A qualitative analysis of the culture of parents and community members of a comprehensive high school: an examination of loyal support

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A qualitative analysis of the culture of parents and community members of a comprehensive high school: an examination of loyal support

by

Laura Studer Brock

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Administration)

Major Professor: William K. Poston

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2000
This is to certify that the Doctoral dissertation of

Laura Studer Brock

has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

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For the Major Program

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For the Graduate College
This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Roger L. Brock, and my daughter Elizabeth L. Brock, for their love and support in seeing me through this research; and to my parents, Gerald A. Studer and Marlene E. Studer for giving me the best, always.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover and determine the elements of the parent/community culture of a comprehensive high school. More specifically, the study investigated the main elements of the parent/community culture, identified the factors contributing to that culture and their relative strengths, determined the education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes, determined how the loyal support culture was developed and maintained, and described the parent/community culture itself. The research was conducted at a comprehensive high school located in a mid-sized city in the Midwest.

Interviewing was the primary method of data collection. Small group interviews were conducted with 79 participants, individual interviews were conducted with 12 participants, and informal interviews were conducted throughout 24 days spent in the field. After the interview process began, it was clear that nearly all the participants were generally positive and supportive of the school. The study was then framed through the lens of a “loyal support” culture. The beliefs, values, and attitudes were collapsed through an inductive process to provide key elements and factors of the culture.

Other means of data collection included the Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices (O'Connell, 1993) on the impact and quality of school practices and the level of support for the school. Additionally, an informal survey was provided to high school alumni at their annual alumni reunion banquet. The data from these two surveys provided valuable insights into the cultural elements and factors and was used in data triangulation.

Results of the study determined that nine cultural elements comprised of 45 cultural factors were the foundation of this parent/community culture in relation to the high school.
Of the nine cultural elements, one had a weak contribution to the parent/community culture; four had moderate contributions; three had strong contributions; and one had a very strong contribution to the parent/community culture. Of the 45 cultural factors, eleven were rated as "Weak," eleven were rated as "Moderate," eighteen were rated as "Strong," and five were rated as "Very Strong." The parent/community culture is strong, thus it helps perpetuate the educational values, beliefs, and attitudes that both help and hinder educational progress at the local high school.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

It seems only fair to acknowledge, based on studies of school quality and its relation to student performance, as well as disappointing evaluations of many, many different types of school reform, that although schools matter, they probably account for less variation in student achievement than we believe—or than we hope—they do. (Steinberg, 1996, p.58)

Steinberg (1996) acknowledges that schools may have less impact on student achievement than most educators would prefer to believe. Despite two decades of educational reform, many reform efforts, for the most part, have failed or have not been reasonably successful. Studies indicate there has been a lack of systemic change, particularly in our high schools. In a study surveying over 3,300 high school principals, Cawelti (1994) reported there was little systemic change in high schools and only spotty reform efforts. Sizer (1992) characterized the high school as an institution unable and uncommitted to change; satisfied with maintaining the status quo. High schools continue to pigeonhole students into honors, regular, and special needs classes, and "expose" students to a vague and conventional curriculum (Sizer, 1992). Students in our high schools are clearly still at risk.

External pressures on public schools to change may seem obvious enough as national commissions, state legislatures and governors suggest remedies or devise plans for improving schools (Deal, 1993). Yet, Deal adds, "Less obvious to school principals, district superintendents, and some academics is exactly what these external constituencies want" (p. 14).

Even more recent research continues to affirm the notion that America's students are not measuring up. Steinberg (1996) provides the following depressing outlook on the "unusual" nature of successful school reform efforts:
Although there are occasional success stories in the media about a school here or a program there that has turned students' performance around—stories which are widely publicized in the popular media precisely because they are so unusual—the competence of American students overall has not improved. (p. 48)

Public schooling may not be as bad as some would have us think. What is unfortunate to educators, parents, and the public is a lack of clear information and documented evidence on the true status of our schools. In an annual report (Bracey, 1999) advises that public opinion of our schools has been clouded by misinformation and sloppy research. Bracey provides documentation to refute common misconceptions held today. He asserts that standardized testing has gone so far overboard that the results can be misleadingly high or low. As for the "public vs. private" debate, Bracey finds no clear differences between these types of schools when comparing curriculum and success. School choice or privatization has not yielded in superior achievement according to Bracey's report. He also contends that recent reports on class size reduction reforms may not shed accurate information due to the consequential factors such as increases in non-certificated teachers especially in the impoverished inner-cities. We appear to be our own worst enemies. Bracey states, "After decades of working in the arena of public school performance, I have concluded that many Americans have a neurotic need, almost a compulsion, to believe the worst about their schools" (p. 165).

Nevertheless, achievement is not as it could be in our public schools, especially high schools. The complexity and size of high schools contribute to the failure to implement meaningful change. Some would say that high school teachers are subject-centered rather than student-centered; therefore, teachers do not understand that today's schools fail to meet students' needs. There are many other possible causes for the lack of effective change.
Schools have ever increasing challenges facing them, especially high schools. Problems associated with poverty, violence, diverse populations, technological advances, court decisions, and changing families continue to plague our high schools. Columbine High School's massacre of 1998-99 will be in the forefront of our memories for quite some time.

There are those that contend that understanding the culture of the school and the factors that influence that culture hold the key to change in these schools. But, what is culture? Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952) early definition of culture provides insights into the implication of culture for schools and for change in schools:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (p. 45)

There are two key points in this definition that underlie the purposes of this study. The first point is that "traditional ideas and their attached values" act as conditioning elements for further action. Ideas and values of school staff and, perhaps, people in the community influence the way teachers and students think and the things they choose to do. For example, it's important for students to believe that school is important and to engage in learning. It seems likely that if parents and community members think learning is important, this will indeed influence the thinking and subsequent behavior of the students.

The second key point is that culture systems are "products of action." Ideas and values are caused by actions and events in the systems. For example, if school policies serve mainly to punish students who cause trouble rather than provide assistance, parents may begin to think the school is punitive and doesn't care about their kids. Therefore, they
become less cooperative in helping to resolve student conflicts at school. It becomes important to understand the cyclical nature of culture—that culture can be influenced by activities and events. Culture, in turn, influences behavior of the people in a system. If factors that influence culture are understood, these insights can be used to promote actions that will result in more positive ways of thinking and develop more positive values toward learning.

Schein (1992) provides support for studying culture and the factors that influence culture. He concluded that organizational culture is a "multidimensional, multifaceted phenomenon" which "fulfills not only the function of providing stability, meaning, and predictability in the present but is the result of functionally effective decisions in the group's past" (Schein, p. 68). According to Schein, an understanding of culture not only provides deeper understanding of groups of people or organizations, it also helps us understand why it is so hard to change them.

Unfortunately, school reform has somewhat ignored school culture and almost completely ignored the culture of a school's parents and community. Earlier studies by Brookover et al. (1979) and Rutter et al. (1979) provide evidence that culture does make a difference in schools. Brookover et al. found that the culture system in elementary schools affects the productivity of the school. In high schools, Rutter et al. found that the school "ethos" separated more effective from less effective schools. There is also evidence that the culture of the community influences school culture. Research has linked school norms and values with those of the community. In a study of eight diverse high schools, Metz (1990) determined that school norms tend to conform to local community norms about the purpose
and value of education. Metz also identified the community, including parents, as one of five factors shaping the context of teachers' work. She also found that students' perspectives in a particular school are likely to be a blend of those fostered by the community, the staff, and the student body. Clearly, parents and communities have direct influences on teacher and student behaviors and outcomes.

Schools and educators have made some attempts to include parents and community members in schools. For example, the *Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll* (Rose and Gallup, 1998) identified parents' and community members' satisfaction with their schools and queries them about what they want from their schools. Quality improvement programs have caused more local schools to ask their "customers", clienteles, parents, and community members how well their school is performing and what can be done to provide better service to them. But, they may have not made an attempt to determine what parents' and community members' ideas and values are, and the factors that influence these ideas and values. We must go beyond merely knowing what external constituencies want for their schools and also determine how they themselves influence the very culture of their schools. The external constituency at the level closest to the school is that of parents and close community members. What parents and community members think, believe, and value related to the culture of the school must be understood.

Unfortunately, little is known about parents' and community members' beliefs, values, and attitudes related to schools, and how these beliefs, values, and attitudes are developed and sustained. Nor is it understood how the activities of the school and teachers reflect the parent/community culture. Understanding parent/community culture, its development, and
the factors that influence it can subsequently enhance the process of initiating and managing change in our schools.

**Statement of the Problem**

America's public schools have been highly scrutinized over the past two decades as school improvement efforts have been undertaken in order to "fix" public education. The current wave of school reform has not resulted in significant change, especially in secondary schools, which appear to be more resistant. Early efforts to study culture in the workplace have provided some valuable insights into the vagaries of school change. The culture of the school (beliefs, attitudes, and values) appears to support or block efforts for meaningful change in schools.

Culture helps explain why schools exhibit common and stable patterns under variable conditions. Within the school, culture gives meaning to instructional activity. Externally, culture provides the "symbolic facade" that elicits faith and confidence among outsiders with a stake in education (Meyer and Rowan as cited in Deal, 1993, p.7). Developing a positive school culture is a key to success in improving schools (Sweeney, 1991). A strong, positive school culture is more likely to promote staff behaviors that maximize learning opportunities for students (Sweeney).

School norms and values have been linked with those of the community. In her extensive research with eight diverse schools and their communities, Metz (1990) reported that school norms, particularly those related to the purpose and value of education, tend to conform to local community norms. Understanding the integrated pattern of beliefs, values, and attitudes, of the parent/community culture may enhance understanding of the school
culture. Perhaps the parent/community culture has an even more important influence on the culture of the school. More needs to be known about the parent/community culture, the factors that create this culture, and the extent to which the parent/community culture influences the school.

The problem for this study is to define and describe the basic components of a parent/community culture; extrapolate and clarify the specific factors which influence a parent/community culture; discover and determine the specific and integrated pattern of education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of a parent/community culture; and to determine the specific factors contributing to the development of a parent/community culture and the unique school-loyalty of community members and high school graduates.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study was designed to provide information about a high school's parent/community culture, the specific education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes underlying that culture, its development, and the factors that influence the culture. Data collected in this study was also used in a high school culture case study. The case study, conducted by several researchers, examined the relationships of a high school's faculty work culture, student culture, and parent/community culture, thus providing an integrated view of the school culture.

Following are the specific purposes of this study of a parent/community culture followed by the purposes related to the case study. The purposes of the case study were not addressed or reported as part of this specific document.
Purposes of this study:

1. To discover and describe the basic elements of a high school parent/community culture.

2. To identify the specific factors which influenced a high school parent/community culture and describe the relative strength of these factors.

3. To determine the specific education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of a high school parent/community culture.

4. To identify the traditions and behaviors that primarily influenced the development and maintenance of a loyal support culture.

5. To provide a rich description of the high school parent/community culture.

This document does not report on the larger case study of which this study was one component. For the reader's interest, the purposes of the larger case study are listed below:

1. To describe the relationship of Anycity High School's parent/community culture with Anycity High School's: school culture, student culture, and faculty culture.

2. To describe the relationship of the parent/community culture's specific education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes with Anycity High School's: school culture, student culture, and faculty culture.

3. To examine the relationship of the parent/community culture's specific education-related factors, events, or activities with Anycity High School's: school culture, student culture, and faculty culture.
Research Questions

The research questions below are designed to provide direction for this study's investigation of a high school parent/community culture.

1. What are the basic elements comprising a high school parent/community culture?
2. What are the specific factors that influenced the development of the high school parent/community culture?
3. What is the relative strength of each specific cultural factor?
4. What are the specific education-related parent/community beliefs, values, and attitudes comprising the culture of the parent/community?
5. What traditions and behaviors primarily influenced the development and maintenance of the parent/community culture and promoted loyal support?
6. What is the culture of the parents/community of the selected comprehensive high school?

Assumptions

This study was predicated on the following basic assumptions:

1. Schools have unique cultures as do the parents/communities related to each school.
2. School culture is important to school improvement and change.
3. Parent/community culture influences school culture, and has a direct impact on teacher engagement and, thus, student engagement and achievement.
4. Participants will respond to interview questions in a manner reflecting their beliefs, values, and attitudes.
5. Participants will understand and interpret the interview questions as intended by the researcher.

6. Voluntary participants are more likely to be positive, supportive and involved in the activities of the school.

Limitations of the study

This research project was a study of the culture of the parents/community of a comprehensive high school. Participation of parents and community members in interviews or in completing surveys was voluntary. Like many school activities, the supportive parents and community members are the usual people to volunteer and participate. Though attempts were made to involve parents identified as negative or of low support, it was clear that a cross-section would be difficult to achieve.

Participation of community members was limited due to time constraints and the limitations of selective sampling. Community members were identified by the school principal and recruited. Snowball sampling techniques led to further participants. Clearly, not all community members could be involved in this study and were limited to those identified for interviews. A larger community sampling technique is left for future study. Further, many participants shared roles across “grouping” lines. For example, the parents often were involved in the community businesses and groups, thus, they could serve dual purposes in the interview process. In addition, many business participants were either parents of current students or alumni of Anycity High, themselves. This reality may have caused limitations in the ability to gather a cross section of the community participants.
Just as the context of this research was limited, the theoretical framework has limitations due to the inability to examine all possible factors within the model. While the broader context of parents and community are recognized by this researcher as possible factors that impact the culture of parents and community of a high school, it was not feasible to conduct this study without limiting its scope.
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature for this study defines culture in relation to the study of schools, defines the attributes of parent and community culture, helps to provide an understanding of the research related to the impact of parent/community culture on high schools and provides a rationale for the theoretical framework guiding this study. Moreover, this review of literature provides an understanding of the research methods used to study parent/community culture. The following sections of this chapter discuss school culture, parent/community culture factors, the research model/conceptual framework for this study, and the qualitative research methodology selected for this study.

School Culture

The philosophy and theory of culture must antecede its definition. Culture appears to be a misunderstood term at the heart of debate and confusion for researchers and lay people alike. The literature is full of definitions for culture with little firm agreement. Culture has had many definitions over the years especially in its role in the fields of anthropology and sociology (Barnes, 1995). Culture is explained by Saranson (1971) as “…a distinct structure or pattern that, so to speak, governs roles and interrelationships within that setting. What is implied, in addition, is that structure antedates any one individual and will continue in the absence of the individual” (p. 12). Kilmann (1989) likens culture to an “invisible force” or “energy” that moves people to action (p.50). The following analogy by Kilmann provides clarity to the concept of culture. He states, “Culture is to the organization what personality is
to the individual—a hidden yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilization” (Kilmann, p. 50).

