehensive high school?

The student culture of AHS was described by examining the five common ways of thinking to develop a picture of the "essence" of the student culture and to determine the connections among the ways of thinking. The student culture is conceptualized as a web comprised chiefly of threads representing the five common ways of thinking. Quotes from student interviews were selected to support and explain students' thinking about their culture.

5) To what extent do organizational system factors influence the student culture of a comprehensive high school?

The extent to which organizational factors influence the AHS student culture was established by analyzing data from Rounds One and Two small group and individual interviews. Analysis was guided by the organizational systems model described in Chapter Two. Frequencies were established for each organizational influence identified. Quotes from student interviews were selected to support and explain students' thinking about the influences on their culture.
CHAPTER IV. REPORT OF FINDINGS

This chapter reports the findings from a research study of the student culture of a comprehensive urban high school. Findings are presented in conjunction with the research questions which guided the study.

Research Questions One and Two

What are the common ways of thinking within the student culture of a large comprehensive high school?
What is the relative strength of specific ways of thinking within the student culture of a large comprehensive high school?

The organizational culture reflects the extent to which certain assumptions (common ways of thinking) are shared across all units of the culture, even though subgroups (subcultures) may hold variations of these assumptions (Schein, 1992, p. 12). Anycity High School does have a student culture. Data gathered in small group and individual interviews and on the Partners in Education Student Survey (PESS) from students representing all grade levels, both genders, and the major ethnic groups, indicate that students at Anycity High School share some common ways of thinking.

These common ways of thinking within the Anycity High School (AHS) student culture emerged from the student interview data. The most pervasive ways of thinking were those comments and sentiments noted with sufficient frequency to be categorized as a common way of thinking. The relative strength of each of the ways of thinking was determined by the percentage of students who rated the strength of each way of thinking a 3 (somewhat strong), 4 (strong), or 5 (very strong) in small group interviews. When the most pervasive and strongest ways of thinking
among students at AHS were identified, they were triangulated with the survey data. The survey statements and responses were examined to determine whether any of them supported the common ways of thinking. Three of the five most pervasive and strongest ways of thinking were found to be supported by student responses to survey statements with the triangulation approach.

Students at AHS identified five common ways of thinking, with the most pervasive listed first: 1) Having friends at school is important; 2) Getting involved in school makes a difference; 3) We have a reason to come here; 4) Our school pride, traditions, and school spirit make us unique; and 5) Supporting each other makes a difference. Each of the five common ways of thinking are described below. The way of thinking is provided in underlined type. The evidence for the way of thinking that was identified in interview responses includes a frequency response, a percentage, explanation of concepts when appropriate, individual quotes that represent the thinking of many students, and, when appropriate, percentages of survey responses that support the way of thinking.

Table 4.1 shows the five common ways of thinking and their relative strengths with survey item percentages. The extent of each way of thinking is reflected by column two: the frequency (F) with which students listed each way of thinking in interviews. The relative strength of each way of thinking is shown in the third column: the percentage (Pi) of students who rate the way of thinking in small group interviews. The percentage of students (Ps) for survey items that identify the pervasiveness and strength of each way of thinking are shown in the fourth column.

We need to have friends in school. The importance of having friends at school is the most pervasive (F=56) and strongest (Pi=97.8) way of thinking among
Table 4.1 Common ways of thinking and relative strength with supporting survey items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Ways of Thinking and Supporting Survey Items</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P_i</th>
<th>P_s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=91</td>
<td>N=72</td>
<td>N=62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need to have friends at school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting involved in school makes a difference.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have a reason to come here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 6: The purpose of this school is to help students learn.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our pride, traditions, and school spirit make us unique.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 45: I am proud of this school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 47: There is enough school spirit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting each other makes a difference.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 18: Teachers and other adults in this school will help you deal with home or personal problems.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 20: Teachers treat me with respect.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 21: My teachers care about me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 22: In this school you are treated like you are important.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 41: Students help each other succeed in school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey percentages (P_s) reflect the number of students agreeing with survey statements by assigning each one a 4 (somewhat agree), 5 (agree), or 6 (strongly agree).

Students at AHS. Over 40 percent of the students interviewed in small groups indicated that the importance of having friends is very strong. The student who observed, *Friends are the main thing*,1 expresses this powerful way of thinking best. Interview responses dramatically exhibit students' need to have friends. One interviewee noted that *everybody wants friends, you know, everyone feels better when they*

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1 Phrases in italics represent quotes from students interviewed.
see someone they know. I mean, school wouldn’t talk if there’s no friends, you know, it’d just be boring. Students have a compelling need to belong that cuts across everything they do at school.

Several students described what having friends contributed to the school experience. In one student’s view, friends help with peer pressure and overlook mistakes and help you not to make them next time. Students also believe friends draw them to school and help them connect: They make class easier and help you get through the day. The overriding sentiment about having friends at school is that it [school] wouldn’t be fun if you didn’t have any friends. Some students, however, observed that the need to have friends sometimes competed with schoolwork for students’ time and attention or put them at odds with school rules, saying, Some people come to school to see friends and don’t learn, and if you get in a bad crowd, you can get in trouble. No survey statements specifically addresses the importance of having friends at school.

A significant aspect of the AHS students’ way of thinking about the importance of having friends is related to cliques. Students in interviews noted (F=12) the existence of many cliques, or social groups of students at AHS and talked about the power of cliques to include or exclude and to comfort or to hurt. Several students in small groups noted that cliques make it easier to fit in, but pointed out that when you are new, it is hard to fit in. No one will talk to you or sit with you. It’s up to the new person to make the first move. Students said that cliques are based on established friendships; interests, particularly if extracurricular activities are involved; popularity; and ethnicity. One student reported that the cliques have a historical origin: People have always been friends, back in junior high. Interests are another reason students listed for the existence of cliques: People in sports tend to hang together. Popular students, including student leaders and athletes, tend to find each
other. One student noted that *Popularity is important. People want to fit in, and they care what others think.* Some of the cliques at AHS are the result of ethnic grouping. One student observed that *the black students and Asian students stand around together in the halls before school and at lunch.* Another student commented on the difference between cliques at AHS: *Most people are friends with all groups, but sometimes there's prejudice between groups.* A different student said, *There are cliques, but they don't hate each other and fight,* supporting the idea that the existence of cliques does not create open conflict at AHS.

In summary, the most pervasive and strongest sentiment among students at AHS is, "We need to have friends at school." The need for friends supports or hinders students. Students at AHS are keenly aware of the cliques in their school and their power to make school engaging or unpleasant.

**Getting involved in school makes a difference.** Students at AHS perceive that getting involved in school activities benefits both students and the school (F=32). This way of thinking is strong; 83.1 percent of those reporting in small groups rate the importance of involvement "somewhat strong," "strong," or "very strong." Nearly 25 percent of students rated this mindset very strong. Even more important, those students who did not rate this way of thinking strong provided comments supporting its importance. Participating in athletics, fine arts activities, clubs, and student government, and attending activities to show support are ways that students get involved at AHS. AHS students reported several benefits of getting involved in school. One student pointed out, *you make friends that way.* Another student noted the important connection between participating in activities and feeling positive about school: *Kids need to get involved so they like school.* Another student explained that participating in school activities *teaches you how to get along*
with other people, and you need that when you get older. Students also report that there are personal rewards to be derived from involvement. In one interviewee's words, *Getting involved is important, so you can be recognized and have fun. Join clubs.*

*Involvement helps you open up. It's a reason to come to school.* A different student felt that involvement in school activities means that *you show your abilities to your peers and are more confident.*

Some students expressed awareness of the reciprocal nature of student involvement in school activities, pointing out that student participation is good for the school. One student observed about the school's public image, *Students like to have a good reputation for the school. Sports, debate, swimming are ways to do this.*

Another student recognized the power of student involvement in promoting mutual understanding among students: *Involvement helps control racism, like in the play the Multicultural Club is doing. Students won't tolerate racism here.* An active junior connected student involvement with the school's image and with forming friendships:

Well, they want, if you want to make your school great, you need to be involved.

*Student government is really, is a big part. . . . We do fund raisers where you get the school involved, like the canned food drive. . . . The more you get involved, the more easier, it's easier for you to make friends.*

Students believe that getting involved helps the school and benefits students.

Survey statements concerning peer relationships did not express the same sentiments that students identified in this way of thinking and could not be used for triangulation.

In summary, many AHS students strongly believe that getting involved in their school makes a difference. They note that involvement helps them and benefits
the school as well. They like school more, earn recognition, and make friends while helping to create a positive public image of the school.

We come here for a reason. AHS students talked frequently about the importance of having a purpose for coming to school, about accomplishing something while they're at AHS (F=32). More than 80 percent of students interviewed in small groups rated this way of thinking "somewhat strong" or "strong." Students at AHS have a sense that there is a "bottom line" or an end in sight to their education, but that reason or purpose varies. Some students are concerned with the importance of "getting an education," others report the importance of graduating, some are preparing for college, and still others express a need to earn a diploma to get a job. One student described the value of a diploma:

Some students want to be something. Jobs that pay decent are closed if you don't have a diploma.

Many students connected their academic efforts with earning graduation, with winning college scholarships, and with having a good life. One student reported that every kid cares about grades, some more than others. A different student noted, Some students don't realize how important academics are till they're juniors or seniors, but they really are important to all students. Another student indicated that, Lots of people care about academics. . . . AHS has a good share of smart people and straight 'A' students. We worry about the future, about college, especially seniors. Yet another student noted that rewards are a reason to come to AHS: Everyone wants a good education to go to college. Grades are important. If you get a 3.6 [GPA] two semesters in a row, you get a letter. We want good jobs, a good life, money. Some students' reasons for coming to AHS are complex, involving more than one reason. One student's words communicate these students' thinking about attending AHS: Trying for good grades is
important so you can get a good job, get into college, stay on sports teams—to prove to yourself and others that you can make it.

Eighty-four percent of the students surveyed agreed with the statement, "The purpose of this school is to help students learn." This response is interesting when the explanation of this way of thinking is considered. Students' interview statements indicate that they come to AHS to get an education, graduate, prepare for college, earn a diploma to get a job, or even to get good grades, but their statements do not focus on learning or engagement in academic work.

In summary, many AHS students widely believe there is a reason for attending school. Their reasons vary by student but include getting an education, graduating, preparing for college, and needing a diploma to get a job. The survey shows that students agree that the purpose of AHS is to help students learn, an interesting response in light of students' explanation of this way of thinking.

Our pride, traditions, and school spirit make us unique. Students believe that pride, tradition, and school spirit are important at AHS (F=28); these things set the school apart from other high schools. While this way of thinking is not as pervasive as the previous three, it is strong among those students who hold it; more than 95 percent of students interviewed in small groups rated this way of thinking "somewhat strong," "strong," or "very strong." Nearly 32 percent believe this way of thinking to be very strong. One junior described a sentiment held by many about the importance and uniqueness of school pride at AHS:

Kind of gives their school character. Our school is like known for our pride and how we support each other in almost everything we do. It's just really, I think it's really important to show it, 'cause I have friends from different schools, and they sit there
and talk about how bad their school is and how they don't like it, and I sit there, I just love my school! [student emphasis].

Students listed several important and unique AHS traditions that have "always been that way." A specific point of pride and major source of tradition is the AHS Alumni Association. As one student said, We have a lot of Anycity High pride, a lot. 'Cause like our Alumni Association is like the biggest in the nation, and, I mean, once you graduate from AHS, you're like, I don't know, you take pride in it. Other specific traditions mentioned repeatedly in interviews were participating in Homecoming Week dress-up days, holding "awesome" pep rallies for athletic events, wearing red and black on Fridays, and sitting on the senior bench outside the counselors' offices on the main floor of the building.

Students also see school spirit as an important part of their culture. One student's insight explains the relationship among students' pride, athletic success, and the perceived negative public perception of AHS. Pride in our school is important. We're proud to go to AHS. We want to see the teams be good and support them so we give AHS a good name, because people think AHS is bad and this side of town is bad. The negative school image becomes a motivator for students. Students see school spirit and athletics as intertwined. A senior commented that there's just a lot of school spirit, you know, like football games, . . . you will sell a crowd, you know. Pep assemblies are always fired up, everything. That's school spirit, you know, people always have AHS sweaters on or AHS sweatshirts on or something that has AHS on it every day. Students perceive school spirit to be strong despite the teams' general lack of athletic success. A senior observed, I think our school has a great amount of school spirit. I really do. I mean, our football team isn't the best, but even though it isn't, I mean, I can see lots of students. Maybe they don't come to watch the game . . . .
Students' responses to two statements on the survey support the perception that there is great pride in their school. Over 87 percent of the students agree with the statement, "I am proud of this school", and 75 percent of the students surveyed report there is enough school spirit at AHS.

To summarize, students at AHS believe their pride, tradition, and school spirit make the school unique. The belief is very strong. The sentiment that the public perceives AHS negatively may have resulted in an underdog mentality and pride in their school. Involvement in activities offers students the opportunity to show pride and school spirit in order to combat the negative public image. Students surveyed say they are proud of their school and believe there is enough school spirit.

Supporting each other makes a difference. The perception that AHS provides a supportive and caring environment for students was expressed often (F=20). This way of thinking was rated "somewhat strong," "strong," or "very strong" by 77.4 percent of the students participating in small group interviews. Students described teacher caring, a family or team feeling, respect for and from teachers, freedom with responsibility, and openness with each other as factors contributing to a supportive environment. One student noted that you get the feeling that you are supported no matter what here. Friends care. Teachers care. Other students described teachers and the principal as really caring about students. An example they provided was talking with them outside school. One student offered another example of caring teachers: Ninth grade teachers ask seniors if they are keeping their grades up and if they are going on to college.

Several students spoke about a special feeling of belonging and support that is important. One student reported that the feeling is about everyone helping everyone, about caring for the "family" at AHS, and about lots of students feeling close to teachers.
Another student described being comfortable and knowing everyone as an *Anycity High feeling* that she experienced when a classmate died during the school year. She noted that because of the feeling, *There's no place I'd rather be.*

Students also feel supported because they are given freedom such as open lunch and are treated with respect. One student said it well: *Teachers treat us like adults. . . . There's a big difference from middle school. Teachers expect students to act mature. Teachers expect to be treated with respect and then they'll respect us.* Another student reported that *everyone gets listened to here.* Students also appreciate other students' being open and honest as a sign of respect. One noted that *many students are open about themselves.* Another student indicated, *Being friendly is important. You need to respect other people here. Think before you tell people what you think of them.*

Perceptions about the importance of AHS having a supportive environment are supported by students' responses to several statements on the survey. More than 70 percent of survey respondents agree that "teachers and other adults in this school will help you deal with home or personal problems." Over 80 percent of the students surveyed agree that their teachers treat them with respect, and 72.5 percent agree that their teachers care about them. Over 60 percent of the respondents agree that they are treated as important in their school. Nearly 60 percent of students surveyed agree that they help each other succeed in school.

In summary, students who point out the common way of thinking that supporting each other makes a difference at AHS are emphatic and emotional. This way of thinking is somewhat strong and is an important part of the student culture although not as pervasive as the other four ways of thinking. Students believe that teachers' caring, a family or team feeling, respect for and from teachers, freedom with responsibility, and an openness with each other help create a supportive
environment at AHS. The survey supports students' feelings that the staff at AHS will help them deal with problems, that their teachers care about them, and that they are treated like they are important at AHS.

To summarize the findings for the first two research questions, five common ways of thinking within the student culture of Anycity High School were identified and explained. The pervasiveness of each way of thinking was indicated by distribution frequencies for the way of thinking, and the strength was determined by the percentage of students who rated the way of thinking a 3 (somewhat strong), 4 (strong), or 5 (very strong) in small group interviews. Most pervasive and strongest listed first, the common ways of thinking among students at AHS are: 1) We need to have friends at school; 2) Getting involved in school makes a difference; 3) We have a reason to come here; 4) Pride in our school, our traditions, and our school spirit make us unique; and 5) Supporting each other makes a difference. These ways of thinking indicate that the AHS student culture is strong and positive.

Research Question Three

To what extent are school membership and authentic work present in the student culture of a large comprehensive high school?

The extent to which school membership and authentic work are present in the student culture of Anycity High School was derived by determining the extent to which students agreed or disagreed with the statements in the Partners in Education Student Survey (PESS) measuring the dimensions of school membership and authentic work (Appendix V). Survey data were used to address this research question because the PESS is designed to assess the concepts of school membership and authentic work as defined by Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn (1992). All students completing the survey responded to the same set of statements, which
describe various aspects of each concept. Small group and individual interviews provided data that support and explain the concepts of school membership and authentic work rather than determine their extent in the student culture.

School membership reflects students' sense of belonging to their school. School membership is influenced by clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, success, and a caring environment. Students' responses to the school membership dimension statements on the PESS were placed on a continuum having one endpoint as "disconnected" (a score of 1 on the survey) and the other endpoint as "connected" (a score of 6 on the survey). Scores of 4, 5, or 6 are considered connected. Scores of 1, 2, or 3 are considered disconnected.

The extent of school membership at Anycity High School is shown in Figure 4.1, which provides a frequency distribution of students' responses to survey statements about school membership. The following conclusions can be drawn from Figure 4.1: 1) The extent to which students report a sense of school membership is spread across the continuum. There are students at AHS who are disconnected and others who report they are very connected to their school; 2) Using 3.5 as the midpoint of the continuum, the responses of 71 percent of the AHS students surveyed fall above the midpoint. These students report that they are connected to their school; and 3) Using 3.5 as the midpoint of the continuum, the responses of about 28 percent of the AHS students surveyed fall below the midpoint. These students surveyed report that they are disconnected from their school.

Interview data provide students' quotes which support the survey data and explain students' thinking about school membership. Several students who were interviewed expressed a strong sense of school membership. One student connected a feeling of belonging with getting involved, having fun, having
opportunities, and meeting friends: *It's important to get involved. So you can have fun, be with more people. There are lots of opportunities--sports, student government, clubs, National Honor Society. It goes hand-in-hand with friends. You meet most of them in activities, the true ones.* Teacher caring is an element of school membership that students feel connects them to school. One student said of teachers' treatment of students, *I think they're very understanding. And they care a lot about you, even if you*
don’t think they do. Deep down, people do know that they do care about you. And they’re always there for you.

Several students reported feeling a sense of family at AHS. One student expressed their ideas well:

Well, what makes us unique is... as a group, we are one. It’s, I mean, they’ll back you up and everything. That’s one thing AHS is, ’cause I’ve visited other schools and it’s not like that. It’s , it’s people off in their own little, you know, it’s just different. . . . AHS is a whole. I mean, they back you up. They give you encouragement. . . . We’ve had two deaths this year. . . . Enemis became friends again . . . . I mean, everybody just came together, and that, that just shows, in my opinion, that just showed unity here.

Finally, another student described a feeling of satisfaction and “fitting in”: It’s a good school. I mean, I wouldn’t want to go anywhere else, just because I’ve been here for four years and I’m used to everything.

Some students who were interviewed did not feel a sense of school membership. They report feeling disconnected. One student described the difficulty of being new and trying to find a group of friends at AHS:

I’ve been here for, since the beginning of school, and, I don’t know, people just don’t, I don’t know, they’re not friendly, but like they don’t really try to get to know, ’cause they already have their own group and stuff, you know, so they don’t really make much of an effort to try to get to know new people.

Another student also identified the groups as a factor that separates students: There are certain groups here. Not everybody gets along. It’s positive if you’re in one [a clique] but negative if you’re left out or there’s cultural bias. Some students identified school procedures that get in the way of feeling like a part of the school. One student went
so far as to say students drop out because school is boring. *It's [AHS is] no fun. We just get down to business. I don't like the hall monitors. People don't make it fun to be here. That's why students drop out of school.* A few students feel excluded from decision making. One student who felt excluded from leadership believed that the staff members in charge of student organizations had favorites: *Sometimes I don't feel like I have any say in anything because it's basically the class officers that are making everything up, you know.* She went on to say that class officers had a great deal of influence and offered this response to a question about how she could have more "say": *I'm not quite sure. 'Cause sometimes I feel that part of... the vice principals are like, I feel that they're all on conspiracy or something, not anything like that, but just that some of them have their favorites . . . .*

Authentic work influences student engagement and is a function of extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, sense of ownership, connection to the "real world," and fun. Students' responses to the authentic work dimension statements on the PESS were placed on a continuum having one endpoint as "contrived" (1) and the other endpoint as "real world" (6). Scores of 4, 5, or 6 are considered real world. Scores of 1, 2, or 3 are considered contrived.

The extent of authentic work at Anycity High School is shown in Figure 4.2, which provides a frequency distribution of students' responses to survey statements about authentic work. The following conclusions can be drawn from Figure 4.2: 1) The extent to which students report being involved in authentic work is spread across the continuum. There are students at AHS who are involved in contrived work and others who report they are very involved in real world work; 2) Using 3.5 as the midpoint of the continuum, the responses of over 63 percent of the AHS students surveyed fall above the midpoint. These students report that they
Figure 4.2 The extent of authentic work at Anycity High School
1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Somewhat Disagree
4=Somewhat Agree  5=Agree  6=Strongly Agree

are involved in real world work; and 3) Using 3.5 as the midpoint of the continuum, the responses of about 37 percent of the AHS students surveyed fall below the midpoint. These AHS students describe their schoolwork as contrived.

Interview data provide students' quotes which support and explain the survey results. Some students who were interviewed feel that the work they do in
school is connected to the real world. One student described communications skills he learns at school as useful in his job:

O.K., because I work at the mall and when I'm at school I have to talk to people, you know, for working on an assignment with someone we have to communicate, and I'm, and so I'm at the mall trying to make a sale. I have to communicate with someone.

Another student described group skills he learned at school as good preparation for work. Getting ready for the work force is important. Bosses want to know if you can work with people. Students are individually accountable when they work in groups. Other students talked about having fun in the classroom, a factor that influences student engagement: My algebra teacher calls a test a party. Shoot, we come into class on Fridays and she has the music going and a big sign up and balloons and stuff.

Students in interviews who report the work they do as less than authentic describe a variety of reasons that they feel their work is contrived. One student described the difference between students who care about school and those who don't. Most kids don't learn much here. You learn on your own. There's a difference between educating and graduating. Some kids don't care [about getting an education]. Some students only pass the courses they like. Another student commented on not feeling rewarded for good work: If you get it done, you do [feel rewarded], if you don't, there's nothing that's going to happen. I've seen half the people in my class that don't do their work, and I do my work and try, and we get basically the same grades. I don't understand how that works. Still other students reported a lack of fun. One interviewee who was asked if there was fun at school responded, At school? No, I don't think so. . . . All you do is go to classes and sports. Finally, some students report that schoolwork, rather than being important at the present, might be useful later: Well, for me, I see it basically just that what I learn here at school in most of my classes
would be useful towards college, but then after that, I really don't connect it too much with like the real world, say.

To summarize, the extent of school membership and authentic work in the AHS student culture were measured through student responses to statements in these two dimensions on the PESS. Students' school membership scores were placed on a continuum having one endpoint as disconnected and the other endpoint as connected. Disconnected students who were interviewed associate the absence of a sense of belonging with being new and not being able to find a group, with not having fun, and with not feeling popular. Connected students describe getting involved, having fun, meeting friends, and feeling a sense of family at AHS.

Students' authentic work scores were placed on a continuum having one endpoint as contrived and the other endpoint as real world. Students who feel they do work that is contrived describe not caring, feeling unrewarded for what they perceive to be good work, and having no fun in class. Those students who believe they are doing real world work report that things they learn in class help them on the job and that teachers make class fun.

Distribution frequencies show that the student engagement factors of school membership and authentic work are distributed through all points on the continuum. Over 70 percent of students surveyed feel they are connected to their school. Over 60 percent of students surveyed feel they are engaged in real world work at AHS. Quotes from student interviews support and explain survey responses that were categorized as disconnected and connected. Likewise, quotes from student interviews support and explain survey responses that were categorized as reflecting involvement in contrived work and real world work.
Research Question Four

What is the student culture of a comprehensive high school?

The student culture of Anycity High School was derived by integrating previous findings into a "coherent whole," the overarching pattern or ways of thinking common to students at Anycity High School. The whole reflects the "essence" of the student culture in the school (Schein, p. 10).

AHS's student culture is conceptualized as a web. The five common ways of thinking are the major threads of this web. These five threads are: 1) Having friends at school is important; 2) Getting involved in school makes a difference; 3) We have a reason to come here; 4) Our pride, traditions, and school spirit make us unique; and 5) Supporting each other makes a difference. The threads interconnect with each other to weave a pattern that is the "essence" of the AHS student culture. The essence of the student culture is described first, followed by a description of each thread and the main connections.

The AHS student culture is stable, strong and positive in nature. The student culture also is supportive, involving, and purposeful. It promotes pride and loyalty, and is rooted in tradition. The strength is reflected in students' agreement about the importance of the ways of thinking that are the threads of the web. Students indicated over 75% agreement with three of the threads and over 95% agreement with the other two threads. The positive aspect of the culture is evident in the nature of the students' ways of thinking. The supportive environment created by caring teachers and friends at school makes students feel comfortable and contributes to a sense of unity. Students feel having friends makes school interesting and helps them fit in. They believe that getting involved in school activities rewards them and promotes a positive image for the school. Students also feel that coming to
school is worthwhile; some attend to earn diplomas to get jobs; others want to excel academically and win college scholarships. The sense of uniqueness students attribute to their pride, traditions, and school spirit centers on overcoming the negative public image of the school. What all these threads create is a meaningful pattern of thinking that draws students to AHS for positive reasons.