Meaning changes over time. Erickson (1987) noted that, commonly, anthropologists have thought of culture as a system of ordinary, taken-for-granted meanings and symbols having both explicit and implicit content. He explains that culture is deliberately and nondeliberately passed down among members of a social group that is naturally bounded together. In contrast, Erickson suggests that some sociologists have argued for social structure or political economy as a better explanation for variations in norms, values, and beliefs rather than the anthropological notion of culture. In a thought provoking statement, Erickson (1987) asserts that culture defines options because it molds what we think is possible. He describes culture as ontological; culture defines what does and does not exist in the world around us.

School culture, as a unique term, holds its own definitions and qualities as revealed in research over the past few decades. Saranson (1971) characterizes the nature of school culture by stating, “The school is a reflection of our society as well as the principal vehicle by which its young are socialized or prepared for life in adult society” (p. 7). In defining school culture, characteristics or components have been identified. Pawlas (1997) lists seven key components of a strong, effective school culture. Included are shared values, humor, storytelling, empowerment, networks of communication, rituals and ceremonies, and collegiality. Beckum and Zimney (1991) assert that school culture and specifically a classroom culture “can be viewed as having two main dimensions- an external dimension that refers to the classroom practices that directly reflect the demands of the dominant culture
(community, school as an institution, family), and an internal dimension (student, teacher) that emerges from the dynamic interaction of student and teacher when they come together in the classroom” (p. 127).

One of the main reasons Erickson (1987) suggests a need to study the culture of schools is that by determining the culture, or patterns of social organization, a reasoned basis is developed for making educational reform a possibility. Likewise, in a study of high school faculty work culture, Barnes (1995) asserts that, “Research in schools have shown that the ‘ethos’ or the culture appears to be the major determinant of school effectiveness and productivity” (p. 39).

It is apparent that culture is an important factor in the study of society, communities, organizations, and schools. School culture does have an impact upon the schooling of children. Sweeney (1991) states that developing a positive culture is the key to success in improving schools. The study of the values, norms, beliefs, and ways of thinking has been shown in the literature to demonstrate an impact upon the effectiveness of the entity being studied. Knowing the culture of the students and utilizing unifying, interactive experiences in the classroom can help improve opportunities for positive student development and enhance the entire schooling process (Beckum and Zimney, 1991).

Culture is a recognized factor in the effectiveness of the school organization. If we truly wish to understand our schools, especially in the world in which we live today, we must study the culture of the school.
Parent/Community Culture Factors in Relation to School Culture

Researchers agree that effective school reform efforts must take the community, its culture and conditions, into account if reform efforts are to be successful (Metz, 1990; McLaughlin and Talbert, 1990; Steinberg, 1996). Though little was found in the literature regarding the impact of specific cultural factors outside the walls of high schools, the literature clearly suggests that the culture of the community and involvement of parents in their child’s education are recognized factors influencing school reform efforts.

American families have changed greatly in recent decades along with the changes in our society. Families are no longer the “two parent, two child, stay-at-home mother, working father, living in a single-family home in a middle class neighborhood family,” as was once thought typical (Fuller, 1993). Single parent families, blended families, divorce, ethnicity, and poverty are issues changing the faces of American families. It is predicted that up to one third of all children born in the 1980s will live with a stepparent before age 18, that a third of families with children will live in poverty, and that by 2010, 30-40 percent of all children will be members of minority racial and ethnic groups (Fuller). It appears that children come to school less prepared than in the past to learn ever increasing amounts of information. Many educators believe that schools cannot succeed on their own. Teachers have long recognized the value of parent and community support in educating our children.

Researchers are beginning to understand the impact that outside factors have upon schools, school culture, reform efforts, teacher engagement, and student achievement. Louis and Smith (1992) include “community and district environment of the school” and “school culture, and particularly teacher culture” as two of four factors influencing teacher
engagement. Clearly, the impact of the community and the culture of the school influence the ways in which teachers engage students in the learning process and, thus, the student outcomes achieved. Bell (1993) insists that achievement problems are not the fault of schools alone. He states:

Today, however, school leaders and others must turn increasingly to the parents, homes, and communities. We have foolishly concluded that any problems with the levels of academic achievement have been caused by faulty schools staffed by inept teachers—and that by fixing the schools we can attain the levels of success we so desperately need in this decade. Certainly, there is much that needs to be done within schools, for they must become dramatically better in the coming decades than they have ever been. But education must become everyone's responsibility, and we must transform the total culture so that it nurtures learning inside and outside the school. We must become a learning society. (Bell, 1993, p. 596-7)

Beckum and Zimney (1991) suggest that existing research demonstrates “the norms, ideals, values, or even prejudices of the community or society influence and, in some cases, dictate school and classroom practices and activities” (p. 125). They go on further to suggest that researchers have found because schools are influenced by the greater society the “poor, ethnic, racial, and language minority groups often undergo educational experiences which serve to maintain the dominant culture, and result in their further marginalization, socially and economically” (p. 125).

In research focused on rural American schools, the cultural context of schooling is approached, “Public schools were local outposts of the national culture embedded in local communities” (DeYoung, 1994, p. 14). In this manner, schools are reflections of the culture of the community. DeYoung also discusses the issue of “oppositional cultures” where, for example, the community norms clearly impact the norms of the school. He cites examples of rural Appalachian communities in which hunting is a recognized factor of life and in which
deer season means that school is closed for the opening week of the hunting season. Most assuredly, this impact of the community on the culture and norms of the school cannot help but impact teachers, students, and learning.

In a study of teachers at eight secondary schools, Metz (1990) used detailed descriptions of three of the eight schools studied to demonstrate how socioeconomic characteristics of the community affect not only the characteristics of students, but also the behaviors of parents in relation to teachers. The socioeconomic and educational characteristics of teachers who are recruited to the schools, the behavior of the principal, and staff expectations of the role that education plays in the lives of children were also found to be affected by the socioeconomic characteristics of the community in Metz’ study. Metz concluded, “For both individual students and individual teachers, the experience of life in school and the effectiveness of their academic efforts is deeply affected by the social class of the school in which they happen to find themselves” (p. 102). Metz argues that school and teacher culture tend to conform to local community norms about education, which are socioeconomically based, and that it's more difficult for middle class teachers to generate both high expectations and have sensitivity for students' backgrounds when they teach in lower socioeconomic schools.

Additionally, Metz (1990) noted that the nature of the community/school link also differed according to social class. Parents in high and middle SES (Social Economic Status) schools of generally smaller size had more collective and individual control in schooling. Low SES schools often were in large metropolitan areas where individual and collective parent control was hampered by the large size of the urban district. Issues of social class got
into schools primarily through community pressures and through the students. Reform
efforts, Metz concludes, must take heed of the social class differences among schools and
base change efforts according to the analysis of the needs of schools in light of their specific
social class identity.

The "Iron Law of Social Class" suggested by Louis and Smith (1992) demonstrates a
type of self-fulfilling prophecy in the values and culture of the community. This "Iron Law"
suggests: (1) The higher the socioeconomic status of the community, the higher the value
placed on education; (2) the higher the value placed on education, the more the system will
press teachers to perform; (3) the greater the pressure on teachers to deliver, the higher the
performance of the students (p. 124). This "law" supports the thesis that the culture of the
community and, thus, the parents of students in a particular school have a deep impact on the
resulting success (or failure) of the achievement of their students.

Social class is not a new concept in regards to having an identified impact and
influence on schools, students, and teachers. Hollingshead (1949) studied the impact of
social class on high school students. He found that the home (social class) conditions the
way students behave in school, church, etc. Hollingshead determined that family and
neighborhoods influence how students conceptualize themselves, others, and right from
wrong. The manner in which students then conceptualize themselves is carried with them in
school, church, and other areas of life. Hollingshead’s landmark study, *Elmstown’s Youth*,
captured the essence of the influence environmental factors had upon high school students.

In a recent study of high school students, Steinberg (1996) found that issues outside
of the school setting had a significant impact on achievement level of students. The study
surveyed 20,000 students over three years, conducted small focus group interviews, interviewed approximately 600 students individually, and interviewed teachers and parents. Factors such as student engagement, ethnicity and achievement, parenting styles, home environment, peer group influence, and student employment were studied and analyzed. Steinberg agreed that good teachers in good schools do positively impact the abilities for students to succeed, yet, his research clearly indicates that factors outside of school may have more important influences upon student achievement than factors within the school setting.

Steinberg (1996) explains that neighborhoods "matter" because the neighborhood in which a family lives affects the pool of peers their child comes into contact with. Student peers, then, influence the behaviors of each other. Steinberg's research found that achievement of students was positively impacted by peer groups that believed success in school and working hard were acceptable and that their personal success would impact their future employability. Students with peer groups that did not support education or success in school were less likely to perform well. In fact, peers with poor academic influence over their friends were likely to negatively counteract the positive and supportive behaviors of parents.

Factors found in Steinberg's research that appear to increase the likeliness that a neighborhood will provide a good social environment for children include high parent involvement in schools, high levels of parental participation in organized activities serving children, and a high level of parental supervision and monitoring.

Steinberg lists several factors outside of school that must be addressed if reform efforts are to succeed. The most serious and prevalent factor is parental disengagement from
the child's life and education. Secondly, contemporary American peer pressure that scorns doing well and demeans academic success is a strong influence on students. Third, an overloaded activity schedule demands too much of a student's time and attention away from academics. Sports, after-school jobs, and socializing strip away the time for actual engagement in academic tasks and homework.

In addition to eight other recommendations for improving student achievement, Steinberg recommends that efforts to improve parental effectiveness through training or clinics is critical to help develop the fundamentals for good parenting. He also recommends efforts to increase parental involvement in schools by engaging parents in meaningful ways in the business of schools and their child's education.

Sanders and Epstein (1998) included six types of involvement in their framework of essential elements of a comprehensive program of school-family-community partnerships. The six types of involvement are: 1) parenting, 2) communicating, 3) volunteering, 4) learning at home, 5) decision-making, and 6) collaborating with community. This framework was used in a study of two middle schools and two high schools. The results of the study indicated that school personnel, students, and parents do maintain a strong belief in the importance of school-family-community partnerships to students' success in and beyond high school. The schools under study were in the beginning stages of implementing activities from the six types of involvement. Findings included that time for working on school-family-community partnerships is limited and suggested that attitudes of educators and families can present obstacles to effective school-home-community partnerships.
Further, the findings indicated that with a team approach and the right support, the school community can work together to build an effective program of partnership.

In a larger study of six high schools, two rural, two urban, and two suburban, analyses of survey data from 423 parents provided further information regarding parental attitudes and school partnership programs (Sanders, Epstein, and Connors-Tadros, 1999). The findings showed that school partnership programs positively influenced parental attitudes toward school. The study suggested that different types of school practices resulted in different parental involvement behaviors. School practices that assisted parenting and promoted interactions with teens on learning activities at home positively and significantly impacted the involvement of parents. In conclusion, the study indicated that high schools that develop strong programs of partnership that include different types of involvement are likely to encourage greater family involvement both at home and school, and improve parental attitudes toward the school.

Recent views on parent involvement were revealed in a study (Pryor, 1995) conducted in five Midwestern school districts. In this study, students’, parents’, and teachers’ views were gathered through questionnaires, focus groups, or telephone interviews. The results indicated a positive attitude about parent involvement was positively correlated with student-school bonding and student success. Ironically, there was no association found between parent involvement attitude and parents’ participation in school events. Pryor reported that in all five schools parents were eager for improved communication from the school. School safety was the most common concern reported by parents. Parents expressed
interest in being more involved in the school in a variety of ways and wanted to be more involved in school governance.

Contrary to this evidence, teachers felt that the major problem with most teenagers today is their parents' lack of concern about their education. Students were more reluctant about having their parents involved in their education. Generally, students wanted parents to help with their academic work but stay out of their social lives. All in all, a large majority of parents, students, and teachers agreed that children do better in school when parents are involved in their child's education (Pryor, 1995). It is clear that teachers and parents must share the responsibility for educating youngsters to be productive citizens.

The study of the work life of teachers also presents opportunity to study a variety of factors in school culture. In a study of teacher work life, Louis (1990) asserts that the values of the outside community of the school affect all areas of perceived quality of work life. The values of the outside community have the most obvious impact on the respect and status accorded to teachers and hence on teachers' sense of efficacy and relevance" (Louis). In essence, teachers believe they can achieve what the community believes they can achieve.

Teacher effectiveness is dependent upon many factors such as motivation, conception of tasks, enthusiasm over subject matter, and sense of efficacy (McLaughlin and Talbert, 1990). The contexts of the school workplace and teacher effectiveness are inextricably intertwined. It is the context of the secondary school, not only within the school, but beyond the school walls that either enable or constrain teachers' best work and professional growth (McLaughlin and Talbert, 1990). In view of the context of secondary teaching, five contextual layers were identified in a model for study. The layers for consideration included
a teacher's subject area/department, the school's structure and culture, the school sector/policy system, the community social class culture, and the educational value system including societal, professional, and community (McLaughlin and Talbert). These contextual layers were situated in a model depicting the innermost layer as the "subject area /department" with the school's structure and culture layered next, then the school sector/policy system, then the community social class culture, and so on. "Each of these contexts of secondary education can define teachers' work, inhibit or support professional authority over classroom instruction, and affect teachers' thinking and feeling about their work with students" (McLaughlin and Talbert, 1990, p.4). The diverse and interacting contexts of the teachers' work place shape teachers' professional roles and dispositions. This, in turn, shapes the educational experience of the students. Student success is dependent upon the impact of the intertwined contexts within and surrounding the school. Apparently, it does take a village to raise a child.

Teachers' values and behaviors are important in creating an engaging learning environment for students. It is clear that the values, beliefs, and norms (the culture) of the parents and community of the school are a crucial in shaping teachers' behaviors in a positive way. Louis and Smith (1992) reveal insights on the issues and concerns that have surfaced in the quest to analyze and improve student engagement. They state:

Because teachers' work and students' work are inextricably intertwined, teacher alienation is a primary stumbling block to improving student engagement. From the student's point of view, teacher engagement is a prerequisite for student engagement ("Why work for a teacher who doesn't really care or make learning stimulating?"). From the teacher's point of view, student engagement is critical to teacher investment ("Why waste my time on students who don't try?"). In this sense, teacher engagement is a critical step in the process of creating schools that increase student learning opportunities and improve student achievement (p. 120).
Researchers agree that engaged teachers promote the engagement of students in meaningful learning. Newmann et al (1992) provides insight to the factors affecting student engagement including: 1) students' personal and social backgrounds, 2) the district and community context, whose norms and policies affect many aspects of life in school, 3) school culture, reflected in beliefs and values of staff and students, 4) school organization (size, structure, division of labor), 5) curriculum, 6) teachers' background and competence, and 7) teacher--student interaction, in and out of class. Not specifically addressed in the previous list of factors is the effect of the culture of the parents/community even though both school culture and the context of the community are included. Engagement in academic work is defined by Newmann et al 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" (p. 12). Educators can enhance students' academic engagement by building a sense of membership in the school at large and providing academic tasks to maximize the authenticity of the schoolwork (Newmann et al).