The overarching meaning that the AHS student culture provides for many students very much reflects the meaning embodied in the concept of family. The most pervasive characteristics of the student culture—stability, strength, positive nature, supportiveness, involvement, purposefulness, pride, loyalty, and tradition—also are those of an effective family. Many students feel connected to the school through the AHS "extended family." Several students proudly listed family members—brothers and sisters, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents—who had attended AHS. Many of these people, who are often a generation or two older than the AHS students, still live in the _____ Township area. As noted previously, students are encouraged to develop lifelong loyalty to AHS through the Alumni Association. One student described the pride in this connection: Once you graduate from AHS, you're like, I don't know, you take pride in it. Several interviewees recently had helped serve the annual Alumni Dinner, which a thousand graduates had attended.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the familial student culture at AHS is the sense of unity students feel. One senior expresses this feeling well:

Well, what makes us unique is... as a group, we are one. It's, I mean, they'll back you up and everything. That's one thing that AHS is, 'cause I've visited other schools and it's not like that. It's, it's people off in their own little, you know, it's just different. And I have friends from other schools that I've talked to about it, and
that's one thing about AHS. AHS is a whole. I mean, they back you up. They give you encouragement. Like for instance, the basketball team aren't, they're not doing that well this year, but everybody supports them. I mean, everybody still goes to the games and they're still standing behind them. So, I mean, as a group they, they have a lot of spirit.

Interviewer: Why do you have a school that really puts it together?

I just think it's, it's the tradition of Anycity High School. I mean, that's something that the teachers, I've noticed the teachers have pounded in, you know, pounded in our heads as freshmen, and when you look at, you know, when I was a ninth grader and tenth grader, I looked up to the upperclassmen, and they always went to the pep assemblies. They were always, you know, into the school, into that kind of thing, you know, buying the, the little Anycity High pins and the, you know, the little knick knacks, you know, to support the school and I, then just little things, I mean, that just brings you together, you know, you can count on somebody here. Like I say, we've had deaths. This is something else that I just thought of. We've had two deaths this year. We had a teacher, and that didn't affect the students as much, but the students were there for the teachers. The teachers were really upset about it, and I noticed in all the classes. Some of the teachers were hugging the students, and that just shows unity there. Well then... a real popular girl died, and everybody was just there for each other. Enemies became friends again. I mean, just everybody just came together, and that, that just shows, that's, in my opinion, that just showed the unity there.

Despite all the positive aspects of its familial nature, if this school is to promote excellence, the AHS student culture web is missing a critical thread. While students report that they come to school to earn a diploma, get good grades, or win a college scholarship, they did not indicate that learning and academic engagement
are reasons to come to school. The thread that represents a way of thinking that promotes learning, engagement, and achievement is missing from the web. While the web creates meaning for students, and the meaning is strong and positive, without the learning and engagement thread, the student culture just exists. The web (culture) has positive elements but does not truly support excellence in student achievement. The student culture is not focused on learning and student achievement or engagement; the web is not as effective as it should be.

The implications of this missing thread and recommendations for spinning and weaving it into the AHS web are described in Chapter Five. Following is a description of how the five major threads connect to form the pattern of the web described above. The characteristics of each thread also are described.

The AHS student culture web has close connections among the threads representing students' mindsets that "Having friends at school is important," that "Getting involved makes a difference," and that "We have a reason for being at school." For AHS students, friends provide the primary reason to be in school. In turn, school offers students activity opportunities to make new friends and be with established friends. Also, by getting involved in school activities, students find another reason to come to school and develop a strong sense of school membership. The cultural thread representing students' way of thinking, "Our pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique," connects with the three threads already discussed. Students at AHS believe that involvement opportunities generate and support pride and school spirit and nurture tradition. Another thread representing students' way of thinking that "Supporting each other makes a difference" also connects with the strong section of the web formed by the first three threads. Friends and staff members provide support for students--especially students on
teams, in clubs, and with performing groups—and demonstrate pride and school spirit. This supportive atmosphere reinforces students' way of thinking that they have a reason for being at school.

The thread representing AHS students' compelling way of thinking that they need to have friends at school anchors the web. This powerful need to belong pervades every aspect of students' school lives. One student's observation about having friends at school illustrates the power of this way of thinking: We come to school to see friends. We care the most about friends. For students like the one quoted above, having friends provides a strong sense of school membership and gives them a reason to come to school.

AHS students see their friends as a very positive aspect of their school experience. Some students believe their friends help them cope with peer pressure and get through classes. One student explained the connection between having friends and feeling supported at school: Friends make it easy at school, when you need someone to talk to. They're there when the stress builds up. Many students feel that getting involved in school activities provides them with a way to have friends and gives them an opportunity to belong, to fit in with a group or clique. A student noted, We support each other. Athletic teams get supported. Kids who are involved in school stick up for each other. We're as one. . . . We need to be together. The opportunity to be with friends also increases the likelihood that students will participate in school activities. One student commented, If your friends are involved, you will be, too. Having friends at school makes many students feel supported, cared for, and important.

The cultural thread of getting involved in school is closely connected to the threads representing the ways of thinking "We need to have friends at school" and
"We have a reason to come to school". In addition, the involvement thread ties to the thread representing the "pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique" way of thinking. As noted previously, AHS students see getting involved in school activities as a way to make friends and as an opportunity to be with friends.

Participating in or attending school activities helps some students feel good about themselves and find a purpose in school. A student observed that involvement helps you open up. It's a reason to come to school. The involvement thread also connects with the thread, "Pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique." Students who get involved in school activities feel they show school spirit and create an identity for themselves. One student explained, It's how we show school spirit. So many kids go to school here, you're just a number if you don't get involved. Recognition and reward for their involvement make a difference to students. A student pointed out that people participate to be known, to be popular. Other students commented that participating in activities keeps students out of trouble and gives them something to do. One students' words express the strong link to school that students' involvement forges: Kids need to get involved so they like school.

Doing something for the school and community is an important part of the thread representing students' thinking about getting involved. One student commented that students like to have a good reputation for the school. Sports, debate, swimming are ways to do this. You want your school to be the best. Another student said that activities such as the Pep A Club's food drive help the community, not just the school, and give the school a good reputation. A different student could see that students' involvement in the Multicultural Club created a benefit reaching beyond contributing to a positive school image. The student said, Involvement helps control racism, as in the play performed by the Multicultural Club theater group. Students won't
tolerate racism here. Getting involved in school activities creates a second strong thread in AHS students' cultural web. This thread closely connects with the "We need to have friends at school" thread and the "We have a reason to be here" thread.

Another major thread in the AHS students' cultural web represents students' way of thinking, "We have a reason to come here." This sense of purpose contributes to students' feeling of connection to the school. For nearly all students, this purpose is strongly connected to having friends at school, as previously discussed. Also, having a reason to be in school ties closely to involvement. As noted above, students who participate in school activities see extracurricular activities as a reason for coming to school. Meetings, practices, performances, and competitions offer students opportunities to make new friends and be with established friends. Friends can encourage academic activities as well as extracurricular ones. One student commented, *Friends help on tough assignments--different people can help with different things.* For many students, the reasons for coming to school go beyond social needs. These students cite academic purposes, such as earning good grades and scoring well on college entrance exams as reasons to come to school. A student observed, *Getting good grades is important here. You have to study hard because college is not far away.* Other students have different academic reasons for being in school. They concentrate on earning enough credits to graduate, sometimes as quickly as possible. A student said, *Most people come to school, so it means something. . . . You don't want to be a bum.* Whether AHS students want to see friends, participate in extracurricular activities, or pursue academics, they say they have a reason for being in school. However, these reasons do not include coming to school to learn, to challenge themselves, or to work hard.
A fourth major thread represents students' way of thinking that "Pride, tradition, and school spirit make this school unique." The emotion that surrounds this way of thinking and makes it so effective in creating stability and a sense of belonging is evident in one student's words: *AHS is different than a lot of other schools. Where a lot of the schools have enthusiasm and excitement for being there, AHS has pride as well and a long standing tradition of involvement with the community. AHS is definitely one of a kind.* This thread is closely tied to the "getting involved makes a difference" thread. One student explained this connection clearly: *People like to get involved. It's a tradition--way back when AHS first started, sports made it what it is. AHS has a bad name, and sports are our way of getting rid of it.* This student added insight into the underdog philosophy that underpins students' thinking about their culture. Several students commented on what they perceived to be AHS's undeserved "bad reputation" and linked it to the reputation of the immediate community as a "bad place." They went on to say, as did this student, that they consider their participation in school activities to be a way to improve the school's public image. *Pride in our school is important. We're proud to go to AHS. We want to see the teams be good and support them so we give AHS a good name, because people think AHS is bad and the community is bad.* The negative public image often serves as a motivator and unifier, as one student explained: *The underdog image gets you up. It brings us together, to fight for our school. We don't have as good a spirit because lots of students are not involved. The Alumni Association is strong. If we're so bad, why do they come back?!* The underdog image gives students a reason to be involved in school activities and a focus for their academic and extracurricular efforts. They learn loyalty to AHS in the process. So, the cultural thread representing students' way of thinking that "Our
pride, traditions, and school spirit make us unique" also connects with the "We have a reason to come here" thread.

The fifth major thread in the AHS student culture web represents the students' way of thinking that "Supporting each other makes a difference." This thread connects closely to the "We need to have friends in school" thread and to the "Getting involved makes a difference" and "Pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique" threads. Many students express a sense of being supported by friends at AHS. The connection between the need to have friends in school and the importance of supporting each other has been discussed previously. An important aspect of the "Getting involved makes a difference" thread is the support students feel from teachers to participate in school activities. One student said that extracurricular participation is highly recommended by counselors. Another student commented that teachers and administrators . . . like to encourage the, the kids to like be in activities, like after school activities and stuff. Another source of support students feel is fellow students' attendance at performances, competitions, and pep assemblies. Pep assemblies were usually described as "awesome" and were mentioned often as a way for students to show support for school teams. Students described their awesome participation in homecoming week dress-up days as evidence of their support for school pride and school teams. They also pointed out that many teachers show their support of students' involvement by wearing red and black on Fridays. Pep assemblies, dress-up days, and teachers' wearing of red and black also link the "Supporting each other makes a difference" thread to the "Our pride, traditions, and school spirit make us unique" thread.

To summarize, the presentation of this finding has described the essence of the AHS student culture, which is conceptualized as a web created by the
connections among students' five common ways of thinking, or major threads. The overarching meaning that the AHS student culture provides for many students very much reflects that of a family. The best characteristics of the student culture—stability, strength, positive nature, supportiveness, involvement, purposefulness, pride, loyalty, and tradition—parallel those of a nurturing and supportive family. If the school wants to promote excellence, the AHS student culture web is missing a thread representing the importance of student learning, engagement, and achievement.

Research Question Five
To what extent do organizational systems factors influence the student culture of a comprehensive high school?

Research question five focuses on the influence of organizational systems factors on the student culture of Anycity High School. Examination of the small group and individual student interview data indicates that seven organizational systems factors influence the AHS student culture: 1) peer influence, 2) teacher influence, 3) involvement opportunities, 4) student leadership, 5) the school's mission, 6) the school's negative public image, and 7) the goal of increasing student attendance through implementing a new attendance policy. Findings are presented for each of the seven organizational systems factors and include an explanation of the organizational systems factor's influence on the AHS student culture, frequencies from student small group and individual interview data, and quotes from student interviews to support and explain the factors.

Study of the interview data reveals that peer influence has a powerful effect on the AHS student culture. Students in 13 of the 16 small groups reported peer relationships are important in their culture. They mentioned the positive influence
of having friends at school. Friends make school interesting, stand by them, and help them with schoolwork. Students in three of the same 16 small groups acknowledged that friends sometimes exert a negative influence. Friends compete with schoolwork for their attention and may get them in trouble. Another important element of peer influence is role models. At AHS, upperclassmen (juniors and seniors) serve as role models and "cultural transmitters" for younger students. Four of 21 small groups and one of 20 individuals interviewed reported the influence of upperclassmen. Students in the small groups, all composed of freshmen and sophomores, indicated they had been treated surprisingly well by upperclassmen. Two of these small groups noted that upperclassmen had been very helpful to them in "learning the ropes" at AHS when they were new. A junior commented on the role of upperclassmen in influencing the student culture: 

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when we were freshmen, we all looked up to the seniors. I think they were really involved, the senior class, when we were freshmen, real involved.
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Upperclassmen, from their perspective as "guardians of the school culture," hold a less positive view of the underclassmen. One small group of students and two individual interviewees expressed the sentiment that freshmen and sophomores did not give upperclassmen they respect they deserved and displayed undesirable behaviors. The same junior went on to express concerns, echoed by another individual and those in a small group: 

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I think that this year's freshmen class doesn't seem to be as involved even as we were.
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A senior observed that

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the kids coming up are a lot worse. Like most of the ninth graders smoke and it's, I think it has a little bit to do with it, their upbringing. They don't give, you know, anybody respect. Like when I was a ninth grader, the upperclassmen, you know, you
worshipped the upperclassmen. . . . Now, these kids, they don’t have any respect for anybody but themselves.

Upperclassmen believe they once were positively influenced by older students to become involved in school activities but see themselves now as exerting less positive influence on younger students, with the result being weaker or nonexistent school connections for some younger students.

The interview data suggest that teacher influence is an important organizational systems factor affecting the student culture of AHS. When students in 24 small groups were asked, "What makes a good day at AHS?", the responses with the greatest frequency were related to the teacher. Students in 16 small groups reported the teacher made a difference. They said such things as, *The teacher is in a good mood, When the teacher makes class fun, or The teacher praises me.* Interestingly, when students in the same small groups were asked, "What gets in the way of a good day?", the greatest frequency of responses again centered on the teacher. Students in 19 small groups said such things as, *Nagging teachers--when they have a bad day, everyone else does too! and Teachers, when they're grumpy and complain about things you have no control over, like they can't find the worksheets.* These responses suggest that students believe teachers' attitudes and behavior directly affect their own attitudes and behavior--positively or negatively. Further evidence of teachers' influence on the student culture comes from students' responses to a later question, "What makes interesting schoolwork?" Students most frequently report things that are teacher controlled (frequency of response is indicated in parentheses): 1) group work (14); 2) hands-on activities (14); 3) learning about interesting things or things they could use (10); 4) doing something fun (8); 5) interesting discussions (7); 6) changing the routine (6). Teachers make the decisions to include or exclude student-
centered activities like those listed above. Their decisions can help students connect with each other and their work or disconnect them.

The interview data suggest that involvement opportunities have a strong, positive influence on the AHS student culture. All of the students in small groups who talked about the importance of being involved in extracurricular activities are positive about the effects of participation for themselves and for the school. They see getting involved as a way to make friends, to establish a positive reputation, to earn recognition, to contribute to their school, and to promote a positive image for AHS. Students pointed with pride to the volleyball team's state tourney appearance, opposing football coaches calling their team "classy," the Multicultural Club's production of a play, and the awesome feeling generated by the Homecoming Pep Rally as outstanding results of student involvement at AHS. Involvement opportunities seem to offer students positive experiences even though AHS is not currently known for winning athletic teams. Students in only two small groups expressed concern about the lack of athletic success at AHS. One student observed, *We never win but we have fun playing.* Another student explained the unifying influence of involvement on the AHS student culture: *Competition [being in an activity] is very big at AHS. We care about the family. Being close is more important than winning.* The organizational systems factor, involvement in extracurricular opportunities, appears to strengthen AHS students' sense of belonging to their school and their sense of connectedness with each other to a greater extent than it appears to promote winning.

The influence of student decision making and problem solving involvement opportunities on the student culture varies with students' own participation and their perceptions of the students involved in decision making groups. Students who
are involved in decision making groups generally believe they make a difference at AHS. Thirteen students interviewed individually were asked, "How much of a voice do you think you have in what happens at AHS?" Eight of the 13 students interviewed believe that students who are involved in decision making groups or are popular have more "say" than most students. One student observed, *I have a lot of friends, but I’m not, you know, real popular, not in their clique, kind of... I think they listen to the, more of the cheerleaders and stuff more than anything else, you know.* Three of the 13 students interviewed believe that students need the support of a group to be heard. One of these students noted,

*I am in a quote unquote more popular crowd, so you know, sometimes I think I have more influence on other people, but sometimes, like when I get in a group like senior board or like student government, I think I have no voice. Even if I voice my opinion, I think it would have no effect at all unless I have 30 other people backing me up. And I don’t really like that, because sometimes they won’t even listen to you unless you have a small majority following you. It’s, like, it’s tough for one certain person to have a, you can always voice your opinion whether or not it makes an effect, you know, it just depends on how many people agree with you.*

Students in general are perceived to lack a voice in the school when they are not involved. One student explained,

*I don’t think a lot of students think they have a lot. And I think that has to do with how much they get involved. A lot of them aren’t involved, and they sit there and complain about what, you know, ’I don’t like this, I don’t like that.’ Well, if you don’t like it, then get involved. . . . I don’t think a lot of them have a lot of voice in what they do. They just like to complain.*
Decision making and problem solving opportunities seem to positively influence those students who actively participate in them.

The organizational systems factor, student leadership, influences the AHS student culture. Thirteen of 21 small groups and five of 20 individuals interviewed perceive that leaders or leadership groups—such as student government, junior and senior board, Dew Crew and Pep A Club—make a positive difference for students at AHS. One student said, *Everyone knows who the leaders are. Everyone wants to be one.* Many students pointed out the Pep A Club service projects that help retired teachers or community groups as they build a positive reputation for the school. Another student expressed the opinion that AHS needs more leadership groups so that more students can be involved. Three of thirteen students interviewed individually hold negative opinions about the "voice" they have in their school. Two of these students expressed the opinion that gaining leadership positions amounted to a popularity contest. One student said,

... to get on the senior board, you have to be elected and that’s all basically a popularity contest right there. So I don’t think it’s who’s qualified or not, because our class president ... promised to do so many things and he’s never shown up to a meeting. He just hasn’t done anything for the school.

Another student feels that people complain about leaders but do not run for election. While students expressed generally positive feelings about their student leaders and leadership organizations, they did not communicate a strong sense of solid, positive student leadership that makes a difference for AHS students.

Another organizational systems factor influencing AHS students' culture is the school's mission. Interview data show that students have a clear perception of what the AHS teachers and administrators expect of them. Six of the eight
individual interviewees who were asked, "What is the goal of AHS--what does AHS want for its students?", responded that the school wants students to graduate and go on to college or get a good job. One student's sentiments are representative of others:

I think that the teachers and administrators, what they want is the kids to have good grades. I think they want... to make like East, you know, like the top school, you know, one of the best schools you can go to, and also probably like, they like to encourage the kids to like be in activities, like after school activities and stuff.

Seven of 21 small groups and five of 20 individual interviewees volunteered that their purpose in coming to school is to earn credits, try for good grades, win scholarships, get into college, and/or get a good job. The influence of the school's mission is strong enough that students in five of the 16 small groups expressed the opinion that more students should participate actively in the school's mission. One student's thoughts illustrate their point: More students would pass if they cared.

Ultimately, students' sense of the school's mission is reflected in their common way of thinking, "We have a reason to be here." One student, a senior, looked into the future to come up with a memorable explanation of the school's goal for students:

Teachers want you to graduate from high school then come back eight years later with a nice job, you know, something like that, so they can just sit back there and say, 'Huh, I helped that kid succeed.' They don't want to read your name in the paper eight years later seeing a certain person on a list robbing a [store].

The school's negative public image impacts the student culture of AHS in interesting ways. As discussed previously, students perceive that the school and surrounding township have a "bad reputation" in the public. The impact of this negative public image is seen most clearly in the students' common way of thinking,
"Our pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique." The underdog philosophy that supports this way of thinking has been discussed previously. What is important here is that students hear from their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters that the school and the surrounding community share a "bad" reputation to which students and community members respond, "AHS and _____ Township against the world!" Twenty out of 24 small groups asked about the effect of this underdog philosophy replied that they disagreed with the reputation, hated it, and found it to be a motivator and unifier. Students say they participate in activities and give their best effort so that the school looks good. The Alumni Association galvanizes school and community pride, tradition, and spirit to battle the negative public image. As previously noted, students proudly mentioned the Association as the largest and oldest of its kind in the country. They relish the loyal support of the alumni as they learn what will be expected of them as graduates. Through serving dinners at the annual reunion and seeing the contributions of Association members to the school's booster club and scholarships, students learn about their future roles. The negative public image of AHS influences students to defend their school with words and actions and especially promotes participation in school activities to improve the public image.

The interview data also show that Anycity High School's goal to increase student attendance by implementing a stricter policy influences the student culture. Ten of the 21 small groups and four of the 20 individuals interviewed reported that the new attendance policy has an impact on their behavior and their thinking about their school. These students do acknowledge that more students are in school this year, but they provide a diverse view of the need for and impact of the policy. In ten of the small groups, students said they had always had good attendance and voiced
the opinion that the new attendance policy works and is fair. Students holding these opinions represent female and male athletes, grade levels 9-12, and the talented and gifted (TAG) program. Students in eight of the small groups said they feel the attendance policy forces them to come to school, especially when they are not feeling well, and that they feel stressed as a result. One student expressed their view of the new policy: *The attendance policy makes me come to school a lot more. No one likes it, but we accept it because we can't change it.* These groups include senior board representatives, class officers, TAG students, Hispanic students, juniors, and sophomores. Participants in 11 of the small groups commented that the attendance policy should be modified to allow more days of absence and/or some excused absences. Students in these groups represent senior board; School-Within-a School (SWS); TAG; the ninth grade house project; female athletes; African American and Hispanic students; and freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

The influence of the new attendance policy on what happens in the classroom is not clear. Six students interviewed individually were asked, "What is different in your classroom?" as a result of implementing the new attendance policy. Their sentiments vary widely. One student reported that teachers had more time to teach: *... they don't have to worry about pulling all their [attendance] cards and all this, so they have more time to teach you now.* Two students feel people are learning more. One said, *Yeah, they probably are [learning more] because they [teachers] say if you come to class every day you're not going to fail.* The other student noted that teachers need to repeat less since more students are there every day but warned that

*sometimes they're [students] less willing to learn because they're there every single day, and it's just repetitious, and I think teachers really got to watch it. You've got*
Teachers have to keep the will to learn up. If you don't have the will to learn, you can't teach anything...

Three students said they didn't learn more, although one observed that teachers have more time to teach because attendance only has to be taken once. One student worried about students who attended class but didn't want to learn: There's just more troublemakers and more people that don't want to be there now than there ever has been. . . . They'll sleep through class, but they'll be in class. . . . I don't think that's right. The goal of implementing a new attendance policy has influenced the student culture at AHS. Some students' attendance has improved, but the policy may adversely affect the way students who already had good attendance and are active think about school.

To summarize, examination of the interview data reveal that seven organizational systems factors influence the AHS student culture (the overarching ways of thinking among students): 1) peer influence; 2) teacher influence; 3) involvement opportunities; 4) student leadership; 5) the school's mission; 6) the school's negative public image; and 7) the goal of improving student attendance through implementing a new attendance policy. Peer influence is strong and appears to positively impact students when friends at school support students, especially academically, but negatively impacts students when friends compete with schoolwork. Peer influence also seems to encourage involvement through the role modeling of older students. Involvement opportunities focused on extracurricular activities appear to have a strong, positive influence on students' connection with school and with friends. Decision making and problem solving opportunities appear to positively influence students who participate; they feel they make a
difference. Student leadership is perceived as a desirable goal but falls short of having the strong, positive influence on students' thinking that moves a school forward. The school's mission seems to positively influences students' way of thinking that they have a reason to come to school. The school's negative public image appears to positively influence students to get involved in activities so they can contribute to improving this image. The goal of improving student attendance by implementing a new attendance policy positively influences many students to come to school more often. Implementing the new attendance policy seems, however, to negatively influence some students who are active and who already have good attendance.

Summary of Findings

1 & 2) Five common ways of thinking within the student culture of Anycity High School were identified by triangulating data from small group and individual interview with the Partners in Education Student Survey data. The pervasiveness of each way of thinking was indicated by distribution frequencies from student small group and individual interviews. The relative strength of each way of thinking was determined by the percentage of students who rated the strength of each way of thinking a 3, 4, or 5 during small group interviews. Most pervasive first, these ways of thinking include: (1) Having friends at school is important; (2) We have a reason to come here; (3) Getting involved in school makes a difference; (4) Our pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique; (5) Supporting each other makes a difference.

3) The extent of school membership and authentic work in the AHS student culture was measured through student responses to statements in these two dimensions on the PESS. Students' school membership scores were placed on a
continuum having one endpoint as disconnected and the other endpoint as connected. Their authentic work scores were placed on a continuum having one endpoint as contrived and the other endpoint as real world. Distribution frequencies show that the student engagement factors of school membership and authentic work are distributed through all points on the continuum. Over 70 percent of students surveyed feel they are connected to their school. Over 60 percent of students surveyed feel they are engaged in real world work at AHS. Quotes from interviews support and explain the survey responses of students who feel connected and disconnected, and who believe they do contrived or real world work.

4) The student culture of Anycity High School was described by conceptualizing the student culture as a web and describing the essence of the web as well as the connections among students' five common ways of thinking, or major threads in the student culture web. The essence of the AHS student culture is stable, strong and positive in nature. The student culture is familial; it is supportive, involving, purposeful, proud, rooted in tradition, and supportive. However, if the school wants to promote excellence, a focus on student learning, engagement, and achievement is missing.