Research Model/Conceptual Framework

A conceptual model was developed to guide this study and provide structure for conducting the study and analyzing the data. The model for this study was intended to provide a theoretical base for the study of parent/community culture and the factors that comprise and influence it. Because a purpose of this study was to discover and identify the basic elements and factors of a parent/community culture of a comprehensive high school, two proposed factors (traditions/rituals and loyal support), not identified in the literature,
were included in the original model. The method of identifying theories from empirical data is called "grounded" theory (Spradley, 1979). The school of focus for this study displayed a unique factor of loyal support through its extensive alumni association. This theme emerged early in the data collection phase and appeared to have special relevance to the study. The high school alumni have a large, well-maintained alumni association and hold an annual reunion for all alumni. The cultural factor of "traditions/rituals" was also deemed to be especially important to this study in light of the traditions of the alumni. Additionally, the high school studied appeared to be held in high esteem by the alumni as many would hold their college. Though the constructs of "loyal support" and "traditions/rituals" were not identified specific to parent/community culture through the literature, these unique elements were deemed important to be specifically studied.

The review of literature in the previous section provided the constructs for the framework or model for this study. Explicitly put, Bell (1993) states the total culture of a school must be transformed in order to improve our schools. For the purposes of this study, the "total culture" is identified as 1) the parent/community culture and its factors related to education; and 2) the school culture including student culture (student engagement), teacher culture (teacher engagement), leadership (principal), and student achievement (academic success). The part of the total culture under investigation for this study only focuses on the parent/community culture though some data tend to reflect the overall school culture.

The model shown in Figure 2.1 displays the total culture of a school with the parent/community culture surrounding the school culture. The school culture is comprised of the student culture, the teacher culture, and school leadership. Within the school culture,
TOTAL CULTURE

PARENT/COMMUNITY CULTURE

- community values
- socio-economic status
- ethnic or racial minority status
- parental involvement/support
- parental disengagement
- parental control in education
- neighborhood (peer influence)
- "Iron Law of Social Class"

- community norms
- family type (i.e. single parent)
- beliefs/ideals
- attitudes/values
- loyal support
- traditions/rituals

SCHOOL CULTURE

Student culture

Student achievement

Teacher culture

Teacher engagement

Student engagement

Leadership

Figure 2.1 Parent/community culture model
teacher engagement and student engagement are intertwined and connected resulting in
student achievement. Arrows push down from the parent/community culture representing the
influence that cultural factors have on school culture. Those influences in turn exert
influence on the teacher culture, student culture, and school leadership. This internal
pressure then impacts both student and teacher engagement and ultimately, student
achievement. The model also has arrows pressing out from school culture to the
parent/community culture. This outward pressure indicates that the factors of the school
culture, including student achievement, influence the parent/community culture. The
model's design flows from outside to inside and inside to outside. The factors and
components are interconnected and interrelated. The flow of influence is constantly ebbing
back and forth exerting pressure and influence from one component to another.

Definitions of each element in the model are provided below. A definition of
“parent/community culture” is also included:

**Attitudes**—ideas or feelings about things

**Beliefs**—convictions, things held as “true”

**Educational value system**—values held by the greater school community which may inhibit
or support teachers’ work

**Ethnic or racial minority status**—level to which diversity is viewed positively or
negatively

**Family status**—particular set of factors that make up the family unit: one-parent, two-
parent, divorce, stay at home, parent(s) work
"Iron Law of Social Class"—theory that higher SES parents demand better education for their children and schools rise to meet the demand

Loyal support—intangible norm to hold blind faith in the school and support it wholeheartedly

Neighborhoods (peer influence)—neighborhoods matter because peers in the local neighborhood impact the behaviors and values of students either positively or negatively

Parent/community culture—the culture of a comprehensive high school’s parents and community members as related to education

Parental control in education—ability for parents to “have a say” in schooling

Parental disengagement—parent(s) has little involvement in child’s life and education

Parental involvement—parent’s level of activity and perceived level of support related to school functions (conferences, volunteers, attend games, concerts, belongs to parent group, etc.)

Socio-economic status—level to which family or community has acquired financial security (blue collar vs. white collar)

Traditions/rituals—beliefs, ceremonies, or customs handed down

Values—principles or ideals held as intrinsically valuable

Other factors—factors that may emerge through the research process

The conceptual framework model was not intended to be all encompassing of the elements and factors related to total culture, parent/community culture, and school culture. It was intended to be a useful tool or guide in the development and implementation of this
research. The elements and factors that emerged from the data through an inductive process were analyzed and cross-checked with the elements of this model developed through the review of the literature.

Qualitative Research Methodology

This section provides a rationale for the use of qualitative research methodology. Lancy (1993) refers to a "growing disenchantment of relying exclusively on quantitative methodology" (p. 24) in gathering and analyzing data. Though survey data were collected in this research study (Parent Survey, Alumni Survey), qualitative methods were primarily utilized to gather data directly from the participants. Much of the data for this study were obtained through interviewing processes that are described briefly in this section and in detail in Chapter Three.

Data collection

Interviewing  "The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms" (Patton, 1990, p. 290). Merriam (1988) states, "Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate" (p. 72). Patton identifies three types of interviews useful in qualitative research: informal conversational, general interview guide approach, and standardized open-ended interview. These three types range from mostly open-ended questioning in an informal procedure to a
prepared list of guiding questions to a highly focused, strictly followed standardized procedure.

Merriam (1988) provides three similarly identified types of interviews (unstructured, semi-structured, and highly structured). Both researchers agree in the depth and focus for each type of interview. The unstructured or informal interview is not predetermined and is often exploratory. It tends to be used in on-going participant observation. The general interview guide approach or semi-structured interview utilizes a guiding set of questions. This approach assures that basically the same questions are asked of participants. In standardized or highly structured interviews, exact interview questions are asked of each participant which minimizes variation if multiple interviewers are used (Patton, 1990; Merriam).

Fetterman’s (1989) approach to interviews in the context of ethnography provides a similar view of the informal interview. He defines ethnography stating that, “Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture” (p. 1). Informal interviews are most common in ethnographic work and have a specific but implicit research agenda. They can be used to discover categories of meaning in a culture through exploring what people think and how one person’s perceptions compare with another (Fetterman). Informal interviews are a mixture of conversation and embedded questions beginning with non-threatening questions and, if rapport is established, then asking other types of questions if necessary (Fetterman). Structured or semi-structured interviews are most useful towards the middle or end of an interview to avoid shaping responses. This type of interview uses verbal approximations of a questionnaire with explicit research goals (Fetterman). To gather a personal historical
perspective, Fetterman offers the "retrospective" interview. This type of interview can be structured, semi-structured or informal to help reconstruct the past.

Also discussed by Fetterman (1989) is the "grand tour" interview that is designed to provide a "map of the terrain" of the setting under study. Interviewing strategies such as asking the same question in several different ways provide an opportunity to determine if the interviewee is offering "real" answers or just what the interviewee thinks the interviewer wants to hear. Another strategy is to ask the interviewee to repeat or clarify a question which can stimulate more and deeper conversation (Fetterman).

Patton (1990) describes the strengths and limitations for the three main types of interviews. Informal interviews allow the interviewer to be highly responsive to individual differences and situational changes which strengthens this method. Limitations or weaknesses of the informal interview include increased time in collecting data, possible interviewer effects, and the heightened difficulty in pulling together and analyzing the data (Patton). Interview guides (semi-structured approach) allow the interviewer to obtain basically the same information from a number of people by covering the same material. Additionally, this approach is strengthened by the fact that the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate a particular subject (Patton). Moreover, interviewing across a number of people is more systematic and comprehensive, group interviews are more focused using an interview guide, and interview guides can be developed in more or less detail depending upon the importance of the sequence of questions (Patton).
Standardized, open-ended interviews are written out in advance in the sequence to be asked. Interviewer effects are minimized by asking the same questions of each respondent which strengthens this approach (Patton, 1990). Data collected through standardized interviews are strengthened by the fact that the respondent’s own words are captured systematically thereby facilitating data analysis. A weakness of this kind of interview is that it does not allow the interviewer to pursue topics or issues that were not anticipated when the interview questions were written (Patton).

**Focus group interviews** Small groups of people can be interviewed together regarding a specific topic during focus group interviews (Patton, 1990). This type of interview generally lasts one-half to two hours and is conducted with groups of six to eight people. The idea of focus groups is based on the recognition that people generate thoughts and decisions in a social context often growing out of discussions with other people (Patton). The purpose of focus group interviews is to obtain high-quality data in a social context where participants can consider their own views in the context of others (Patton). Patton describes several advantages to focus group interviews including efficiency and a provision for quality controls in that participants can provide checks and balances on each other that weed out false or extreme views. Additionally, the group tends to stay focused on important topics, and assessing the extent of consistent views in the group is relatively easy.

Weaknesses of the focus group interview are also inherent in this method. Due to the size of the group and response time needed, the number of questions that can be asked must be limited (Patton, 1990). Furthermore, the interviewer must possess considerable group process skills in order to manage the interview so that one or two participants do not
dominate. Patton suggests that taking notes while facilitating a focus group can be difficult and recommends that a pair of researchers share the facilitating and note-taking tasks.

Borg and Gall (1989) identify several other characteristics of the qualitative inquiry process. These are presented as follows:

1. Holistic inquiry—all elements in the setting in which the inquiry takes place are studied in an effort to understand reality;

2. People as data gathering instruments—any biases resulting from the interactions and value differences between the "instrument" and the subjects must be carefully considered;

3. Purposive rather than random sampling—purposeful selection of subjects is believed to be more likely to uncover the full array of "multiple realities" of a wide range of participants;

4. Inductive data analysis—data are first gathered then studied inductively to reveal unanticipated outcomes rather than focusing on testing preconceived hypotheses;

5. Grounded theory—theory is developed from the data with the belief that grounded theory will not limit or bias the perceptions of the observer which may occur through a reliance on \textit{a priori} theory;

6. Emergent design—the research design evolves with the progression of the study. A tentative design is formulated but adaptations to include variables not anticipated for at the beginning can be made throughout the study;

7. Interpretation of outcomes—reality is constructed from the participant’s (subject’s) point of view (emic perspective);
8. Intuitive insights—emphasis by the researcher is placed on tacit or intuitive knowledge obtained from interactions in the research situation:

9. Emphasis on social process—there is a focus placed upon social processes and the meanings participants place on social situations; and

10. Confirmation interviews—questionnaires or structured interviews are utilized to confirm earlier findings.

Borg and Gall (1989) indicate several limitations to qualitative research in general that should be carefully considered. The limitations include observer bias (which cannot be fully eliminated), the difficulty of exact replication of qualitative research (only "similar" studies can be conducted), the subjectivity involved in selecting data sources, and the problems associated with field studies in which subjects may behave differently under observation, thereby obscuring true behavior.

In contrast, strengths of qualitative data are based on several features. The data focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that "real life" can be thoroughly explored (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman offer other appealing features of qualitative data in "local groundedness" or proximity of data collection to the actual setting and "richness and holism" which provides strong potential for revealing vivid descriptions and complexity. The fact that data are typically collected over a sustained period make this method powerful for studying any process (not just collecting a "snapshot" of the setting). Additionally, with qualitative data's emphasis on "people's 'lived experience," [they] are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on
the events, processes, and structures of their lives” (Miles and Huberman, p. 10). Miles and Huberman indicate several other strengths in qualitative data stating:

They often have been advocated as the best strategy for discovery, exploring a new area, developing hypotheses. In addition we underline their strong potential for testing hypotheses, seeing whether specific predictions hold up. Finally, qualitative data are useful when one needs to supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret quantitative data gathered from the same setting (p. 10).

**Data recording techniques**  Recording data from interviews must be completed accurately. “The raw data of interviews are the actual quotations spoken by interviewees. There is no substitute for these data” (Patton, 1990, p. 347). The purpose of each interview, according to Patton, is to “record as fully and fairly as possible that particular interviewee’s perspective” (p. 348). Patton’s recommendation is to tape record interviews during qualitative research in order to collect verbatim responses. An advantage of the tape recording method is that researchers gain more freedom during the interview to attend to and respond to the interviewee’s needs or cues rather than attempting to take verbatim notes. It is important to explain the use of the tape recorder before beginning the interview and to make sure the interviewee feels comfortable with this technique.

Tape recording is an easy manner to collect verbatim data, yet, there is a need to take notes during interviews for the following reasons: 1) notes taken during the interview are helpful for designing new questions or probes as the interview progresses; and 2) taking notes during the interview will facilitate later analysis (Patton, 1990). Additionally, if the tape recording fails, the notes taken can be reviewed and elaborated to clarify points, add context to notes, determine new issues to probe, and identify new information.
recordings can then be fully transcribed in order to have printed hard copies of the data or location points on the tape can be recorded for marking information and bits of data.

**Data analysis**

When data collection has formally ended and it is time to begin the final analysis, the investigator has two primary sources to draw from in organizing the analysis: (1) the questions that were generated during the conceptual phase of the study and clarified prior to final analysis and (2) analytic insights and interpretations that emerged during data collection. (Patton, 1990, p. 378)

Qualitative research can be classified as ethnography. Wilcox (1982) defines the goal of ethnography as combining the view of the insider with that of the outsider to describe a social setting. She states, “The resulting description is expected to be deeper and fuller than that of the ordinary outsider, and broader and less culture-bound than that of the ordinary insider” (p. 462). Analyzing qualitative data can be done in two ways according to Wilcox’s research. One method involves identifying key incidents or events that have been recorded and described in the data and linking them to other incidents, theoretical constructs, or phenomena. Another approach to data analysis relies on the quantification of qualitative data from coding longhand or typed interviews, or descriptive accounts. Both approaches may be part of the same study. Traditionally, a written report is produced at the conclusion of the study in a descriptive style that details the setting of the research.

Pfaffenberger (1988) remarks on the sameness of quantitative and qualitative data analysis stating, “…it is clear that qualitative data analysis, like any other form of analysis, requires that the material be broken down into its constituent elements, which must be compared, named and classified so that their nature and interaction becomes clear” (p. 26).