The five major threads of the web connect to each other to weave the familial pattern described above. "We need to have friends at school," students' most powerful way of thinking, is linked to each of the other four ways of thinking: "Getting involved makes a difference," "We have a reason to be here," "Pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique," and "Supporting each other makes a difference." "Getting involved makes a difference" is strongly connected to "We need to have friends at school," and also to "We have a reason to be here," to "Pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique," and to "Supporting each other makes a
difference." "We have a reason to be here" is closely connected to "We need to have friends at school" and to "Getting involved makes a difference." "Pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique" is solidly connected to "Getting involved makes a difference," but also is tied to "We need to have friends at school" and "Supporting each other makes a difference. "Supporting each other makes a difference" connects with "We need to have friends at school," with "Getting involved makes a difference," and with "Pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique."

5) Seven organizational system factors influence the AHS student culture: (1) peer influence; (2) teacher influence, (3) involvement opportunities, (4) student leadership, (5) the school's mission, (6) the school's negative public image, and (7) the goal of improving student attendance through implementing a new attendance policy. Peer influence is strong and appears to positively impact students when friends at school support students, especially academically, but negatively impacts students when friends compete with schoolwork. Peer influence also seems to encourage involvement through the role modeling of older students. Involvement opportunities focused on extracurricular activities appear to have a strong, positive influence on students' connection with school and with friends. Decision making and problem solving opportunities appear to positively influence students who participate; they feel they make a difference. Student leadership is perceived as a desirable goal but falls short of having the strong, positive influence on students' thinking that moves a school forward. The school's mission seems to positively influences students' way of thinking that they have a reason to come to school. The school's negative public image appears to positively influence students to get involved in activities so they can contribute to improving this image. The goal of improving student attendance by implementing a new attendance policy positively
influences many students to come to school more often. Implementing the new attendance policy seems, however, to negatively influence some students who are active and who already have good attendance.

All research findings and recommendations are discussed in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V provides a summary of the study, discusses the research findings and their implications for practitioners, describes the limitations of the study, outlines recommendations based on findings, and provides suggestions for future study.

Summary

As part of a case study of a large comprehensive high school, this study was designed with the following purposes: 1) & 2) to identify and describe the common ways of thinking and their relative strength within the student culture of a large comprehensive high school; 3) to determine the extent to which school membership and authentic work are present within the student culture; 4) to describe the student culture (overarching ways of thinking) of a large comprehensive high school; and 5) to determine the extent to which organizational systems factors influence the student culture.

Conducted on-site for a total of 20 days during November, December, February, March, and May of the 1993-94 school year, this study employed primarily qualitative methods but also drew upon quantitative research and used triangulation to determine findings. Qualitative research was conducted through 45 small group and 41 individual student interviews. A total of 259 students were interviewed, 225 in small group and 34 individually. Small group and individual student interviews, consisting of open-ended questions, were designed to explore students' ways of thinking and to identify and explain the organizational systems factors that influence the student culture. Raw interview data were transcribed, the
small group interview data from large sheets of newsprint, the individual interview
data from tape recordings.

A survey, Partners in Education Student Survey, (PESS) was administered to
132 students. The survey is comprised of 65 statements grouped into nine
dimensions and is designed to assess the extent of student engagement, including
school membership and authentic work. Surveys were coded so that scores could be
separated for day school students and for night school students. Group results were
analyzed statistically to determine if there was a significant difference between the
mean scores of the day school students and the night school students. Results
showed that the day school students' scores differed significantly from the night
school students' scores (Appendix S). Night school students' scores were less
positive on all nine dimensions. Therefore, only day school students were included
in the data analysis.

Triangulation strengthened the study in two ways. As each source of data
was analyzed, results were compared to results from previously analyzed data
sources. Each set of added results was examined to determine whether it confirmed,
disputed, or added new information to the data that had already been analyzed.
Triangulation also was used to focus the data from the student survey on the data
from student interviews to confirm the most pervasive and strongest ways of
thinking within the student culture.

Findings were derived by coding, categorizing, analyzing, quantifying,
summarizing, and synthesizing all collected data concerning the student culture of
AHS. The findings of the study are: 1) Interview data revealed five common ways of
thinking among students at AHS, most pervasive and strongest first: (1) We need to
have friends at school; (2) Getting involved makes a difference; (3) We have a reason
to be here; (4) Our pride, traditions, and school spirit make us unique; and (5) Supporting each other makes a difference. 2) Distribution frequencies show that the student engagement factors of school membership and authentic work are distributed through all points on the continuum. Over 70 percent of students surveyed feel they are connected to their school. Over 60 percent of students surveyed feel they are engaged in real world work at AHS. 3) The essence of the AHS student culture is stable, strong and positive in nature. The threads of the five common ways of thinking feed into each other to create a student culture that also is supportive, involving, purposeful, proud, loyal, rooted in tradition, and supportive. 4) The interview data suggested that seven organizational systems factors that impact student culture: (1) peer influence, (2) teacher influence, (3) involvement opportunities, (4) student leadership, (5) the school's mission, (6) the school's negative public image, and (7) the goal of improving student attendance through implementing a new attendance policy.

A discussion of the findings and implications for practitioners is provided below.

Discussion

The findings of this study reflect the common ways of thinking and the extent of school membership and authentic work within the student culture, the overarching ways of thinking within the student culture, and the organizational systems factors which influence the student culture. These findings permit the researcher to make specific suggestions about what can work in making school a meaningful and engaging experience for high school students.

Common Ways of Thinking and Their Relative Strength

Five common ways of thinking, listed above, emerged from small group and individual student interview data and were triangulated with PESS results.
It is not surprising that students shared widely and strongly the way of thinking, "We need to have friends at school." Tarr (1977) studied student groupings in a large suburban high school. His findings parallel those of this study. Tarr found that students at all grade levels (9-12) reported that their most important activity at school was seeing friends. For most students, friends did not usually interfere with adherence to school rules. Like the students at AHS who formed cliques on the basis of common interests, the students in Tarr's study seemed to group themselves on the basis of interests (p. 2). The study showed that the real basis for the connections among group members was common values (p. 3). It is encouraging that AHS students often credit having friends at school with positive influences: helping them fit in, making school seem more interesting, encouraging them to become involved in school activities, and assisting them with schoolwork. However, some AHS students acknowledged that friends sometimes interfered with studying or classwork and could put them at odds with school rules.

Recognizing the importance students place on having friends at school, perhaps practitioners should provide more opportunities for students to interact with friends at school. The following suggestions assume that students will respect the opportunities and act responsibly. Teachers might want to set up cooperative learning groups, for example, in which students can choose group members. Students can be allowed to select classes or homerooms to be with friends. Administrators can plan unstructured time for students to see friends during the school day or after school. Supervised areas can be designated for informal student contact in place of a study center, providing that students are not replacing work time with social time. Students can be allowed to use the cafeteria or an open gym,
with supervision, to spend time with friends. These suggestions can accommodate cliques as well as pairs of friends.

The pervasiveness of the way of thinking, "Getting involved makes a difference," is exciting. Studies have shown that participation rates are higher for students in small high schools than for students in large high schools (Holland & Andre, 1987, p. 446). AHS students, however, report that many students participate in school activities and that involvement makes them feel good about themselves, helps them make friends, and rewards them. Holland and Andre's study also showed that participation in extracurricular activities positively correlates with desirable personality and social characteristics (p. 447). Students' feeling that getting involved in activities provides them with a way to do something positive for their school is promising. These students have a sense of community that can be refocused on student engagement and achievement.

Administrators need to find ways to make resources available to support increased student involvement in school activities. Students who do not seek out involvement opportunities need to be targeted for inclusion. These students, as well as others, could be interviewed to determine which activities would interest them and what times would work to meet. Some activities may need to be added and new sponsors found. Other activities may need modification. Some students simply may need a sponsor or another student to extend an invitation to participate in a club or sport. Because many students work, planning time for student activities during the school day may be necessary. A short activity period scheduled into the school day once a week could meet many students' needs.

It is heartening that students report that "We have a reason to be here." AHS students pose a sharp contrast to the apathetic picture of most high school students
drawn by Sizer (1984) and Goodlad (1983) over a decade ago. Bishop (1989) supports the characterization of high school students as unmotivated (p. 6). Their perception that teachers have expectations that they graduate and go on to school or get good jobs is particularly interesting. It is also encouraging that students see their schooling as having a "bottom line," whether it is academic success and further education, or earning enough credits to graduate and get a good job. What is noteworthy about AHS students' sense of purpose for coming to school is that students did not describe learning or being engaged in schoolwork as a reason to come to school.

Perhaps the most important implications for practitioners relate to students' thinking, "We have a reason to be here." While this way of thinking seems positive, teachers and administrators need to sharpen the focus of this positive belief. Students did not describe learning as a reason to come to school. It appears that these students may be spending their time and energy "performing rituals, procedures, and routines without developing substantive understanding" (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992, p. 12). Changing this focus requires further study of classroom activities to determine which strategies engage students and which strategies need to be modified; training for teachers in engaging teaching techniques; support for teachers as they learn and practice new techniques; and a new focus of teacher evaluation for administrators.

Students' mindset that "Our pride, tradition, and school spirit make us unique" is very strong and positive. It provides great support for the "Getting involved makes a difference" mindset. These two mindsets are fertile ground to nurture student engagement and achievement. The Mitchell and Willower (1992) study of a "good" high school (one with outstanding academic and extracurricular
success) reported that students identified three main topics in interviews: 1) friends and subgroups in the school, 2) school spirit and athletics, and 3) academic performance as preparation for employment or college (p. 11). The strength of this way of thinking draws heavily on the motivating influence of the negative public image of the school and community.

Students' way of thinking, "Our pride, traditions, and school spirit make us unique," provides the school a solid foundation upon which to build a school that offers all students opportunities to experience a sense of school membership. Again, opportunities to broaden and strengthen this way of thinking need to be provided. Students who feel disconnected most need to feel this pride and school spirit. They need opportunities to represent or contribute to the school in positive ways as they boost self-esteem, perhaps by assisting with an alumni event or participating in a service project. Involvement in any of the suggested activities mentioned above would help create a sense of school pride and spirit that can make a difference for disconnected students.

It is promising that students at AHS believe that "Supporting each other makes a difference." Students focused on teacher caring as a major factor affecting this way of thinking. Steinberg (1990) found that teachers who use "relationship-building rituals" to make individual students feel special and worthy contribute to the "risk-free" classroom environment so important to school success (p. 3). At AHS, for example, several students described one English teacher who always had a good day. She greeted them at the door every day and made them feel so good that they couldn't have a bad day. One student reported that he had never read an entire book before taking this teacher's class. AHS students feel support from teachers that is strong enough to provide a basis for becoming engaged in schoolwork.
The supportive environment that is part of the AHS student culture is a strong element in building students' sense of school membership (Newmann et al., 1992, p. 23). Students should be ready to accept challenges in the classroom that will require them to develop new types of competence (p. 23). Teachers can raise their expectations as long as they continue to offer students the assistance each needs to move forward. Teachers also need to ensure that all students feel the support reported by the students interviewed. A program such as TESA (Teacher Expectations Student Achievement) can raise teachers' awareness of which students are involved in class and how to increase involvement for those students who might be disconnected. Supporting all students well provides the school with another solid piece with which to build a school community focused on student learning and engagement.

The discussion of the findings for the five research questions that guided this study leads to two general suggestions. First, practitioners need to recognize the importance of high school students' culture. Understanding the common ways of thinking among the students in a high school enables administrators and teachers to consider these mindsets when changes are made. These common ways of thinking affect how students behave, particularly how they learn. Taking these ways of thinking into consideration can be the first step toward creating a more effective learning environment. Second, the positive nature of the AHS students' five common ways of thinking about school offer practitioners the opportunity to build from strength in planning for school improvement. While they are positive, the students' ways of thinking could be more sharply focused on engagement, achievement, and learning. For example, when students reported, 'We have a
reason to come here" and "Getting involved in school makes a difference," they did not talk about learning and engagement in their schoolwork.

**Extent of School Membership and Authentic Work**

School membership and authentic work are factors of student engagement in academic work. Measuring these concepts provides an indication of the likelihood that AHS students will experience engagement in academic work, which is necessary to learning.

The extent of school membership in the AHS student culture is widely distributed. When scores of 4 (somewhat agree), 5 (agree), and 6 (strongly agree) are combined to indicate students' perceptions of their connectedness to school, 71.6 percent of AHS students surveyed fall in the connected range.

It is encouraging that a solid majority of the students surveyed feel connected with AHS and experience membership in their school. The size and diversity of the AHS student body might be expected to promote student alienation. However, the students interviewed say that their school supports them and provides an environment that promotes bonding. They see the whole endeavor of school as significant, feel it is worthy of their efforts, and believe it respects them. These students are set up to be successful learners.

The extent of authentic work in the AHS student culture also varies widely. When scores of 4 (somewhat agree), 5 (agree), and 6 (strongly agree) are combined to indicate the students' perceptions of the real world nature of work, 63 percent of AHS students surveyed fall in the real world range. Authentic work parallels the distribution of school membership along its continuum. Less than 10% of students fall at the extremes of both measures, with a large majority of students falling somewhere between.
It is promising that so many of the students surveyed feel they are engaged in real world work in their AHS classrooms. With even more students agreeing that they feel a sense of school membership, the likelihood that AHS students will experience engagement in academic work is much better than might be expected in a large comprehensive high school.