Three activities usually found in qualitative data analysis: rewriting, coding, and comparison
Rewriting consists of filling in field notes with more detail from memory. Often there is little precious time to complete field notes while actually in the field. This rewriting serves as an important part of the data analysis and provides an opportunity to fill in culturally provided contextual knowledge.

Coding is a process in which category names are attached to basic units of data. Coding categories may stem from theoretical constructs or may "emerge" from that data as they are analyzed. Codes and categories may be modified throughout the stage of analysis as data are sorted and a framework of theory "grounded theory" emerges (Pfaffenberger, 1988). Microcomputer systems for storage, retrieval, and analysis of field notes should allow the researcher to use a flexible and evolving set of codes (Brent, 1984, as cited in Pfaffenberger).

Comparison is required for completing data analysis. Coded bits of data are inductively analyzed by comparing similarly coded sections of field notes or interview transcripts to determine which features of social behavior are present when a particular phenomenon is present. A different method is the constant comparative method in which comparisons are made continuously and new notes are written only after looking back at previously written notes with the same code (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Lincoln (1985) outlines similar relevant operations for data processing: unitizing and categorizing.

Unitizing is similar to coding in which separate, stand-alone, bits of data are marked from interviews or field notes. Categorizing helps bring together the units of data that apparently relate to each other. The units of data are sorted by meaning first, and then a label is placed on the data set or category. Also noted by Lincoln is the process of "member checking."

This strategy provides a useful opportunity to determine, through the eyes of the respondents,
whether the reconstruction of the data make sense and was successfully produced by the researcher.

Computer programs such as word processing programs, automatic indexing and retrieval programs, or text-oriented data base management programs are three basic options in software for the creation, storage, and retrieval of research data. Word processing programs have the advantage of remaining flexible for the researcher for inserting additional notes, coding and re-coding data with ease, and familiarity to the researcher eliminating the stress of learning a new program (Pfaffenberger, 1988). One draw back to word processing is the task of keeping track of numerous text files. Extensive hand-kept record systems or specialized indexing programs may alleviate this problem.

The data analysis for this study was an inductive process in which a conceptual framework guided the study and analysis began with the data themselves. From the data and inductive analysis, theoretical categories and relational propositions emerged (Lincoln, 1985).

Validity and reliability "The human factor is the great strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analysis" (Patton, 1990). Patton contends that because each qualitative study is unique, analytical approaches selected will also be unique. He asserts that researchers must do their best to fairly represent data and communicate what the data reveal according to the purposes of the study. It is also his contention that there are no straightforward tests for reliability and validity. Patton cites three distinct but related inquiry elements of which the credibility for qualitative inquiry depends. They are:
1. Rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high-quality data that is carefully analyzed, with attention to issues of validity, reliability and triangulation;
2. The credibility of the researchers, which is dependent on training, experience, track record, and presentation of self; and
3. Philosophical belief in the phenomenological paradigm, that is, a fundamental appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, and holistic thinking. (Patton, 1990, p. 461)

Validity is the measure of how true, credible, and authentic the findings are to the people under study and the readers of the research (Miles and Huberman, 1994). During the conduct of this study, multiple sources of data were gathered in order to determine as accurately as possible the culture of the parents and community members of the high school under study. Themes emerged from the interviews that provided the data about the culture of the group studied.

Reliability is the underlying issue of whether “the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods” (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Reliability addresses the extent to which one’s findings are consistent and can be replicated. Merriam (1988) states that reliability in quantitative research design is based on the assumption that there is a single reality that if studied repeatedly will give the same results. However, qualitative research seeks to describe and explain the world as those in the world interpret it and does not seek to isolate laws of human behavior (Merriam). “The argument for qualitative research has never been that its claims for generalizability are exceptionally strong. Qualitative research is best for understanding the processes that go on in a situation and the beliefs and perceptions of those in it (Firestone, 1993). This study was designed to provide insight and understanding of the culture of parents and community members of a particular high school.
Triangulation

An important step in the analysis of this study was the process of triangulation. Erlandson (1993) defines triangulation as "seeking out several different types of sources that can provide insights about the same events or relationships" (p. 115). Triangulation helps establish that the information gathered is generally supported or disconfirmed (Patton, 1990; Erlandson, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The process of triangulating data sources improves the truthfulness of the data. “Traditionally, from the ethnographer’s point of view, the gathering of many different kinds of data has been seen to increase the validity and reliability of the study…” (Wilcox, 1982). Or more aptly put, Patton (1990, p. 470) states that, “Triangulation is a process by which the researcher can guard against the accusation that a study’s findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator’s bias.” In this study, triangulation of varying methods and data sources were used formulate the findings. “In effect, triangulation is a way to get to the finding in the first place…” (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Summary

Culture is an important factor in the study of society, communities, organizations, and schools. The study of the values, norms, beliefs, and ways of thinking has been shown in the literature to demonstrate an impact upon the effectiveness of the organization being studied. School culture does have an impact upon the schooling of children as demonstrated by the culturally based resistance to change in many of our schools.
Research also shows that factors outside of school contribute to the culture and relative success of the students. Factors such as social class, parental involvement or disengagement, family status, and educational values contribute to students' success in school. Particularly alarming is the impact of social class on schooling. Metz (1990) concluded, "For both individual students and individual teachers, the experience of life in school and the effectiveness of their academic efforts is deeply affected by the social class of the school in which they happen to find themselves" (p. 102). It is important, then, to gain understanding of the total culture of schools and the component cultures of which it is made. The study of the parent/community culture of a high school attempts to gain such understanding of one component of the school's culture.

Qualitative research methodology is particularly well suited for school culture research. Interviews are a common and effective method of gathering data from the insiders' points of view. Data analysis must remain faithful to the integrity of the data so as not to completely remove the context from which it came. Processes such as triangulation can alleviate research issues in data analysis. Triangulation of data sources and methods improves the reliability and validity in qualitative research.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Kilmann (1989) offers a metaphor for organizational culture indicating that culture is to the organization what personality is to the individual. He describes culture as an unseen yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilization. Determining the "personality" of a given phenomenon is an intricate task needing several strategies in order to weave a cultural web from the perceptions of those closest to the phenomenon. Merriam (1989) suggests that a case study is specifically suited to the needs of research studies conducted to understand and interpret educational phenomena. To weave the delicate web, a case study was conducted to ensure that data would be collected in-depth from a variety of sources utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods.

This research study investigated the culture (beliefs, values, norms, and ways of thinking) of parents and community members who provide loyal support for a comprehensive urban high school. The section that follows begins with a review of the background and purpose for the study followed by a discussion of the data collection and procedures. Included is a description of the various methods used in this study including: parent survey, small group interviews, individual interviews, informal interviews, and alumni survey. Data analysis is discussed next followed by a description of how the results were reported. Specific procedures, including the purposes and processes of small group and individual interviews, and data collection forms are provided in the Appendices.
Background of the Study

The study of the parent/community culture was conducted at a selected, large high school in an urban, mid-western city. This study was an offshoot of a larger case study of large, comprehensive urban high schools (Barnes, 1995). The larger case study investigated the faculty work culture of high schools. Barnes conducted school culture audits in six high schools in Iowa and five others in the United States and Canada. The selected high school in this study, which served a diverse population of over 1700 students, was committed to participate in an in-depth, single case study of its overall school culture.

The in-depth case study of one selected high school’s culture was comprised of three major components. Each component is listed below:

1) **Faculty Work Culture**: conducted by Robbins (1995) and Barnes (1995) under the direction of Dr. James Sweeney (former Professor, Iowa State University)

2) **Student Work Culture**: conducted by Westerman-Beatty, (1995).

3) **Parent/Community Culture**: conducted by this researcher.

In this study, the researcher conducted field research of the culture of parents and community members of the participating comprehensive, urban high school from March 29, 1994 to May 13, 1994 spending 24 days in the field. As the study progressed, it was clear that the participants selected for the study and those that participated voluntarily were primarily “loyal supporters” of the school. Interviews were conducted with volunteer parents and community members. Data began to emerge that was overwhelmingly positive and supportive especially from parents and alumni. Efforts were made to identify those who had negative or opposing views. There was little success in getting participation from those
with negative points of view, though a couple non-supportive (negative) were interviewed. Thus, the study evolved into a study of parent/community culture within a frame of its "loyal support culture" because little data were collected to support any opposing points of view. Though clear suggestions and recommendations were made by the loyal supporters to improve aspects of the school, their loyal support did not appear diminished by their wishes to see improvements.

The purpose of this study was to: (1) discover and describe the basic elements of a high school parent/community culture, (2) identify the specific factors which influenced a high school parent/community culture and describe the relative strength of these factors, (3) determine the specific education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of a high school parent/community culture, (4) identify the traditions and behaviors that primarily influenced the development and maintenance of a loyal support culture, and (5) provide a rich description of the high school parent/community culture.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are important when studying topics such as culture. In a classic study of adolescents and their community, Hollingshead (1949) utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods. In this study, qualitative data collected from interview schedules were quantified though a process of coding transcribed notes, and "sorting" the data using a word processing sort command. Quantitative techniques provided knowledge of "how often" a given phenomenon or condition occurred in data collected.

An example of a quantified phenomenon is demonstrated by the recurring use of the phrase "Anycity Against the World" during interviews in this study with community
members, parents, and alumni. First, the transcribed words were transcribed, coded, and sorted. Then the specific data was counted. Quantifying data can help measure its value or strength. The phrase dates back several decades and still holds strong meaning in the local community. It started as a rallying cry that held people together standing for strength and loyalty. It also took on some negative connotations that tended to keep the community separate from outsiders. The frequent use of this or similar phrases provided insight into the depth of meaning held by the phrase. The ability to sort and collapse data allows researchers to determine the value or strength of such information. Data collected qualitatively, such as notes taken while attending parent meetings or talking to alumni, were also drawn upon to illustrate specific incidents and allow participants to speak for themselves.

The use of qualitative versus quantitative data collection is not a circumstance of using one, or the other, in this study. Lancy (1993) discussed several relationships between quantitative and qualitative research. One of the relationships, "Complementary", posits that both qualitative and quantitative research have the potential to contribute vital information bearing on a question or problem. Lancy concluded that:

Ultimately, of course, to understand the nature of education, we will need much additional research of all stripes. Consider trying to characterize someone's "quality of life" without reference to quantitative data of any kind, e.g., age, income, family size, etc., or only with reference to these various quantifiable criteria. Clearly either extreme is unsound. (p. 13)

Examining the high school loyal support culture requires methods that go beyond the observable surface to uncover the core ideas and values. Qualitative methods are especially useful for investigating questions that are not readily answered by quantitative means (Patton, 1990). Qualitative methods in culture research, such as the interview, allow the
researcher an opportunity to engage in joint inquiry with members within a cultural unit to uncover the core ideas and values related to the insiders' culture as well as to cross-check different sources of data. This study utilized qualitative methods to determine such cultural phenomena and to fill in the gaps between various sources of data.

Quantitative methods, through use of a survey instrument, *Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices* (O'Connell, 1993), provided information about parents' perceptions about the quality of school practices. The survey data were useful to help provide focus to the study of loyal support culture and to compare the responses from different groups of individuals. Triangulation was employed to strengthen the design of the study by focusing several research strategies on determining and examining cultural phenomenon.

Ethnography, employed in this study, is a research strategy that is naturalistic, observational, descriptive, contextual, open-ended, and in-depth (Spindler, 1982). Ethnography can be defined as a descriptive anthropological study of the human condition. In other words, the researcher utilizes research techniques to portray the particular setting, lives, and events of a certain group of people. In conducting an ethnographic study, a researcher goes within the setting under investigation and attempts to provide an inside view of a group of people from the view of an objective outsider. Spindler viewed the goal of ethnography as combining the views of insiders and outsiders to describe a social setting. He stated, "The resulting description is expected to be deeper and fuller than that of the ordinary outsider, and broader and less culture-bound than that of the ordinary insider (p. 462)."

A critical strategy for this study was to gain first the perspective of those in the culture system (insiders) before utilizing the researcher's (outsider) perspective. Fetterman
(1989) argued that both the insider (emic) and outsider (etic) perspectives are needed for good ethnography. "An emic perspective compels the recognition and acceptance of multiple realities. Documenting multiple perspectives of reality in a given study is crucial to an understanding of why people think and act in the different ways they do" (Fetterman, p. 31). Collecting information from an emic perspective helps ensure the validity and usefulness of the data. Fetterman suggested also utilizing a social scientific or "etic" perspective. Etic is the outsider's perspective on reality in a given situation. The individual researcher supplies this perspective or perception. After carefully collecting an emic perspective from participants, the researcher makes sense of the data collected from the native's point of view and his or her own scientific analysis (Fetterman, 1989).

Data Collection and Procedures

This study utilized small group interviews, individual interviews, and informal interviews with parents and community members. The interviews were conducted in conjunction with a parent survey and an alumni survey in the investigation of the high school loyal support culture. In this section, the use of human subjects in research is discussed briefly followed by a discussion of securing participation in the study and entry to the field. Finally, each of the above methods and the research procedures are discussed.

Use of human subjects

The Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research reviewed the methods and procedures used in this study to ensure that the rights of the human subjects were protected, that potential benefits outweighed the possible risks, that
confidentiality of participants and the data collected was assured, and that informed consent was obtained by appropriate procedures. Documentation of the Human Subjects Research review including the Participant Consent Form can be found in Appendix A.

Securing participation in the study

In the larger case study, the principal investigator secured the participation of the six high schools at a meeting held with the school principals of an urban school system in a mid-western state on February 10, 1993. The study of school culture, or "culture audit," was explained in a written summary of the project. The purpose of the culture audit, the benefits to the schools, and the specific procedures for conducting the study were explained. Opportunity for questions and answers was provided. A request was made by the principals to have an additional presentation made to teacher representatives from each school so they would have a clearer understanding of the culture study.

Consequently, March 3, 1993, teacher representatives from each of the six participating high schools were given a presentation to explain the purpose of the culture audit, the benefits to the schools, and the specific procedures for conducting the study. Two high school teachers from the participating high school in this study attended the meeting and recommended the in-depth culture study to their School Improvement Team. The team agreed to move forward with the culture case study and informed the entire staff of the decision to participate in a study of their individual school's staff work culture, parent/community culture, and student culture.

The principal of the participating high school was contacted by letter, and a request was made to establish dates and procedures for conducting the culture study involving
parents and community members. An initial meeting was held with the principal and this researcher to plan details and discuss scheduling for interviews. The principal's help was also requested in identifying teachers, parents, and community members who have a special understanding of the school who might participate in interviews. It was later decided that teachers would not be included in this part of the case study because they were to be interviewed by other investigators studying the faculty work culture portion of the case study. A draft of a promotional bulletin for the culture study was included in the letter to the principal.

Meetings were held between the researcher and the principal on February 11, 1994, February 18, 1994, February 22, 1995, and March 14, 1995. Faxes and telephone calls were made between meetings as needed to clarify details and exchange information. Dates and procedures for distributing the parent survey and conducting the interviews were planned. The principal provided a letter stating the school's agreement to participate in the research study, a letter of invitation to potential interviewees, and a cover letter for the parent survey (sample letters were provided to the principal by this researcher). Additional planning for the study was conducted during brief meetings while the researcher was at the school site to conduct interviews.

Community entry

Gaining entry or acceptance into a community is crucial for success when examining concepts such as culture particularly when conducting qualitative research. An introduction to the community by a trusted person can benefit the researcher's initial contacts with community members (Fetterman, 1989). The principal of the participating high school
provided a similar type of initial introduction to parents and community members. The researcher provided the principal with a sample of the information that could be shared with parents and community members. The information included the purpose for the participants' involvement and also an invitation to participate in the interviews. This information was used in school newsletters and letters to parents and selected community members to promote their participation (see Appendix B).

The school principal and school culture audit "contact person" were asked to help identify and schedule interviews with key informants, parents, and community members. The school contact person and principal provided the researcher with a resource list of key people who were involved with parent and community organizations related to the school. The selection of participants is described later in this section. Interviews were conducted at the school site unless a more convenient location off the school grounds was mutually acceptable.

**Parent survey**

A survey instrument, *Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices* (O'Connell, 1993) was used for the initial data collection of this study (see Appendix C). Specific survey distribution information can be found in succeeding paragraphs. Data from the survey were analyzed to determine parent perceptions about specific aspects of the school. These include: (1) the perceived level of quality of educational practices and services employed by the school their child attends; (2) the perceived level of impact school practices have had on parents to enhance their support of their child's learning; and (3) the perceived level of parent support for the school. During analyses of the study, the survey provided an additional data
source for data triangulation. Triangulation of data sources is specifically addressed in the data analysis section.

The survey instrument was a building level survey for parents which included 83 items measuring 14 dimensions of educational practice: (a) school climate, (b) communication, (c) accessibility, (d) responsiveness, (e) parent involvement, (f) monitoring and assessment, (g) student equity, (h) physical environment, (i) school program, (j) curriculum, (k) support services, (l) student activities/athletics, (m) teacher behavior, and (n) leadership (O'Connell, 1993). Each dimension contained two to nine items and used four different six-point Likert scales measuring levels of quality, impact and support.

This instrument was piloted in 42 schools, seven of which were high schools, and norms were developed. A pilot study, O'Connell (1993), determined the reliability of the instrument. It reported:

Estimates of internal consistency reliability were conducted using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. The alpha reliability was .97 for the full scale. Internal consistency reliability estimates for each of the 14 subscales of educational practice ranged from .75 (support services) to .97 (teacher behavior and leadership) with eight of the subscales having reliability estimates above .90. Reliability estimates for each of the three subscales of parent support were .92 (financial support), .84 (moral support), and .79 (support through participation). (p. 58)

It is important to ensure both an adequate return of instruments and to survey a representative group of respondents (Borg and Gall, 1989). Four hundred and forty-three surveys were distributed to school parents and sixteen community members. One hundred thirty surveys were completed and returned with a return rate of 29%. Three distribution methods were employed to ensure an adequate and representative return. Each method
involved a different "group" of participants. The groups were labeled with numbers in order to keep the three distributions identifiable from each other. The three "groups" and rationales for their inclusion and selection are discussed below.

Surveys were distributed by school staff to "Group One" during parent conferences, March 3-4, 1994, to promote the survey return rate. Group One consisted of parents attending parent-teacher conferences. One hundred-sixty surveys (40 per grade level) were administered at the conferences. The surveys were available to parents as they picked up report cards. Parents were asked to complete the survey, seal it in an envelope, and return it to the school staff members before they left. This method provided opportunity for all parents to participate if they attended parent conference nights. Eighty-nine of the 160 surveys were returned for a return rate of 56 percent.

To promote a representative sample, an additional 208 surveys were administered in eight randomly selected classes during the week of March 14, 1994. This sampling was labeled "Group Two" in order to keep the distributions of surveys distinct from each other. English classes were chosen because they are required for all students. Student schedules were made prior to the research and no attempt was made to ensure statistically randomized groupings in the English classes. No attempt was made to verify the distribution of students by class. The classes were heterogeneously mixed, thus the assumption was made that student characteristics such as race and socioeconomic status were evenly distributed throughout the randomly selected classes. The names of teachers were randomly selected by the principal and researcher. Teachers in the eight randomly selected English classes (two per grades nine through twelve) distributed the surveys to students who acted as couriers.
Students were asked to deliver the surveys to their parents and return them in a sealed envelope to their teacher by March 18, 1994. Teachers were asked to encourage students each day of that week to return the completed surveys to school. Parents were instructed in the survey cover letter to return the survey uncompleted if they already completed a survey during conferences. Twenty-five out of the 208 surveys distributed in this manner were returned for a return rate of 12 percent.

The researcher's doctoral committee recommended an additional distribution of the parent surveys to small group interview participants. This would allow community members (some of whom were also parents) the opportunity to share their perceptions of school practices. The seventy-nine small group interview participants, "Group Three", were also provided copies of the survey if they had not received one already at conference night or from their student in an English class. They were provided the same cover letter and were asked to complete the surveys and return them to the school office in the envelope provided. This group also included community members which helped broaden the perspective of the survey participants. Sixteen of the 79 surveys distributed were returned for a return rate of 20 percent. Because of the varying rates of return and group sizes, it was later determined that the statistical comparisons between the groups would not be reported. The survey data will be reported as a whole combining the three distribution groups into one (n=130) for analysis.

The completed instruments were scanned at the Iowa State Computational Center. Data were analyzed by using the SPSS-X and SAS statistical computational systems. Descriptive statistics were calculated first and analysis of variance was used to examine
possible differences between each of the three separate distribution groups and by "grade level" for only the first distribution group (n=89 with 56% rate of return). The analysis of variance was not conducted with the other two survey distributions due to the lower group sizes and rates of return. Group Two had n=25 for 12% rate of return and Group Three had n=16 for 20% rate of return. Differences between the three distribution groups were not analyzed for the same reason.

Interviews

Interviews are one important method of capturing the reality of subjects by allowing the subjects' own views to emerge (Lancy, 1993). Field work, including interviews, for the study of the loyal support culture of the participating high school was completed in 24 field days between March 29, 1994 and May 13, 1994. Eighteen small group interviews were conducted with 79 parents and community members including 41 (52%) males and 38 (48%) females. Of the small group interviewees, 29 (37%) were alumni of the participating high school, 38 (48%) were parents of students at the participating high school, 3 (4%) were local clergy, 27 (34%) were business people, and 6 (8%) were ethnic or racial minority. These statistics reflect crossovers in categories. For example, some parents were also counted as alumni or business people. Twelve key informants were interviewed individually and the interviews were taped and transcribed. Key informants were individuals who were highly involved with, have special insight, or deep knowledge of the participating high school and its loyal support culture.

This researcher conducted all individual and small group interviews. Two students from Iowa State University's Pre-LEAD Educational Administration Program helped conduct
seven small group interviews by assisting with writing responses or asking the focus
questions. An Iowa State University professor of sociology observed the small group
interview process during two interview sessions because of a special interest in this
methodology. Daily schedules of interviews typically consisted of two or three small group
sessions and one or two individual interviews. Some small group interviews were scheduled
in conjunction with other meetings of parent organizations to enhance convenience for
participants. Signed informed consent was obtained from each person participating in
individual interviews and small group interview sessions. Forms for recording data were
adapted from those developed by Barnes (1995) and are provided in Appendix D.

Specific descriptions of the data collection and procedures for: small group
interviews, individual interviews, and informal interviews are provided in the following
paragraphs.

Small group interviews: parents and community members  Efforts were made
to acquire a representative group of parents and community members to participate in the
study. Gender, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status information were considered to
ensure a cross-section of participants. A resource list of several names of school and
community organizations, and their leaders or contact persons, was provided by the Culture
Audit contact person at Anycity High School. School personnel and data sources were
utilized to help with identifying and selecting a cross-section of parents and community
members. Names, addresses, phone numbers, and key identifying information were typed
into a data-base as the “resource list” was developed. The selected community members
were representative of the business, civic, social service, religious, and other groups or
organizations identified as having an insightful perspective of the school and community. This list was useful in tracking parents and community members to secure their participation in the interviews.

The following sequence of actions were used to identify parents and community members for small group interviews:

1. Information was sent to all school parents through a general school mailing. It provided a brief summary of the study and invited them to participate. A response form was included so that parents could indicate their willingness to participate and their preferred dates and times for interviewing.

2. An informational letter and sign-up sheet was provided for parents during the March 3-4, 1994 conferences.

3. Parent groups that work with the school for various purposes were contacted, provided information about the study, and asked to identify participants (i.e. Booster Club, PTSA or Parent, Teacher, Student Association, etc.)

4. Businesses that have relationships with the school, such as supporting scholarships or activities, or that are in close proximity of the school were identified by school personnel and/or parent organizations. The selected businesses were provided the appropriate information by letter. Follow-up calls were made to secure participants.

5. Other community members such as social service persons, religious leaders, senior citizens, and civic group leaders were identified from the resource list and invited to participate. Letters were sent and followed up by phone calls as needed to secure participants and to determine the times and dates for interviews.

6. Each small interview group was asked to identify others who should be contacted to participate in interviews utilizing the "snowball" method of sampling.

The paragraphs that follow summarize the strategies used to obtain participants for the small group interviews. Parents were invited to participate in small group interviews when they attended conferences on March 3-4, 1994 at Anycity High. Signs were posted and sign-up forms were available at report card pick-up tables. Three parents responded on the sign-up form to participate in interviews. The principal also arranged to send a similar
response form with the March school newsletter that is sent to all parents. Seven additional parents returned this form indicating interest to participate. All were telephoned and scheduled into small group interviews. The principal sent a letter to 67 selected community and business people who were identified as possible interview participants. These community and business people were selected because they had a personal or business connection to the high school or were located in the school’s neighborhood. Many of these individuals were school alumni and/or parents of current students. The researcher contacted each by phone to arrange interview dates and times. One hundred and eight individual parent and community members agreed to participate in the small group interviews. Seventy-nine actually participated.

The interview groups were formed purposefully in order to enhance the richness of discussion. If possible, like groups were put together. Parents were scheduled with other parents. Community and business people were scheduled with other community or business people. Often, the participants’ availability for the interview dates and times resulted in mixed groups. Mixed groups also frequently occurred because many interested parents were also representatives of the community and local businesses. Twenty-four small group interview sessions were scheduled. Group size ranged from two to eleven with an average size of four participants. It was often hard to maintain ideal group sizes of three to five persons due to schedule constraints or no-shows of participants. Six interview sessions resulted in one participant showing up. Interviews were held but only notes were taken which became part of the data. These data were not analyzed as part of the small group
interviews but were checked against the small group interview data for confirming or refuting pieces of information.

The final demographics for the small group interviews was as follows: eighteen small group interviews were conducted with 79 parents and community members including 41 (52%) males and 38 (48%) females. Of the small group interviewees, 29 (37%) were alumni of the participating high school, 38 (48%) were parents of students at the participating high school, 3 (4%) were local clergy, 27 (34%) were business people, and 6 (8%) were ethnic or racial minority. These statistics reflect crossovers in categories. For example, some parents were also counted as alumni or business people.

All but two small group interviews were held at Anycity High School. A conference room was reserved for the interview dates and signs with direction arrows were placed from the entrance of the school to the conference room to help participants locate the room. The researcher arranged to go to the location of one business, which employed many Anycity High alumni, to hold the interview session. This particular group was larger than usual with ten participants because they were available at the work site at the time of the interview. The other interview was held off the school campus at a community organization building across the street from the school.

After initial small group sessions were conducted, they were scrutinized for representativeness such as participants' gender, race, and support for the school. Efforts were made to ensure representativeness of the small group participants. The researcher, with the help of the principal and school staff, reviewed the list of participants and determined that particular groups (such as racial groups) were underrepresented. Therefore, a special effort
was made to reach targeted groups of parents who were not supportive, not involved, or were of culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

In order to achieve a more representative sample of parents including non-supportive parents and ethnic/racial minorities, the researcher asked the three vice-principals of Anycity High School to identify students whose parents could be contacted for the interviews. The vice-principals were asked for up to ten names for each of three categories of parents:
1) parent/guardians who are not involved with the school but generally are supportive,
2) parent/guardians who do not support the school (negative), and 3) parent/guardians who are of ethnic/racial minority (either supportive or non-supportive). Seventy-five parent names were provided. Phone calls were made to forty-eight of these additional prospects to invite them to participate. Many could not reached by phone or often declined to participate. Eleven agreed to participate though nine did not show up for the interview sessions. Even with the additional attempts to reach a broad spectrum of parents and community members, it was clear that those who participated in this study were generally those who provide loyal support to the school.

The small group interviews were designed to allow participants to express their own education-related beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking. For example, participants expressed expectations for the school or their values of the importance of education. Additionally, factors influencing these beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking such as the Alumni Association's influence on parent beliefs about the school also emerged and were probed. Group members were asked to identify others who could provide insight to the
parent and community values, beliefs, attitudes, and ways of thinking. Appendix E provides the purposes and approach used for small group sessions.

The researcher facilitated each small group session. During the first part of the session, the researcher used open-ended questions to determine key education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes and the factors that influence each. Pieces of newsprint were hung up with open-ended phrases at the top of each one. The phrases were used one at a time to provoke thoughts and responses from participants. The researcher stated the specific question relating to the prompting phrase. For example, the first sheet of newsprint said "Anycity High School—Your Thoughts." The researcher set up the response activity by asking, "When you think about Anycity High School and everything it is about, what comes to mind?" Each participant had opportunity to respond or to add to the thoughts recorded on the newsprint. Specific probing questions, with the purpose of determining beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking related to selected factors identified in the conceptual model (see Figure 2.1), were asked during latter stages of the interview. The researcher used newsprint to record all participant responses. At the completion of the sessions, the researcher completed the Small Group Interview Summary form. The newsprint was preserved and the comments typed so that they could be examined later as needed.