Staff are to be reminded that students' perceptions of school membership and authentic work cover the entire continuum. Educators need to find ways to identify and then connect and engage those students at the low end of each continuum in school and in real world work. Practitioners will need to design structures and teaching strategies that appeal to disconnected students who feel their schoolwork is contrived. Programs like these already exist at AHS. The School Within a School and the ninth grade house create small communities of students who receive more intense teacher attention. Structures like these that focus on authentic work are probably what the AHS students who aren't currently served in such programs need. These students might also benefit from mentoring with successful adults in jobs they are interested in investigating.

**Student Culture**

The student culture of Anycity High School is conceptualized as a web created primarily by the connections among students' five common ways of thinking, or major threads. The AHS student culture is stable, strong and positive in nature. The threads of the five common ways of thinking feed into each other to create a student culture that is familial; it is supportive, involving, purposeful, proud, loyal, and rooted in tradition.

What is intriguing about the AHS student culture web is that it is quite strong and positive, yet the academic and extracurricular success of the school are not
strong or pervasive. Students' thinking about schooling has not been focused on learning, engagement, and achievement. While students clearly have good intentions and while individual students and an occasional group experience success, a need for achievement that would match positive aspects of the web did not emerge as part of the student culture at AHS.

A key to this puzzle may lie in understanding the link between students' overarching ways of thinking and the cultures of the teachers and community. Students at high-achieving schools share teacher expectations about their schoolwork, have good relationships with teachers, and feel high expectations from parents and community members (Mitchell & Willower, 1992, p. 15). Some of these pieces are in place at AHS. The findings of this study show that students feel teachers care about them, and some students feel teachers expect them to graduate and do well. "Graduate" and "do well," however, are not clearly defined. Staffs need to know more specifically what teachers' expectations are, as well as determine parents' and community's expectations.

It is encouraging that the AHS student culture provides a foundation upon which to build a school community that focuses on achievement for every student. What is possible exists already at AHS in its ninth grade "house" arrangement. Students participating in the house told the researcher that they wanted the administration to know that the house arrangement should be continued. Students listed goals of the project as important to their culture: learning to work in groups so job communication skills develop and learning individual accountability in group work.

The essence of the strong, positive, familial student culture sends several messages to staff. Teachers and administrators need to understand students'
powerful need to make meaningful connections—with their peers, with their teachers, and with their schoolwork. When all three connections are made, a student's chance of being a successful learner is solid. Practitioners also need to recognize that a strong, positive student culture is not necessarily aligned with the school's student learning, engagement and achievement goal.

Organizational Systems Factors

Analysis of interview data indicates that several organizational systems factors influence the student culture (overarching way of thinking). These organizational systems factors include 1) peer influence, (2) teacher influence, 3) involvement opportunities, 4) student leadership, 5) the school's mission, 6) the school's negative public image, and 7) the goal of improving student attendance through implementing a new attendance policy. The most pervasive and powerful factors appear to be peer influence, teacher influence, and involvement opportunities, which are closely connected. All of the factors provide useful and interesting information about shaping the AHS student culture. Because the next section contains recommendations for practitioners that focus on these factors, details for practitioners are included there. The following section presents only discussion of the findings related to organizational systems factors that affect the AHS student culture.

Peer influence's strong effect on the student culture is encouragingly positive in that AHS students generally accept attending school regularly and feel a purpose in doing so. These purposes are supportive of the school's student learning, engagement, and achievement mission, although students are not sharply focused on learning and engagement. Only a few students interviewed report that peers interfere with school and schoolwork. It is also encouraging that freshmen and
sophomores report that upperclassmen are positive role models for them. Upperclassmen, however, believe that their influence as role models had diminished compared to that of older students when they had been freshmen.

The pervasiveness of teacher influence as a factor affecting student culture is not surprising. The nature of students' perceptions of AHS teachers is very positive. Students focus on teachers' caring for them, which enables them to meet challenges in the classroom. AHS teachers need to avert the danger of falling into "bargains" or "treaties" with students that implicitly negotiate their cooperation as long as teachers do not demand challenging academic work of them (Boyer, 1983; MacNeil, 1986; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985).

Involvement opportunities have been shown to create strong, positive connections with school for AHS students. Students believe that getting involved makes them feel good, brings them rewards and promotes a positive public image for the school. In their review of literature related to extracurricular participation and adolescent development, Holland and Andre (1987) observe that "participation may influence adolescent development positively" (p. 447). Involvement opportunities offer AHS practitioners a way to connect the disconnected students.

Student leadership, a third organizational systems factor, is an intriguing influence on the student culture. Students interviewed reported that they perceived leadership groups and student leadership positions as admirable and desirable. Yet they noted that decision making and problem solving groups and their leaders did not have a strong, positive influence on the student culture. Student leaders need to find out what their constituents need and ensure that they represent everyone fairly.

The school's mission has a moderately strong positive influence on the AHS student culture. This is interesting in that students expressed their purpose in
attending AHS to be earning credits, getting good grades, graduating, and going on to college. The school's mission of learning, engagement, and achievement does not exactly match students' interpretation. However, the students' sense of purpose for coming to school does not subvert the adults' mission, as often occurs in high schools (Mitchell & Willower, 1992, p. 6). Enough common ground seems to exist that a shared vision of the school's mission can be agreed upon by students and adults. This is a critical step toward becoming a school community focused on student learning and engagement.

Finally, it is not surprising that the influence of the new attendance policy is pervasive, since attendance affects every student. Students are affected differently by the policy, depending on their attendance history and degree of involvement with school. While students did not argue with the need for the policy and agreed that more students came to school, they did feel that some freedom had been taken away. The key issue for practitioners will be determining whether improved student attendance positively impacts learning, engagement, and achievement at AHS.

The surprising organizational systems factor influencing the AHS student culture is the school's negative public image. Students' perception that other schools and towns perceive AHS to be a "bad school" in a "bad community" could be expected to exert a negative influence on the student culture. Quite the opposite occurs at AHS. Students have adopted an underdog philosophy, connected to that of the surrounding township: "AHS and ____ township against the world!" This philosophy motivates and unifies the students. When the school focuses on improving student learning, this image could change. Practitioners will have to
carefully anticipate the impact on students of a more positive public image. The motivation associated with the negative public image needs to be preserved.

Practitioners further need to understand that, while other organizational systems factors currently may be more pervasive in their influence on the AHS student culture, the factor with the most potential to impact student learning is school mission. Sharpening the focus of the school mission to spotlight student engagement and learning and including students in process could really make a difference. The influence of teachers is critical here. What happens in the classroom needs to align with the school mission. Also, practitioners need to know that the organizational systems factors can interact and create new influences on the student culture. For example, peer influence and the implementation of the new attendance policy may affect students' reasons for coming—or not coming—to school. A related implication is that the implementation of policy affects students' thinking as well as their behavior.

Limitations of the Study

In any research study, problems can occur in sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Problems may arise from the design of the study or from its execution. The areas that are of possible concern in this study are described below.

1. A threat to internal validity results from the small size and convenience sample used for the PESS.

2. Participant volunteers and key informants were used in qualitative interviews and may not be representative of the population.

3. Conclusions should not be generalized because this study involved one comprehensive high school.
Recommendations for Practitioners

Recommendations for high school staff who are interested in including students in their school improvement efforts are presented in this section. The recommendations are presented for each organizational systems factor found to influence the student culture. Whenever possible, the recommendations made below should include all students.

1) Shape peer influence on the student culture to support the school's mission of improving student learning and engagement. Practitioners need to provide students, especially freshmen and sophomores, with direct access to positive role models. Practitioners can design a mentoring system that partners students who are effective role models with the disconnected students who most need their influence. Such a system might begin with freshman orientation and include informal small group meetings with student leaders throughout the year. Students who are role models also can serve as tutors for other students needing academic assistance.

2) Focus teacher influence on student learning and engagement, especially for students who feel disconnected from their school and involved only in work they feel is contrived. An effort to improve the positive influence of teachers on students can begin with sharing the findings of this study, to create an awareness of students' perceptions. Administrators and teachers next can brainstorm a list of ways to increase or spread teachers' positive influence so that it fosters learning and student engagement. Simple strategies can be targeted for inclusion in classroom practice immediately. However, this list is likely to include several complex teaching strategies designed to engage students in learning, such as cooperative learning, alternative assessment, portfolio assessment, and tech prep. The next step is to plan
for teacher training and practice in complex strategies designed to engage students in learning.

Administrators need to find ways to provide teachers with time to learn and practice complex new strategies that will increase their effectiveness. Providing teachers with this time as well as time to create a personal improvement plan targeted to increase student engagement and to share their ideas and questions is critical. When teachers have had sufficient training and practice to be able to apply strategies for engagement appropriately, they are making optimal use of their positive influence on students.

3) Broaden and strengthen student involvement opportunities. The impact of involvement opportunities on high school students is generally positive. Practitioners need to find ways to involve the students who don't participate in school activities in these positive experiences. Students may need to be surveyed or interviewed to determine the activities that will interest students and the meeting times that will work for them. Probably, activities that appeal to a broader range of interests than those currently in existence need to be created. Service opportunities in particular hold great potential for involving all students. To solve the problems of faculty sponsorship and teacher/student conflicts with work and existing activities, a short activity period can be scheduled into the school day.

4) Refocus student decision making and problem solving groups to become more responsive to the entire range of their constituencies. Administrators and teachers can provide opportunities for student leaders to meet with students to discuss school issues. Informal lunch meetings can be scheduled to included any student who might want to meet with student leaders. Student leaders can visit classes or stop in study centers to discuss issues. The messages student leaders and
administrators need to convey and act upon are that all students have a voice in what happens in their school and that everyone should participate in decision making and problem solving. A special effort to include the most disconnected students in decision making and problem solving needs to be made. The student mentors discussed above can provide their mentees a push toward involvement.

Students were positive about leadership groups and indicated that students like to be leaders. Staff need to extend leadership opportunities to more students, especially those who are disconnected. Broadening the range of involvement opportunities will address the need for more leadership opportunities. An even more powerful strategy is including leadership opportunities in class activities, particularly for group work and projects.

5) Involve students in building a shared mission for the school. The impact of the school's mission on students is perhaps the most important organizational systems influence. It is the school's mission that guides all of its educational improvement efforts and is the key to creating a community of leaders at school. Every student and every staff member needs to share in building the vision of the school's mission, which must focus on student learning, engagement, and achievement. Students must be included in this process if school improvement is to be effective. A strong, positive, stable, and familial student culture provide a solid foundation upon which to construct a school community. The process of building a community of leaders at AHS would included all of the previous recommendations for practitioners.

Sergiovanni (1994) advocates community building as "the heart of any school improvement effort" (p. xi). Schools first need to become purposeful communities, in which members have developed a community of mind. One effective way to
begin is for school members to identify and commit to "core values," or a shared vision of the school's mission. As noted earlier, students must be part of the community building process. A true school community cannot be built apart from them.

When school members have committed to core values, they then design out from the core values to create school structures, develop policies, set goals, translate the goals into "core outcomes," decide about how they will treat each other and work together, decide what to teach and how to teach (design curriculum), and plan for evaluation (pp. 72-73).

When a school has become a purposeful community, school members should next work to become a community of learners, an "adventure in shared leadership and authentic relationships (p. 155)." Teachers and principals must inquire together to create community. Genuine reflection and honest dialogue are necessary to inquiring together. There is no blueprint for becoming a community of learners. The journey must, however, be directed by school members' core values.

When the school has become a community of learners, school members should work to become and continue to be a community of leaders. School members share responsibility for leadership. The community of mind, the shared ideas, "becomes the primary source of authority" (p. 170). Leadership becomes a power to accomplish shared goals. In a community of leaders, school members learn and lead together in a "common quest" (p. 155). The journey of becoming a community of learners follows no map. The shared understandings of group members guide the journey.

6) Redirect the energy and motivation created by the school's negative public image. A high school's negative public image also influences the student culture. A
school improvement effort designed to build a community of leaders also will build a positive image of the school as student engagement in learning intensifies. To specifically address the issue of a school's bad reputation, practitioners can work with students, parents, and community members to create a plan that targets eradication of the negative public image. Everyone involved must be careful not to lose the motivational aspects of the school's underdog philosophy in the process of building a more positive public image.

7) Monitor student attitudes toward school, learning, and engagement; student achievement; and teaching strategies as the new attendance policy becomes a way of life. Implementing a new attendance policy has an interesting effect on the student culture. Administrators need to study students', parents', and teachers' reactions and track them as the policy matures. Student attendance should improve if the policy has the desired affect. Questions to be answered through survey, interview, or discussion, deal with students' attitudes toward school and learning as well as teachers' classroom practices now that more students are in school more often. With more students in class more of the time, teachers will be challenged to engage them effectively in learning.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

1. The entire study should be replicated at another comprehensive high school.

2. The seven organizational factors identified in this study could become the focus of a separate study.

3. A study could investigate the influence of friends and cliques upon student engagement.
4. Students' reasons for coming to school and the relationship of these reasons to the school's mission could be studied.