Specific prompts were identified for the small group interview sessions to elicit responses to “get at” the culture of the parents and community in relation to Anycity High School. The original set of prompts were: 1) Anycity High—Your Thoughts, 2) Anycity High—The Big Picture—History, Events, People, 3) Anycity High—The Real Purpose, 4) Anycity High—How to Get There, Achieve Purpose, 5) Anycity High—Who plays a crucial
role? 6) Anycity High—Making it Even Better, and 7) Who else should I talk to? Each prompt was explained thoroughly with descriptive statements and complete questions. For example, for the first prompt the researcher might say, 

"We are here to share your thoughts about education and Anycity High School. Your own views are very important to us. When you think about Anycity High School and everything about it, what comes to mind?"

This procedure allowed for more complete explanation of the prompts listed on the chart paper and helped to frame the question more completely for the interviewees. As the group interviews proceeded, it became clear that more focused questions would be helpful to use with specific groups such as business groups, parent organization groups, and community organization groups. An additional, ten prompts were identified and used with particular groups as the need became apparent. For example, the prompt Anycity High—Dream School—What would it be like? was asked of six small groups. The prompt How do you think people view you as Anycity High parents? was asked of two groups. The data from these additional prompts was used to add to or refute the emerging themes in this study.

Individual interviews: key informants The major purpose of conducting an in-depth interview is to learn to see the world from the eyes of the person being interviewed (Ely, 1991). Key informants were individuals who were highly involved with, have special insight, or deep knowledge of Anycity High School and its loyal support culture.

Interviewing key informants provided historical data as well as information about the nuances of day to day school and community life. Key informants were identified by consulting the following people: (1) the principal (2) other key informants, and (3) small groups of parents and community members. The researcher began by asking the principal to
identify key informants. A list of twelve key informants was developed. Also, during initial small group sessions, parents and community members were asked to identify other key informants. Eleven individuals from the key informant list agreed to participate in individual interviews. Also, during the interviews of key informants, interviewees were asked to identify other key informants. No additional key informants were selected for interviews because it was determined that little new data was emerging from the key informants, though interesting detail and history were recorded.

The principal identified an historian as a key informant. Historians are people who have specialized knowledge of Anycity High School and/or its community. The historian was interviewed extensively to provide in-depth perspectives, knowledge, and insights about Anycity High School and related events, and the loyal support culture. In total, 12 individual interviews were conducted.

The people identified as key informants received a letter from the school principal that briefly explained the study and invited them to participate in an interview. This letter was followed by a phone call by the researcher to secure willingness to participate and determine the time and date of the interview. The purpose and approach for the individual interviews is provided in Appendix F.

Open-ended questions were utilized initially to elicit participant perceptions of key beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking of the loyal support culture and the factors influencing each. Specific questions with the purpose of determining the beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking identified in the conceptual model were asked at latter stages of the interview.
Interviews were tape recorded with participant permission and the researcher took notes throughout. A form was used for documenting comments and taking notes (see Appendix C). Tape recordings were transcribed by typists and preserved for future reference. Two of the interviews were not transcribed. Notes were taken for one of the interviews and used for the data, and the researcher listened to the tape of the other non-transcribed interview and made notes during the analysis of the data.

Informal interviews

"Informal interviews are useful throughout an ethnographic study in discovering what people think and how one person's perceptions compare to another's. Such comparisons help identify shared values in the community—values that inform behavior" (Fetterman, 1989, p. 48). Informal interviews were conducted when the opportunity arose while the researcher was in the field. The researcher attended a selection of meetings where parents and community members addressed school-related issues or where alumni gathered for social events. The school calendar of activities and events was consulted and the researcher identified and selected specific activities to attend such as the Booster Club meeting. The researcher was able to examine aspects of the loyal support culture in the "natural setting" or usual location and circumstances in which parents and community members interacted for school-related purposes. The less-threatening nature of the natural setting helped to promote sharing by participants.

Fetterman (1989) suggests the informal interview should become "transparent to the participant after a short period of time," typically emerging from a conversation. The researcher maintained sensitivity to the participants' levels of receptivity, and decided whether to pursue the conversation. Informal interviews provided expanded opportunities for
interviewing and conversing with parents and community members, and will also provided
the researcher with deeper insights into the loyal support culture. Notes were taken
immediately following the informal interviews. Notes were recorded on the same form used
for individual interviews.

At the conclusion of the daily interviews and other research activities, a summary of
the insights, themes, new ideas and thoughts, or other pertinent information regarding the
loyal support culture was recorded in the Daily Summary Report (see Appendix D). The
researcher found this process to be too cumbersome to complete each day after similar
themes began to repeat themselves throughout the data. Summaries were completed
periodically or as new themes or ideas emerged.

Alumni association survey

The Anycity High Alumni Association is touted as the largest high school alumni
group in the United States. The membership is approximately 7,000 strong and around 1,000
members return yearly for the annual banquet. The unique character, size, strength, and
endurance of this alumni group merits specific attention in this study of the loyal support
culture. It appeared early in the study that the Alumni Association was an important player
in the loyal support culture, plays a significant role in the loyalty afforded the school, and
significantly impacts the school culture. For these reasons, specific attempts were made to
determine the development and importance of this organization.

A short survey, *Anycity High School Alumni Association Survey* (see Appendix C)
was developed by the researcher and the president of the Alumni Association. The
researcher and alumni president met in person and corresponded by phone and fax to prepare
the survey. Thirteen open-ended and short answer questions explored the nature and importance of the organization and specifically explored Anycity High graduates' loyalty to Anycity High School. Three questions were related to the Alumni Reunion and its dinner for the purposes of the alumni group. These three non-study questions will not be reported in the findings. Space was available for additional comments on the one-page survey.

The alumni survey was distributed to the approximate 900 members of the Alumni Association at their annual banquet on May 12, 1994. Six hundred fifty-nine of the Alumni Surveys were distributed at the banquet. High school students traditionally help serve the banquet, and helped in the distribution and collection of the surveys as alumni entered and exited the facility. A total of 92 (14%) surveys were returned either at the banquet that same evening or later mailed to the school. The themes that emerged from the alumni survey were used in triangulating the data sources.

**Data Analysis**

The major portion of data were collected by individual interviews and small group interview sessions. Other data were obtained through a parent survey, alumni survey, and informal interviewing. This researcher conducted the interviews, facilitated the small group sessions, and oversaw the distribution, collection, and analyses of the surveys. Below is a description of the conceptual framework for the study and the strategies used for data analysis.
Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study (see Figure 2.1) theorizes that there are specific factors that influence the specific beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking of the parents and community members. The cultural factors work together creating a "culture" of the parents and community members. This "culture" exerts force or pressure on the culture of the school ultimately impacting students and student achievement. The views of the parents and community members themselves must be understood to understand their culture in relation to the school.

An approach that allows the insiders’ perspectives to emerge was used in this study to determine key beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking. Definitions of the specific factors that influence the beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking and definitions of other elements in the conceptual framework are found in Chapter Two. These definitions helped to focus data collection and played a role in the analysis of the data. The conceptual model also theorized that the parent/community culture impacts and is impacted by the school culture, student culture, staff culture, school leadership, student and teacher engagement, and student achievement.

Triangulation

Researchers suggest that multiple sources of data are needed for triangulating the data in analyses (Fetterman, 1989; Patton, 1990). One specific type of triangulation, "triangulating data sources" is described by Patton (1990):

This means comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means within qualitative methods. It means (1) comparing observational data with interview data; (2) comparing what people say in
public with what they say in private; (3) checking for the consistency of what people say about the same thing over time; and (4) comparing the perspectives of people from different points of view—staff views, client views, funder views, and views expressed by people outside the program. It means validating information obtained through interviews by checking program documents and other written evidence that can corroborate what interview respondents report. (p. 467)

The triangulation of data sources was an important aspect of data analyses for this study. Cross-checking data from different sources such as interviews and surveys helped ensure the accuracy of the study findings and conclusions. Triangulation, the testing of one data source against another, is at the heart of ethnographic validity and always improves the accuracy of qualitative data (Fetterman, 1989).

**Parent survey**

The Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices was scanned by computer as previously described. The data were analyzed and means and frequencies determined. Analysis of variance was conducted to determine if there were significant differences between the parents' perceptions by grade level within the first distribution group (n=89). The means of the fourteen dimensions of the survey were reported and used in triangulating the data in the final analyses.

**Small group interviews**

All small group interview data were written on sheets of newsprint for each interview question. The notations were written as specifically as possible so they would make sense during later review and analysis. The researcher aggregated the notes on computer with a word processing program. For example, the data gathered for the question, "When you think of Anycity High...what comes to mind?" was written on chart paper labeled *Anycity High—*
Your Thoughts. Each separate idea was typed using a return at the end of the statement so that the computer would read the next line as a new paragraph. In this way, each separate bit of data could be coded and sorted for each of the interview questions to tease out common beliefs, ideas, and themes.

Data analysis began throughout the interview process, data capture, typing, and after the data collection period during the coding and sorting process. An inductive process was used to analyze the interview data. Key themes that emerged from the data were identified and recorded. Common themes that shed light on cultural phenomena, beliefs, values, and attitudes were noted. Data from across the questions and between the small groups were examined to identify connections, commonalities, or differences between the sources. The process of examining data from all the groups as a whole enhanced the validity of the ideas or themes that emerged.

Each interview was labeled with a group number for reference and the group data were printed with the data for each listed by question. Several steps were employed to code the data for analysis. The process used for data coding was adapted from research conducted by Forsythe (1994). First each separate piece of data was “tagged” with its group number and a reference word for the question from which it came. For example, Need to train workers (read, write, basic skills) was tagged with “1-purpose” at the end of the statement because it originated from small group #1 and the question “What is the real purpose of Anycity High?.” Next, all the pieces of data gathered from small group interviews were color coded for each separate general idea or theme. The first piece of data from Group 1 was highlighted with purple. The rest of the data for each of the 18 small interview groups was
reviewed. Each data bit that reflected the same general meaning was then coded purple.

After all appropriate bits of data were coded with purple, the next unmarked piece of data in
group 1 was highlighted with a yellow highlighter. Again, all the data from the 18 small
groups was reviewed line by line and all data found to have the same general meaning were
highlighted in yellow. This process continued until all pieces of data were highlighted.

Next, the data were organized and collapsed into highlighted color groups using the
following steps. First, each piece of data was coded with the abbreviation for its color of
highlighter and its small group number. It was later determined that the group number was
not necessary because it was already coded at the end of each piece of data, but the
researcher felt the information at the front of each data bit was useful for quick reference.
References to group numbers and interview questions were helpful so that context of the
response and its particular meaning were not lost in the reorganization of the data. For
example, the data bit "Diverse student body—views this positively, provides balance in life,
SES diverse, culturally diverse, housing diverse, racial mix" was coded Ye/1 because it fit in
the yellow category and it was from small group 1. The codes were each followed by a /
mark so that the color code "Ye/" would be distinguished from any other "ye" in the data.
This process was needed for the forthcoming step in which the color code abbreviations were
replaced by meaningful labels. This step will be further clarified later in this section.

Some pieces of data were highlighted in more than one color if the information was
relevant to more than one theme or general idea. In these cases, as the data bits were tagged
with the color codes, the data were copied and pasted with the additional color codes needed
for each additional highlighted color. For example, the data piece "teachers lack
"aggressiveness in communication about grade and problems" was copied and coded both pink (education/teachers) and orange (communication). When all pieces of data were coded with the appropriate color abbreviation (Pu/=purple, Ye/=yellow, Ro/=rose, Pi/=pink, Or/=orange, etc.) the sort command was used and the computer automatically placed all of the same color data bits together by color code. Categories emerged as a result of the inductive process.

All pieces of data coded Pu/ were then placed in their own separate document and printed. The same was done for each group of data identified by color code. The data for each group were reviewed and a descriptive label was identified for each category. For example, the data coded purple was labeled “Building-Physical Spaces.” Pieces of data that did not fit into the identified color codes were coded with “??” and were reviewed after the color coded groups were sorted to see if they fit into any category. If the information still did not fit, the data piece was not further analyzed. Using the “find/replace” command of the software, the color codes were changed to codes that represented the descriptive labels. For example, Pu/3 was replaced by BldgSp/3 to represent Building-Physical Space/Group 3.

Most of the data after this first coding process remained in large, unwieldy chunks of information and further collapsing of the data were required. The process of color-coding with highlighters was employed twice more as needed within each category to further collapse the data into sub-categories. The original coding was maintained such that the coding was now two or three levels. For example, a data piece from group #5—boundary change/traditions-history would be coded “BouCh/TrHis/5. Categories that emerged within each original category were:
1. Building/Physical Space (BldgSp) was further sorted into Size (Sz), Physical Condition (PhysC), Parking (Pkg), Classic Styling (ClsSty), and Community Use (CoUse).

2. Race/SES Factors (RaSES) was further sorted into Diversity Positive (DivPos), Racism (Rac), and Class/Image (ClsIm).

3. Traditions/History (TrHis) was further sorted into Motto (Mot), Alumni/Boosters (AlBoo), Boundary Change (BouCh), People (Peo), Traditions/Loyalty (TradLoy), and Image (Im).

4. Communication (Com) was further sorted into Types of Communication (TypCom), Problems (Probs), and Public Relations (PR).

5. Sports/Activities (SpAct) was further sorted into Sports Important (SpImp), Coaches (Cchs), Problems (Probs), Needs (Nds), Band (Bnd), and Activities (Acts).

6. Parents/Community (ParCmty) was further sorted into Business (Bsn), Community (Cmty), and Parent Involvement (ParIn). Two of these categories required further coding and sorting. Community (Cmty) was further sorted into Need Connection (NeedCon), Church (Church), and Outreach/Programs (Outreach). Parent Involvement (ParIn) was further sorted into Need Parent Involvement (Need ParIn), Family Breakdown (Family BkDn), Parent Support (Par Sup), and Parent Organizations (Par Org).

7. Policies (Pol) was further sorted into Positive Attendance Policy (PosAttPol), Negative Attendance Policy (NegAtPol), and Improve Discipline (ImDis).
8. Students (Std) was further sorted into Work/Cars (Work/Crs), Drug Problem (DrgProb), Lack of Bonding (LaBond), and Other Concerns (OthCon).

9. Education/Teachers was further sorted into Programs (Prog), Purpose (Pur), People (Peo), Needs/Problems (NeProb), Counseling (Clsng), and Positive Feedback (PosFdbk). Four of these categories required further coding and sorting. Programs was further sorted into Reduce Class Size (RduSz), Teach Basics/Life Skills (BaLiSk), Improve Technology (ImpTech), Special Programs (SpProg), VoTech Programs (VoTech), Strong Academics (StrAc), Athletics/Acivities (AthAc), and Mentors/Careers (MentCar). People was further sorted into Key Leaders (KeyLead), Good Teachers (GdTchrs), Problems with Teachers (ProbTchrs), Strong Principal (StPrin), and Past (Past). Purpose further sorted into Educate Child for Life (EdLife) and Prepare for Work or College (WkCol). Counseling was further sorted into Positive Aspects (PosAsp), Negative Aspects (NegAsp), and Improve Program (ImpPr).