5. A study could investigate AHS night school students' culture and the organizational systems factors that influence student culture in high schools.

6. The impact of various teaching strategies—such as lecture, cooperative learning, or group investigation—on student engagement could be researched.
REFERENCES CITED


APPENDIX A: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM ANYCITY HIGH SCHOOL
November 9, 1993

Patricia Keith, Assistant Dean
Graduate College
207 Beardshear Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011

Dear Dr. Keith;

Jan Beatty is scheduled to do a Student Culture Audit at School beginning the week of November 15. School is involved in a culture audit of our staff, students and community this year as a part of gathering background information to use with our continuing school improvement plan.

We are pleased to have this opportunity to work with Jan and Iowa State and we look forward to her analysis of the audit.

Respectfully,

Principal
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF CONFIRMATION
November 8, 1993

Principal
Anycity High School
Anycity, USA

Dear Principal:

I need to update you in preparation for being in your building to interview students starting November 15. I'm really excited about the opportunity!

I delivered parent permission slips to your secretary on Friday, November 5, for distribution to students in your English classes as soon as possible. With this letter to you is a schedule which indicates how many of the students who return permission slips I need to see and at what times. I have used the times your seven periods meet to schedule my time on November 15, 16, 18, 19, and 22. I will call later this week to see what has been scheduled and to confirm the location of the interview room.

If you need further information, please call me at 253-2322. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Jan W. Beatty
Schedule of Activities
Phase 1, Week 1
November 15-22, 1993
Anycity High School

Jan Westerman-Beatty

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Interviews will be about 40 minutes in length.

If at least 3 students are not available for a small group, please send me an individual instead. To facilitate discussion, please schedule no more than 5 students in a small group.
APPENDIX C: COMMITTEE ON THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH APPROVAL
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. ☑ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. ☑ Consent form (if applicable)

14. ☐ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. ☑ Data-gathering instruments Sample questions

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

<table>
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<th>First Contact</th>
<th>Last Contact</th>
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<td>April 30, 1993</td>
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17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:
Not applicable.

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer

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19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

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<th>Signature of Committee Chairperson</th>
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GC:1/90
APPENDIX D: STUDENT CONSENT FORM
Student Culture Audit
Student Permission Form

The purpose of this study is to provide your school and you with information that will help everyone better understand the student culture and the things that influence it in your school. Culture is "the way we do things around here," the way student groups behave and what they value and believe.

Using the ideas you share during these interviews and information from school documents, the researcher will write a detailed description of the student culture in your school. This is why I would like to talk with you for about forty minutes concerning topics related to student culture.

I, _________________________________, understand the following conditions:
1) The information gathered during this project will be summarized in a report for your high school and used in the researcher's doctoral dissertation.
2) Any tape recordings and notes made during the interview or any written responses to the writing topic will be reviewed only by the researcher and transcriber.
3) Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time by telling the researcher. If you choose to withdraw, any information you have volunteered will not be used in the study.
4) Your name will not be attached to any of the data gathered, so complete confidentiality can be maintained.

I agree to participate in this research project according to the above terms.

Signature _________________________________
Address ____________________________________
Telephone _________________________________

I agree to conduct this research according to the preceding terms.

Researcher _________________________________ Date _________________
Address 1030 NE Aspen Circle, Ankeny, IA 50021 Phone (515) 964-5321
APPENDIX E: SMALL GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE--ROUND ONE
Small Group Interview Guide--Round One
Anycity High School

1) Introduce self and purpose of study: see East High School through their eyes so can help teachers and administrators improve their school.

2) Explain culture and student culture. Use papers. Ask for questions.

3) Explain newsprint: use to record their ideas. Explain notes.

4) Will not use their names or identify them in any way. Ask for questions.

5) Give Student Permission Forms; tell can opt out and ask to sign.

6) Ask to think about their experiences at East High. Tell me, "Around here, students . . . ." (What goes on around East High, what is the way things are done, things that are important.)

7) Ask students to respond in turn until 10 norms and reasons for their importance are recorded: "Around here, students . . . ."

8) Students clarify responses in turn.

9) Students discuss ideas: "Does anyone want to comment on these behaviors?" Does anyone want to comment on the reasons they are important?"

10) "How many students do this?" "How often?"

11) Rate each norm as positive or negative. Record.

12) Rate strength of each norm: 5=very strong
    4=strong
    3=somewhat strong
    2=not very strong
    1=not strong

   Record.

13) Students further clarify why these norms have occurred. Record on separate newsprint.

14) Students suggest ways to strengthen positive norms and eliminate or reduce negative norms.
APPENDIX F: SMALL GROUP SUMMARY FORM--ROUND ONE
Small Group Summary Form
Anycity High School

Interview # ____________

Date__________________

1. Key points identified in the session

2. Other salient, interesting, illuminating, or important points in this contact.

3. Values that surfaced in the interview

4. Additional comments or thoughts
APPENDIX G: DAILY SUMMARY FORM
Daily Summary Report
Anycity High School

Date

1. What are your thoughts about the student culture of this school?

2. What themes appear most prevalent or are there new themes?

3. What big questions will you ask tomorrow?

4. What do you need to do to strengthen the audit?
APPENDIX H: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE--ROUND ONE
Individual Interview Guide
Any City High School

Purposes
1) To identify the prevailing norms of behavior reflecting school membership (clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, success, caring), authentic work (extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, sense of ownership, connection to the "real world," fun), deep history, and leadership;
2) To identify other prevailing norms influencing student culture;
3) To identify organizational factors influencing the student culture;
4) To determine why specific organizational factors influence the student culture;
and
5) To identify strategies or approaches for strengthening the student culture.

Approach
High school students will have an opportunity to provide important information about their culture. The interviewer will engage students in dialog in a setting that ensures privacy and freedom from interruption. Before the session begins, the interviewer will describe for students orally and in writing what culture is and the purposes of the study and the interview. The purposes of tape recording and note taking will also be explained. Students will be encouraged to ask questions about any of this information. They then will be asked to sign the Student Culture Audit Student Information Form.

When this form is signed and the interviewer is satisfied that the student is ready to begin, the interviewer will ask the student to describe the student culture by finishing the prompt, "Around here students . . . ." To sharpen the focus of the dialog, this prompt also will be presented in print.

Students will be asked to talk about "what happens around here that is important and why they think these things are important. Students also will be asked how frequently these things occur, how many students participate, why these behaviors occur, whether the behaviors are positive or negative, and what might be done to reduce or eliminate the negative norms identified. If students have not already addressed the student engagement factors of school membership (clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, success, caring), authentic work (extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, sense of ownership, connection to the "real world," fun), and other factors (deep history, leadership), they will be asked appropriate questions. The plan for the process follows.
1) The interviewer asks the student to respond to the prompt, "Around here students . . . ." While the student talks, the interviewer records key comments and probes to clarify responses and to ensure that she is accurately interpreting what the student says. The interviewer summarizes the norms to check for accurate recording.

2) The interviewer asks the student why this norm is important and records responses, again probing and summarizing.

3) The interviewer asks how frequently the behavior occurs and the number of students who participate.

4) The interviewer asks why this norm is important, probes for clarification, and summarizes to check perceptions.

5) The interviewer asks specific questions about school membership (clarity of purpose, fairness, personal support, success, caring), authentic work (extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, sense of ownership, connection to the "real world," fun), and other factors (deep history, leadership) not previously discussed. The process described above is used.

6) The interviewer probes concepts that have been developed in small group sessions.

7) The interviewer summarizes and thanks the student.
APPENDIX I: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW NOTES FORM
Individual Interview Notes Form
Anycity High School

Interview #____________

________________________________________________________________________

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APPENDIX J: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM
Individual Interview Summary Form
Anycity High School

Interview #  

Date

1. Key points identified in the session

2. Other salient, interesting, illuminating, or important points in this contact.

3. Values that surfaced in the interview

4. Additional comments or thoughts
APPENDIX K: OBSERVATION FORM
Observation Form
Anycity High School

Date________________________

Investigator__________________________

Description of event or activity: what happened, who participated, etc.

Main themes or issues

Explanation or clarification of themes, or issues

Importance of themes or issues

Questions raised by the observation
APPENDIX L: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT SCANNING FORM
Physical Environment Scanning Form
Anycity High School

Date__________________________

Investigator________________________

Symbolic artifacts observed in the physical environment that consistently and clearly promoted meaning and were of sufficient quantity to promote beliefs and values:

**School Membership**
- Clarity of Purpose
- Fairness
- Personal Support
- Success
- Caring

**Authentic Work**
- Extrinsic Rewards
- Intrinsic Rewards
- Sense of Ownership
- Connection to the "Real World"
- Fun

**Other**
- Deep history
- Leadership
- Other factors
APPENDIX M: ARTIFACT ANALYSIS FORM
Artifact Analysis Form
Anycity High School

Date__________________________
Investigator_____________________________
Document______________________________

Summary of document content

Themes or issues the document communicates

Questions the document raises

Significance of the Themes, Issues, or Questions
APPENDIX N: SMALL GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE--ROUND TWO
Small Group Interview Guide--Round Two
Anycity High School

1. What makes a good day at AHS?

2. What gets in the way of a good day?

3. What makes AHS a good place to learn?

4. What gets in the way of AHS being an even better place to learn?

5. Students have talked about the fact that there are many groups or cliques here—that students group themselves by race or popularity. How do you think these groups or cliques affect school unity [the way this school hangs together]?

6. If you feel these groups get in the way, what might happen to make it better?

7. Many students have expressed concern about the new 6-day attendance policy. How has the new attendance policy affected the way you think about going to school?

8. Are there modifications of the policy that the school could consider to get improvement in students' learning?

9. What is interesting schoolwork?
[Follow-up: Which of these things could make you give your very best effort in the classroom?]

10. Students say AHS and _____Township have a bad reputation they don't deserve. The philosophy seems to be "______ Township—and AHS—against the world." What do you think about that?

11. How does this underdog philosophy affect what students do school spirit [unity]?
15. How does this school make you feel?

16. What is it like to be in a classroom here?

17. Pride is very important here. Where does this pride come from?

18. How do you explain that many students say there is lots of pride here but that winning isn't a tradition?

19. More of you say you have attended class this year than in the past. What has changed in your classrooms?

20. How much of a voice do you have in what happens at AHS?

21. What are you most proud of at AHS?

22. How could AHS be a better place for students?
APPENDIX P: PARTNERS IN EDUCATION STUDENT SURVEY
Partners in Education
Student Survey
High School Level

Your opinions are important. Please tell us about your school and how things are going for you. No one will know how you answered these questions. Do not place your name on the survey or answer sheet.

Directions

USE A NUMBER 2 PENCIL ONLY. DO NOT USE INK.
MARK ANSWERS ON THE ANSWER SHEET ONLY.
Darken only ONE circle for each question. If you change your answer, be sure to erase the first answer completely.

On side 1 of the answer sheet provided, darken the correct circle in the sections marked "SEX" and "GRADE" to the left of the dark line. If you are a male, darken 'M'. If you are a female, darken 'F'. Under "GRADE," darken the circle for your current grade in school. For example, darken '10' for 10th grade. DO NOT COMPLETE THE SECTION LABELED NAME.

We want to know how much you agree or disagree with statements in this survey. When answering these questions, think "most of the time," "most teachers," or "most students."

On side 1 of the answer sheet, darken the numbered circle that reflects your opinion according to the following scale.

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = somewhat disagree
4 = somewhat agree
5 = agree
6 = strongly agree

Example: My classes are interesting.
If the student SOMEWHAT AGREES, the circle with a 4 is darkened.