This reorganization of the data into categories allowed the data to be bridged from each small group and between the separate interview questions. Patterns in the data were examined and the data were then analyzed for meaning. A decision was made to use the categories from this data in the analysis of the individual interviews and the alumni survey. As the analysis process continued with the other data sources, conflicting information and new categories were also sought.

In addition, the literature review and theoretical framework for this study resulted in the identification of appropriate factors regarding parent/community culture as part of the
total culture of a school. Factors related to parent/community culture include: educational value system, socio-economic status, ethnic or racial minority status, parental involvement/support, parent control in education, parental disengagement, loyal support (unique to this study), the "Iron Law of Social Class" (Lewis and Smith, 1992), neighborhoods, family status, peer influence, values, attitudes, beliefs, and traditions/rituals. The other main aspect of a school's total culture other than parent/community culture is "school culture." School culture factors included in the theoretical framework but not specifically studied in this research include: student culture, teacher culture, school leadership, teacher engagement, and student engagement. At the heart of the total culture is student achievement. Student achievement results from the combined relationships and relative impacts of all the factors related to the total culture of the school.

Individual interviews

The individual interviews of key informants and an historian were used to validate and triangulate the small group interview data. Ten of the twelve interviews were taped and transcribed. The eleventh interview was taped and notes were taken and the twelfth interview had hand-written notes only. The collection of data resulted in one hundred ninety-four single spaced, typed pages and seven pages of handwritten notes. Because these interviews were in-depth and lengthy, a different process was used in the analysis. The transcriptions and notes of the thirteen individual interviews were printed or copied so that hard copies could be viewed. The interviews were first read holistically to gain an understanding of the entire context of the interview. Highlighters were used to highlight specific data that validated the categorization of the small group data as well as
disconfirming data. Historical data were noted so elements could be used in the rich
description of the school and parent/community.

Informal interviews

Informal interview notes were either typed or handwritten. Highlighters were used to
identify supporting or disconfirming data in relation to the categories and themes generated
from the other data sources. The data were utilized to add to, support, or refute the data from
individual and small group interviews.

Alumni survey

The Anycity High School Alumni Association Survey had thirteen questions plus a
space for any additional comments. Ninety-two of the 659 surveys distributed were returned
for a return rate of 14%. Questions one and two provided descriptive data about the
participant’s year of graduation from Anycity High and the number of years he/she has
attended the annual reunion. Questions three through nine were short answer type questions
about the school and school loyalty. The final four questions were included at the request of
the Alumni Association in order to gather input for improving the reunion. These four
questions were not included as part of the data for this study.

Item number one (year of graduation) and descriptive information (gender, race or
national origin, and state in which you now live) were entered into a computer program,
Statview version 4.0, and means were calculated. The following descriptive information was
determined: gender (n=89) was 44% male and 56% female; race/national origin (n=86)
100% were Caucasian; state of residence (n=89) 85% lived in-state, 15% were from out of
state; year of high school graduation (n=92) Mean=1944 with a range falling from 1923 to 1992; years attending reunion (n=84) 38 (45%) attended 1-10 year, 14 (17%) attended 11-20 years, 16 (19%) attended 21-30 years, and 16 (19%) attended 31 or more years.

A typist typed the responses for items three through nine included in this study so that responses were organized by question. An inductive process was used for each question using the same type of highlighter process used for the small group interviews. For example, Question #3—"What is the main reason you attend the Alumni Reunion dinner?" was coded by taking the first response and highlighting it with a green highlighter. The same color was then used with any similar responses for Question #3. Next, the next unmarked response was highlighted with a pink highlighter and the process was continued until all responses were highlighted. The process was continued in a similar fashion for questions four through nine. After all the highlighting was completed, the categories that emerged were reviewed for meaning and a descriptive name was given to each color category for each separate question.

Data analysis in relation to the research questions

Analysis often occurs throughout the various stages in ethnographic or qualitative studies (Fetterman, 1989). The data from each piece in the methodology described above was examined, probed, compared and contrasted, synthesized, and triangulated to provide a holistic view of the loyal support culture. This holistic perspective of the loyal support culture was the conglomeration of the instrument results; the key themes extracted from small group, individual, and informal interviews; the historical evidence; and the illuminating information from the alumni survey.
The design used in a research study must be carefully matched to the specific needs imposed by the research questions. Researchers must be keenly aware of the type of data needed to answer the research questions, how the data should be collected, and how it would be analyzed. Table 3.1 shows the research elements under study from each of the six research questions and the research techniques used to examine each.

A discussion of each research question and the application of the research techniques used to examine each question follows:

1. **What are the basic elements comprising a high school parent/community culture?**

   This question was addressed through the review of the literature and conceptual framework developed for this study. Additionally, elements emerged through the group, individual, and informal interview data as well as from the themes from the alumni survey.

2. **What were the specific factors that influenced the development of the high school parent/community culture?**

   This question was addressed through the review of the literature and conceptual framework developed for this study. Additionally, elements emerged through the group, individual, and informal interview data as well as from the themes from the alumni survey.

3. **What is the relative strength of the specific cultural factors?**

   The relative strength of the cultural factors was determined through the analysis of the data. Frequencies were determined for the themes that emerged from the small group data. The relative strength was analyzed by reviewing the frequency (number) of small
Table 3.1. Research questions, research elements, and research techniques used to examine each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Research Element</th>
<th>Individual Interviews</th>
<th>Small Group Interviews</th>
<th>Informal Interviews</th>
<th>Parent Survey</th>
<th>Alumni Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Basic Elements of Parent/Community Culture</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Specific Cultural Factors</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strength of Specific Factors</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education-related Values, Beliefs, Attitudes</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Traditions and Behaviors</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parent/Community Culture Description</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
groups that contributed to the emergent theme and the frequency (number) of individual references or comments made for each theme. Based on the holistic examination of the identified cultural factors, each factor was placed on the continuum shown in Figure 3.1.

As a starting point for assessing the relative strength of factors, it was decided that the number of small groups that provided illuminating data for the factor would be used. For example, this “starting point” may be that out of 18 small groups, 7 made significant references relevant to the factor of “positive feelings towards the new attendance policy.” As a tool for calibrating the relative strength, it was decided that the number of small groups providing illuminating data would fall into the following categories: 1-4 small groups (weak factor), 5-8 small groups (moderate factor), 9-13 small groups (strong factor), and 14-18 small groups (very strong factor). After the starting point for relative strength was determined, the other data sources were checked for supporting or refuting data. If such data were found, the level of relative strength was adjusted accordingly higher or lower.

Individual and Informal interview data were also reviewed for confirming or refuting information. The means for the fourteen dimension of school practice studied through the Parent Survey were also used to support, validate, or disconfirm the interview data. The 14 dimensions of educational practice are: (a) school climate, (b) communication,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 3.1  Continuum showing the level of relative strength of cultural factors
(c) accessibility, (d) responsiveness, (e) parent involvement, (f) monitoring and assessment, (g) student equity, (h) physical environment, (i) school program, (j) curriculum, (k) support services, (l) student activities/athletics, (m) teacher behavior, and (n) leadership (O'Connell, 1993).

4. **What were the specific education-related parent/community beliefs, values, and attitudes comprising the culture of the parent/community?**

The education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of the parents and community were mainly identified through the three various interview processes. The statistical data from the Parent Survey also shed information regarding what participants value and support in the high school. Themes gleaned from the alumni survey also provided rich information about the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the high school's alumni.

5. **What traditions and behaviors primarily influenced the development and maintenance of the parent/community culture and promoted loyal support?**

The individual, group, and informal interviews provided descriptive and historical information regarding the traditions and behaviors that influenced and help maintain the loyal support culture. School documents, programs, and historical artifacts were also consulted to provide rich and complete information.

6. **What is the culture of the parents/community of the selected comprehensive high school?**

A review of the literature provided a starting point for beginning the process to study parent/community culture. A conceptual framework was developed to guide the researcher. The process of spending 29 days in the field collecting qualitative data through group,
individual, and informal interviews provided the researcher with a wealth of data. The data were collapsed through inductive analytic procedures to determine themes. The themes were also analyzed for frequency to determine the relative strength of specific factors. A quantitative Parent Survey also provided statistical data about specific dimensions of school quality and educational practice. A survey administered to the unique group of alumni at their annual banquet also provided rich data that were inductively analyzed for themes. The resulting data were triangulated to check validity of the elements and factors that emerged. It was with these data that a rich description of the parent/community culture was written.
CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to discover and determine the elements of the culture of parents and community members of a comprehensive high school. More specifically, the study investigated the main elements of the parent/community culture, identified the factors contributing to that culture and their relative strengths, determined the education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes, determined how the loyal support culture was developed and maintained, and described the parent/community culture itself. The research was conducted at a comprehensive high school located in a mid-sized city in the Midwest.

Interviewing was the primary method of data collection. Small group interviews were conducted with 79 participants, individual interviews were conducted with 12 participants, and informal interviews were conducted throughout 24 days spent in the field. Participants were identified with the help of the school administrators and school culture audit contact person. After the interview process began, it was clear that nearly all the participants were generally positive and supportive of the school. The study was then framed through the lens of a "loyal support" culture. Though suggestions were made by participants for improving aspects of the school, few negative or non-supportive viewpoints were gathered. This interview method provided a means for the researcher to gain the perspective of the participants as fully and completely as possible. The beliefs, values, and attitudes were collapsed through an inductive process to provide key ideas and themes.

Another means of data collection included distribution of the Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices (O'Connell, 1993) on the impact and quality of school practices and their level of support for the school. The survey was distributed three times, as described in
Chapter Three, in order to get a well-rounded perspective and adequate return. Four hundred forty-three surveys were distributed and 130 were received for a return of 29%. Means were calculated for each of the questions comprising the 14 dimensions of school practice measured by the instrument (see Appendix C). An informal survey was provided to school alumni at their annual alumni reunion banquet. Ninety-two of the 659 surveys were returned for a rate of 14%. This data provided valuable insights into the school loyalty and were used in data triangulation.

The findings of this study are presented in this chapter beginning first with the results of the Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices so that these results may be used to provide additional information regarding the cultural elements and factors reported. Second are the results of the Anycity High School Alumni Association Survey. Next, the elements that were identified as components of a parent/community culture will be listed. Each is described and illuminating quotes are provided to further explain the nature of each element. The specific factors that influenced the parent/community culture are identified for each cultural element and are explained with rich examples. A holistic perspective through the data triangulation was used to provide a measure of the relative strength of each factor. Following the factors is a discussion of the education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes comprising the parent/community culture and a description of the behaviors and traditions that helped develop and maintain the culture. Finally, a rich description of the parent/community culture with illuminating examples is provided.
Parent Survey Findings

A survey instrument, Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices (O’Connell, 1993), herein referred to as Parent Survey, was used for the initial data collection of this study. Specific survey distribution information can be found in Chapter Three. Data from the survey were analyzed to determine parent perceptions about specific aspects of the school. These included: (1) the perceived level of quality of educational practices and services employed by the school their child attends; (2) the perceived level of impact school practices have had on parents to enhance their support of their child’s learning; and (3) the perceived level of parent support for the school. During analyses of the data, the survey provided an additional data source for data triangulation.

The survey instrument was a building level survey for participants (parents and some community members) that included 83 items measuring 14 dimensions of educational practice: (a) school climate, (b) communication, (c) accessibility, (d) responsiveness, (e) parent involvement, (f) monitoring and assessment, (g) student equity, (h) physical environment, (i) school program, (j) curriculum, (k) support services, (l) student activities/athletics, (m) teacher behavior, and (n) leadership (O’Connell, 1993). Each dimension contained two to nine items and used four different six-point Likert scales measuring levels of quality, impact and support.

Four hundred forty-three surveys were distributed and 130 were returned for a return of 29%. A complete report of the survey results can be found in Appendix G. The majority of respondents were white females of two-parent households with both parents working and earning between $30,000-$70,000 per year.
Table 4.1 shows the means of the 14 dimensions of school quality and the overall rating of school quality. A six-point Likert scale with the following points was used: 0=Do not know, 1=Very poor quality, 2=Poor quality, 3=Mediocre quality, 4=Good quality, 5=Very good quality, and 6=Excellent quality. Table 4.2 shows the overall level of impact of school practices. A six-point Likert scale with the following points was used: 1=No impact, 2=Little impact, 3=Some impact, 4=Moderate impact, 5=Strong impact, and 6=Very strong impact. Table 4.3 shows the overall level of support. A six-point Likert scale with the following points was used: 1=No support, 2=Little support, 3=Some support, 4=Moderate support, 5=Strong support, and 6=Very strong support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring-Assessment</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Equity</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Environment</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Program</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Activities</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Behavior</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall School Quality</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2  Mean of the impact of school practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of School Practices</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Practices-Impact</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3  Mean of overall school support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Support</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall School Support</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All but one of the 14 dimensions of school quality in this survey (see Table 4.1) ranged in the “Good” to “Very Good” level of quality. Only Parent Involvement scored below a “Good” quality rating with a mean of 3.93. Parent Involvement was rated at the higher end of “Mediocre” quality. The overall rating of school quality was rated in the “Good” to “Very Good” range with a mean of 4.60. It is also helpful to review the frequencies of the distribution of ratings for examining the overall school quality rating. Overall School Quality received the following distribution of ratings: 0.0% (very poor quality), 1.7% (poor quality), 8.5% (mediocre quality), 34.7% (good quality), 38.1% (very good quality), and 16.9% (excellent quality). A very strong majority of respondents (89.7%) rated school quality at the level of “Good” or higher.

The impact school practices have on parents is in the “Moderate” to “Strong” range with a mean of 4.41 (see Table 4.2). Because this rating is a composite mean of 14 different questions, overall frequencies were not calculated.
The overall school support of participants was also in the "Moderate" to "Strong" range with a mean of 4.78 (see Table 4.3). A review the frequencies of the distribution of ratings for overall school support provides more insight to this cultural element. Overall School Support received the following distribution of ratings: 0.0% (no support), 4.0% (little support), 4.0% (some support), 28.2% (moderate support), 37.1% (strong support), and 26.6% (very strong support). An overwhelming majority of respondents (91.9%) rated school support at the level of "Moderate" or higher. A strong majority (63.7%) rated their level of school support as "Strong" or "Very Strong."

Clearly, the participants surveyed conveyed very positive views about their school's quality, its programs and practices, how significantly it impacts their behaviors as parents, and that they are in strong support of the school. The participants identified the weakest element of the school's quality in the dimension of parent involvement and the ability of the school to promote and encourage parent involvement opportunities (see Table 4.1).