© 1994   Dr. Jim Sweeney, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011
STUDENT SURVEY - HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Darken 1 on the answer sheet if you STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement
Darken 2 if you DISAGREE
Darken 3 if you SOMewhat DISAGREE
Darken 4 if you SOMEWHAT AGREE
Darken 5 if you AGREE
Darken 6 if you STRONGLY AGREE

1. I do my best to learn in school.
2. I concentrate on what is being taught during class.
3. I complete school assignments on time.
4. When I do school work I do it to learn.
5. I take pride in doing my school work.
6. The purpose of this school is to help students learn.
7. Teachers treat students fairly.
8. The principal(s) treats students fairly.
9. Adults in this school listen to the student's side of the story.
10. I understand the school rules.
11. The rules in the school are fair.
12. Rules are enforced fairly in this school.
13. Grade level does not matter in how students are treated by teachers and administrators.
14. School attendance is handled fairly.
15. Grading practices are fair in my classes.
16. Discipline is fair in my classes.
17. Teachers will help me when I am having problems in class or with an assignment.
18. Teachers and other adults in this school will help you deal with home or personal problems.
19. School counselors are helpful.
20. Teachers treat me with respect.
21. My teachers care about me.
22. In this school you are treated like you are important.
23. Teachers reward you for giving your best effort.
24. I am praised in class when I do something well.
25. This school recognizes and rewards student accomplishments.
26. In this school the grades students receive are based on how well they perform.
27. What I am learning in school is interesting.
28. Teachers make learning interesting.
29. There are enough opportunities for students to work together in this school.
30. Teachers let me know how well I am doing.
31. Teachers return my work with written comments and ways to improve.
32. Teachers do their best to help you be responsible for your work.
33. This school provides opportunities for students to have fun.
34. Teachers try to make learning enjoyable.
Darken 1 on the answer sheet if you STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement
Darken 2 if you DISAGREE
Darken 3 if you SOMewhat DISAGREE
Darken 4 if you SOMewhat AGREE
Darken 5 if you AGREE
Darken 6 if you STRONGLY AGREE

35. I have enough say in deciding what I should learn.
36. I have enough say in deciding how I should learn.
37. I can choose the classes that I want to take.
38. What I am learning in school is important to me.
39. Things that I learn in school are useful to me now.
40. I believe this school prepares students to be successful in the future.
41. Students help each other succeed in school.
42. Students in this school treat other students with respect.
43. I have friends in this school.
44. Grade level does not matter in how students are treated by other students.
45. I am proud of this school.
46. I look forward to coming to school each day.
47. There is enough school spirit at this school.
48. I feel safe at this school.
49. I feel good about how our school looks inside and out.
50. If I study and work hard I will be successful in school.
51. If I study and work hard it will make a difference in my life.
52. I am satisfied with the extra-curricular activities (clubs, sports, music, etc.) at this school.
53. I am satisfied with transportation for extra-curricular activities.
54. I am satisfied with the social activities (dances, etc.) provided by our school.
55. I am satisfied with our school lunches.
56. Teachers give too much homework.
57. I am satisfied with bus transportation to and from school.
58. There are things that happen in my life outside of school that make it hard for me to learn in school.
59. This school provides students enough access to computers.
60. I am satisfied with the scheduling of my classes.
61. We have a good principal(s).
62. I am concerned about drug use in this school.
63. I am concerned about alcohol use in this school.
64. I am concerned about guns in our school.
65. Gang related activities cause problems for students in our school.

66. Please indicate your ethnic origin by darkening the appropriate circle.
   A. Caucasian        B. Black        C. Hispanic
   D. Native American  E. Asian/Pacific Islander F. Other
APPENDIX Q: SMALL GROUP DATA ANALYSIS CODES--ROUND ONE ORIGINAL
### Original Codes--Culture Elements--Round One

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APPENDIX S: SMALL GROUP DATA ANALYSIS CODES--
ROUND ONE COLLAPSED
**Collapsed Codes**  
*Small Group Round 1*

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APPENDIX T: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW
Individual Interview #8  11/22/93

Sophomore  Female

Asian

Q. Can you tell me what year you are in school?
A. I'm in my tenth year.

Q. OK, all right, and have you been here two years at AHS?
A. No, this is my first year.

Q. OK. Where did you move from?
A. I moved from Harvey.

Q. What is that close to?
A. It's close to the town of Knoxville.

Q. Oh, yes, I know that town, sure, un huh. What we're going to talk about today is...what I would describe as the personality of the student body at Anycity High School. I'm going to try to, I would like to try to see through a student's eyes what it's like to be here at AHS. Since I can't be sixteen again and come back and enroll and really experience it myself, the next best thing I can do is talk to students here to see what it's like, so I think if, if we understand what is important to students here, then that can help make Anycity High School an even better place than, than it already is...So, I'm going to start by asking you some, to talk about some things that you think are important to students at AHS, some things that they do, or what it is about the way we do things around here as students that would be important. Things people believe, things they value, things they do. So, if I said to you around Anycity High School students, how would you fill in the blank?

A. Around AHS? Could you repeat the question?

Q. At Anycity High School, students...and fill in the blank with what's important.
A. I think they value like school activities such as sports and like after school clubs and the activities that they're involved in.

Q. OK, sports, clubs, good. What else would you put on the list?
A. I think their friends have a lot to do with it.
Q. OK, anything else?
A. ...Maybe to a certain amount their grades, maybe.
Q. Great. Anything else?
A. ...I can't really think of anything.
Q. Well, you just came here a year ago, right? You've been here a year?
A. Well, this is my first year.
Q. This is your first year here?
A. Yah.
Q. When you started school here, were there things that really stood out to you about the way students at Anycity High?
A. Yah, I noticed that...they tended to, there were a lot of clicks. They had groups and stuff, I mean, I know that's like that in every school, but that just kind of stood out to me here.
Q. OK. All right, that's a good one. Anything else?
A. ...Well, besides what, the sports and stuff, the school activities like the dances and Homecoming and all that.
Q. OK. OK, good. Now I'd like to ask you to go back to the things that we've talked about. We'll talk about each one of them in a little bit more detail. If you can tell me a little bit more about them. You said that students here value school activities—sports, clubs, dances, Homecoming.
A. Un huh.
Q. How, how do you know that? I mean, what do they do that makes you say that?
A. Well...for like the, was it, I think it was the first pep assembly, or the assembly? The students were really eager to get involved, and they were all excited about the game and the new year starting and stuff, and everyone just seemed really excited and involved in it and there were a lot of people involved in it, and I think that also shows the, the fact that there's a lot of people involved in those activities and stuff.
Q. OK. Why do you think...activities are so important to students at AHS?
A. Well, partly I think it's because they're friends. I think they have friends in those activities and the same people and the same activity probably tend to have more friends in that group and...and then for the people who like may be in sports who aren't as academically inclined, they go more towards sports.

Q. OK, that helps. OK, good...Let me sum that up for you, and then we'll do one more thing... You said that teachers and administrators here want kids to get good grades, and you think that they want AHS to be a really top school.

A. Yah.

Q. OK, that students treat each other usually with respect and courtesy. There are some times when they're rude.

A. Yah.

Q. Or mean in the halls, but most people treat each other OK. Teachers treat students pretty fairly, most of the time don't judge them and that they tend to be fair to all students... Students' treatment of teachers...you've heard kids be rude and disrespectful, probably you think because they personally dislike the teachers, but that you think overall most students are courteous and respectful...If you had a problem you would go to a teacher or counselor only if it were something related to school; otherwise, you'd probably go to a friend. And opportunities to be successful--yes, you see teachers encourage students, you think people that go to Central Campus really have an opportunity. Specifically you've seen people encouraged to enter contests, things like that...To be successful here as a student, kids need to get good grades, they need to get along with people. That's, that's a nice one. You think there are rewards here, that students get recognized in front of class and of course good grades are rewards...In terms of things being satisfying, rewarding or enjoyable, you think students have a choice there...and students have some say in what goes on here. You think they can voice their opinion in the paper, maybe start a petition, but they have a fair chance. The connection you see between your class work and the real world is what you might need for college, but beyond that, you don't see a lot of connections. There is fun here, especially with games, but sometimes in the classroom if the teacher's humorous or is really active about things. OK, good.

Q. Now, I want to tell you about some things that other students have been talking to us that are important here, and see what you, what you say about them.
And tell me very honestly what you think. Some of the students have said that they think tradition is very important at Anycity High School.

A. Yah, I agree.

Q. Do you? OK, what do you know about that?

A. Well, like the Homecoming Week, especially...like we have them Crazy Days I guess you call it?

Q. OK.

A. So basically the tradition of, you know, dressing up for each day of the week and stuff, and just things for Homecomings and things that involve activities, like after school activities and stuff.

Q. OK, OK. Can you think of anything else you'd like for me know about Anycity High School students?

A. ...I think overall it's a pretty good school, and I think that the, the teachers and administrators here, they, they really care what's good for the student, I mean, yah.

Q. Good. Great. Thank you.

A. Un huh.

Q. ...You've basically agreed with the things that other students have said were important, like tradition and pride, involvement, groups, things here. You've helped me see Anycity High School through a student's eye. Thank you a lot.

A. Un huh.

Q. OK.
Comparisons of Day and Evening Students on Construct Measures

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APPENDIX V: TABLES OF SURVEY FREQUENCIES, MEANS, AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR DAY SCHOOL STUDENTS
# Student Engagement

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<td>5. I take pride in doing my school work.</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Engagement Composite Mean** 4.24
## School Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>6 - strongly agree</th>
<th>5 - agree</th>
<th>4 - somewhat agree</th>
<th>3 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>2 - disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. The purpose of this school is to help students learn.</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teachers treat students fairly.</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The principal(s) treat students fairly.</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Adults in this school listen to the student's side of the story.</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I understand the school rules.</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The rules in the school are fair.</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Rules are enforced fairly in this school.</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Grade level does not matter in how students are treated by teachers and administrators.</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. School attendance is handled fairly.</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Grading practices are fair in my classes.</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Discipline is fair in my classes.</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>6 - strongly agree</td>
<td>5 - agree</td>
<td>4 - somewhat agree</td>
<td>3 - somewhat disagree</td>
<td>2 - disagree</td>
<td>1 - strongly disagree</td>
<td>number responses</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Teachers will help me when I am having problems in class or with an assignment.</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Teachers and other adults in this school will help you deal with home or personal problems.</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. School counselors are helpful.</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Teachers treat me with respect.</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. My teachers care about me.</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. In this school you are treated like you are important.</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

School Membership Composite Mean 4.03
### Authentic Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>6 - strongly agree</th>
<th>5 - agree</th>
<th>4 - somewhat agree</th>
<th>3 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>2 - disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. Teachers reward you for giving your best effort.</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I am praised in class when I do something well.</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. This school recognizes and rewards student accomplishments.</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. The grades students receive are based on how well they perform.</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. What I am learning in school is interesting.</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Teachers make learning interesting.</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. There are enough opportunities for students to work together in this school.</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Teachers let me know how well I am doing.</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Teachers return my work with written comments and ways to improve.</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
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<td>5 - agree</td>
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<td>3 - somewhat disagree</td>
<td>2 - disagree</td>
<td>1 - strongly disagree</td>
<td>Number responses</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Teachers do their best to help you be responsible for your work.</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. This school provides opportunities for students to have fun.</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Teachers try to make learning enjoyable</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.26</td>
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**Authentic Work Composite Mean**

3.76
Sense of Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
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<th>5 - somewhat agree</th>
<th>4 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>3 - disagree</th>
<th>2 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. I have enough say in deciding what I should learn.</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. I have enough say in deciding how I should learn.</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. I can choose the classes that I want to take.</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
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Ownership Composite Mean 3.82
## Future Orientation

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<th>4 - somewhat agree</th>
<th>3 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>2 - disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38. What I am learning in school is important to me.</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Things that I learn in school are useful to me now.</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. I believe this school prepares students to be successful in the future.</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.41</td>
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**Future Orientation Composite Mean** 4.19
### Peer Relationships

<table>
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<th>5 - agree</th>
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<th>3 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>2 - disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41. Students help each other succeed in school.</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Students in this school treat other students with respect.</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. I have friends in this school.</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Grade level does not matter in how students are treated by other students.</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.40</td>
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</table>

**Peer Relationships Composite Mean** 3.96
### Esprit

<table>
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<th>3 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>2 - disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45. I am proud of this school.</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. I look forward to coming to school each day.</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. There is enough school spirit at this school.</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. I feel safe at this school.</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. I feel good about how our school looks inside and out.</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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**Esprit Composite Mean**

3.84
### Student Efficacy

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<th>5 - agree</th>
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<th>3 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>2 - disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50. If I study and work hard I will be successful in school.</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. If I study and work hard it will make a difference in my life.</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>1.22</td>
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**Efficacy Composite Mean** 4.77
### Extra-curricular Activities

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<th>5 - agree</th>
<th>4 - somewhat agree</th>
<th>3 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>2 - disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52. I am satisfied with the extra-curricular activities (clubs, sports, music, etc.) at this school.</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. I am satisfied with transportation for extra-curricular activities.</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. I am satisfied with the social activities (dances, etc.) provided by our school.</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extra-Curricular Composite Mean** 4.07
Other Related Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>6 - strongly agree</th>
<th>5 - agree</th>
<th>4 - somewhat agree</th>
<th>3 - somewhat disagree</th>
<th>2 - disagree</th>
<th>1 - strongly disagree</th>
<th>number responses</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55. I am satisfied with our school lunches.</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Teachers give too much homework.</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. I am satisfied with bus transportation to and from school.</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. There are things that happen in my life outside of school that make it hard for me to learn in school.</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. This school provides students enough access to computers.</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. I am satisfied with the scheduling of my classes.</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. We have good principal(s).</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. I am concerned about drug use in this school.</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. I am concerned about alcohol use in this school.</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. I am concerned about guns in our school.</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Gang related activities cause problems for students in our school.</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>