The first, and most successful distribution of the Parent Survey, was to parents attending conference nights. Surveys were distributed by school staff to parents attending parent-teacher conferences. One hundred-sixty surveys (40 per grade level in grades 9-12) were administered at the conferences. The surveys were available to parents as they picked up report cards. Parents were asked to complete the survey, seal it in an envelope, and return it to the school staff members before they left. This method provided opportunity for parents to participate if they attended parent conference nights. Eighty-nine of the 160 surveys were returned for a return rate of 56 percent.
It was decided to examine viewpoints and perceptions of parents between the grade levels. Of the 89 surveys returned in this first distribution, 18 were parents of a 9th grade student, 21 were parents of a 10th grade student, 26 were parents of an 11th grade student, and 24 were parents of a 12th grade student. Analysis of variance was calculated to determine significant differences in the perceptions of parents at the different grade levels. Table 4.4 provides the means and (n) reported for each of the 14 dimensions of school quality plus the overall level of quality.

Parents of students in specific grade levels demonstrated high perceptions of school quality for each of the 14 dimensions and the overall school quality. No grade levels rated any dimension with a mean under 4.00 or “Good” quality. Two dimensions were rated “Very Good” quality by 10th grade parents. They were Curriculum (5.05) and Student Activities (5.03). Tenth grade parents also rated the overall quality of the school at the “Very Good” (5.00) level. Of the 14 dimensions of school quality and the overall levels of school quality, only one dimension of school quality (curriculum) showed a statistically significant difference. Tenth grade parents rated Curriculum significantly higher than did 11th grade parents.

Table 4.5 shows the overall rating of Impact of School Practices (4.31) and by each grade level 9-12. There were no significant differences in the ratings between each grade level. Grade 9 parents rated the impact of school practices at the higher end of “Moderate” impact. Parents in grades 10-12 rated the school’s practices as “Strong” in regards to the impact school practices had influenced parents to help their child succeed in school.
### Table 4.4  Mean and n overall for each dimension and by grade level

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Table 4.4  (continued)

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</table>

*Significant difference at .05.
Table 4.5  Mean and n of the overall impact of school practices and by grade

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Impact of School Practices</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Practices-Impact</td>
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<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
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<td>4.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 shows the rating for Overall School Support and by each grade 9-12. There were no significant differences in the ratings between each grade level. The ratings of support are higher than all other ratings for any dimension with two grade levels rating at the higher end of “Strong” and two grades rating at the “Very Strong” level of support.

In summary of the findings of the Parent Survey, the parents and some community members that participated demonstrated very positive perceptions of the quality of the school, its programs and practices, the impact school practices have on parents in helping their child succeed, and the overall level of support for the school.

Table 4.6  Mean and n of the overall level of school support and by grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Support</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall School Support</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>5.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent Involvement was rated the lowest dimension of school quality. Overall school support was rated exceptionally high. Statistically, there was one dimension that was found significant at the .05 level through analysis of variance when comparing grade levels of the first distribution group (n=89). Tenth grade parents rated the dimension of Curriculum significantly higher than 11th grade parents.

Anycity High Alumni Association Survey

The Anycity High School Alumni Association Survey (see Appendix C) had thirteen questions plus a space for any additional comments. Ninety-two of the 659 surveys distributed were returned for a return rate of 14%. Questions one and two provided descriptive data about the participant's year of graduation from Anycity High and the number of years he/she has attended the annual reunion. Questions three through nine were short answer type questions about the school and school loyalty. The final four questions were included at the request of the Alumni Association in order to gather input for improving the reunion. These four questions were not included as part of the data for this study.

Item number one (year of graduation) and descriptive information (gender, race or national origin, and state in which you now live) were entered into a computer program, Statview version 4.0, and means were calculated. The following descriptive information was determined: gender (n=89) was 44% male and 56% female; race/national origin (n=86) 100% were Caucasian; state of residence (n=89) 85% lived in-state, 15% were from out of state; year of high school graduation (n=92) Mean=1944 with a range falling from 1923 to 1992; years attending reunion (n=84) 38 (45%) attended 1-10 year, 14 (17%) attended 11-20 years, 16 (19%) attended 21-30 years, and 16 (19%) attended 31 or more years.
The survey questions and the categories that emerged from each are listed below along with the percentage of responses each category yielded.

Question #3—*What is the main reason you attend the Alumni Reunion Dinner?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: seeing friends (60%), school spirit and tradition (27%), to see the scholarship awardees (10%), and tradition of family (3%).

Question #4—*Why do you belong to the Alumni Association?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: loyalty and support (44%), friendships and bonds to others (21%), school pride and spirit (19%), no response or unclear response (13%), and obligation to belong (3%).

Question #5—*How strong is your loyalty to Anycity High School?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: very high (82%), medium (10%), no response or unclear response (7%), and fair (1%).

Question #6—*If you are loyal to Anycity High, what is the reason for your loyalty?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: good school (27%), family tradition (18%), Anycity pride and loyalty (18%), school spirit and pride (17%), the people [friends and teachers] (11%), and no response or unclear response (9%).

Question #7—*What does the phrase “Anycity against the world” mean to you?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: community strength and pride (52%), good school (14%), negative connotation (13%), we work hard to get ahead (8%), tight knit/close bonds (7%), and no response or unclear response (6%).

Question #8—*What, in your estimation, is the best thing about Anycity High School?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: good/quality teachers and students (33%),
good education (17%), school spirit (17%), school loyalty (12%), tradition (12%), no
response (7%), and the school building (3%).

Question #9—Please list any suggestions you may have for improving Anycity High
School. Categories that emerged from the responses were: no response (41%), improve
facilities (15%), improve academics (13%), don't know or nothing (13%), improve and
promote pride (9%), and improve athletic programs (9%).

The final comments were read holistically and reviewed for any data that validated,
refuted or added new information. Thirty-seven of the 92 respondents made a short, written
comment. Nearly all the comments made related to the alumni reunion, dinner, and program.
Suggestions were made for shortening the program, improving the seating, or other
programming improvements. No new information was gleaned from these additional
comments.

Elements of a Parent/Community Culture

Nine overarching themes emerged from the small group interview data as cultural
elements comprising the parent/community culture of a comprehensive high school. The
nine cultural elements are: (1) Building/Physical Space, (2) Students, (3) Race/Socio-
Tradition/History, (8) Parents/Community, and (9) Education/Teachers.

The nine elements of parent/community culture are described in this section. Each
description of a cultural element is followed by descriptions of the cultural factors important
to that cultural element. Forty-five cultural factors emerged from the nine overarching
cultural elements. The number of small groups (n=18) that provided supportive and
illuminating data was the starting base for calculating the relative strength of each factor. Participants in each group may or may not have offered beliefs, values, or attitudes regarding an identified factor. Individual statements were hand counted as well as the number of small groups from which the statements came.

Table 4.7 shows the nine Cultural Elements, the 45 Cultural Factors, the number of small groups that expressed values, beliefs, and attitudes to each factor, and the number of separate references made regarding each factor. Factor strength was estimated by sectioning the number of small groups into the following clusters: 1-4 small groups (weak factor), 5-8 small groups (moderate factor), 9-13 small groups (strong factor), and 14-18 small groups (very strong factor). For example, the factor Teach Basics was supported by 25 individual statements from ten small groups, thus, giving it a “Strong” relative strength. After the starting point for relative strength was determined, a holistic measure was used in viewing the data through data triangulation. Other data sources were checked for supporting or refuting data. If such data were found, the level of relative strength was adjusted accordingly higher or lower. Five factors were adjusted to a higher relative strength due to supporting data. None were adjusted to a lower relative strength.

Cultural Element One: Building/Physical Space

Anycity High School was housed in several different buildings in the local community beginning in the year 1861. The present facility was built in 1911 with a grand, majestic and pillared front entry. The $400,000 high school was a triumph for the community and great fanfare was held for its opening. The entire community turned out to
Table 4.7  Factor strength for each cultural factor by number of small groups and number of references

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. Of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. Of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Education/Teachers: Educate Child for Life</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition/History: Alumni Association/Booster Club</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education/Teachers: Good Teachers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition/History: Motto</td>
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<td>Very Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/Socio-Economic Status: Diversity (positive)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education/Teachers: Improve Technology</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education/Teachers: Special Programs</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Community: Need Parent Involvement</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Community: Community Connection/Outreach</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Parents/Community: Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/Socio-Economic Status: Social Class Image</td>
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Table 4.7 (continued)

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<td>Education/Teachers: Improve Counseling Program</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/Socio-Economic Status: Racism</td>
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<td>Education/Teachers: Prepare Child for Work or College</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>Sports/Activities: Sports are Important</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>Education/Teachers: Problems with Teachers</td>
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<td>Tradition/History: People</td>
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<td>Sports/Activities: Problems/Needs</td>
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<td>Education/Teachers: Activities</td>
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Table 4.7 (continued)

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<td>Students: Work/Cars</td>
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<td>Students: Drug Problem</td>
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<td>Weak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports/Activities: Bandi/Other Activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/Physical Space: Parking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/Physical Space: Classic Styling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication: Public Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports/Activities: Coaches</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/Physical Space: Size</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/Physical Space: Community Use</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Very Strong = 14-18 small groups
      Strong = 9-13 small groups
      Moderate = 5-8 small groups
      Weak = 1-4 small groups

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.

hand-carry every book and chair to the school’s new home. Several additions have been added to the school since its beginning. Though understated during the interview process, the high school building itself is a pride of the local community. It has been a “central focus” for the community and even served as the city’s metropolitan headquarters during a community-wide natural disaster in the early 1990s.
Five cultural factors emerged in relation to cultural element *Building/Physical Space*: size, physical condition, parking, classic styling, and community use. Table 4.8 shows the factor strengths for this element and the number of small groups and number of references made through the data collection. Each factor is described in the following paragraphs along with their relative strengths.

Table 4.8 Factor strength for *building/physical space* by number of small groups and number of references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Building/Physical Space</em>: Physical Condition</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Building/Physical Space</em>: Size</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Building/Physical Space</em>: Parking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Building/Physical Space</em>: Classic Styling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Building/Physical Space</em>: Community Use</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Very Strong = 14-18 small groups
Strong = 9-13 small groups
Moderate = 5-8 small groups
Weak = 1-4 small groups

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.
Size  The large and looming physical structure of the school building gives some patrons a feeling of overwhelming space. Parents and community members related feelings that so many students attend in the large building that some “get lost.” They also related the difficulties new patrons and older alumni had in “getting around” the building. This factor had few supporting references thus making it a “Weak” (see Figure 4.1) factor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 4.1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continuum showing the level of relative strength of building size

Physical Condition  Though additions had been made to the high school over the past several years, many parents and community members expressed that upgrades and improvements were needed. Some of the suggestions made were to improve handicap accessibility, add air-conditioning and carpet, improve cleanliness, fix the roof, and improve parking. Innovations such as computer labs, science labs, and a new media center were offered as suggestions. Extra suggestions included enhancing the sports fields and developing a sports complex. The 4.38 mean for Physical Environment on the Parent Survey indicates that the overall perception of the physical environment is “Good” to “Very Good” quality. No provision was made on the Parent Survey to supply additional comments. This factor, Physical Condition, has a “Strong” (see Figure 4.2) relative strength.

Parking  Few references were made regarding improving the parking conditions for Anycity High School making this a “Weak” factor (see Figure 4.3). The idea of bigger,
better parking lots with speed bumps was extracted from the data. Additionally, better access to parking through a new exit was offered as an idea to enhance the parking situation.

**Classic Styling**  The classic styling and gothic features of the high school building and façade are held in high esteem by the parents and community. Though these parents, alumni, and community members ed improvements made, they did not want the “landmark” impeded with any further additions or improvements that do not maintain the building’s original character and façade. The newer gym, made of red brick, was said to be unaccepted “because it hinders the traditional building.” Though “Weak” as a cultural factor (see Figure 4.4), the classic styling of the building does carry some importance to community members, parents, and alumni.
Community Use  

Anycity High School did get some use by the local community for activities such as community college courses (adult education), church use of parking lots, community dance groups, and it was taken over by the city to act as headquarters during a natural disaster. The building itself is located next to a major highway and is accessible to many areas of the greater community. This is seen in a positive light and more community use was recommended by some of the participants. Though important, this factor is rated “Weak” (see Figure 4.5) in terms of its relative strength in this parent/community culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 4.5  Continuum showing the level of relative strength of community use

Cultural Element Two: Students

The parent/community cultural element of Students can be more specifically characterized as “student issues” or “student concerns.” Though the local parents, community, and alumni expressed a belief that the community members and students are “good, hard-working, and friendly people,” concern for the students was an identifiable element. The factors that emerged from this element are: work/cars, drug problem, lack of bonding, and other concerns. Table 4.9 shows the factor strengths for this element. Each cultural factor is described in the following paragraphs along with their relative strengths.

Work/Cars  

Changes in society have brought on changes for students and families. The perception that more students work today, than in the past, was expressed by the
participants. The main reason for students’ outside work was speculated to be the need to have and pay for a car. Comments such as these were made: “Student employment creates problems for meeting the purpose of education.” “So many kids work. Many work 40+ hours to make money for cars and spending money.” “You know, I think more kids probably do work.” “We’re a much more mobile system, you know, where now, you know, I mean kids as soon as they turn 16 they usually end up with a car.” This factor is rated “Weak” on the continuum of relative strength (see Figure 4.6).

Table 4.9 Factor strength for students by number of small groups and number of references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. Of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. Of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students: Other Concerns</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students: Work/Cars</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students: Lack of Bonding</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students: Drug Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Very Strong = 14-18 small groups  
Strong = 9-13 small groups  
Moderate = 5-8 small groups  
Weak = 1-4 small groups

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.
Drug Problem  Most comments made by participants in reference to a perceived drug problem characterized Anycity High School as similar to most other high schools. A focus on the socio-economic status was mingled with such comments as, "Other schools have better access to drugs than kids at Anycity, but kids can cover their actions better [at other schools] because people don’t think rich kids do this." Another participant stated, "The time that my kids were here and I realized that I was probably a lot naïve about such things, but I did feel there was a lot of drug stuff going on and that kind of stuff. Whether there is today or not, I don’t have no idea to what involvement that is." Community members involved with a local youth shelter had a stronger point of view stating, "The drug problem is bad. The staff needs to get a clue—talk to students more, interact, hang out, know them, know kids outside of the school day—home life, friends, do locker searches." The relative strength of this factor is "Weak" (see Figure 4.7).
Lack of Bonding  The perception that students lacked a "bond" to their school and community emerged as a factor in this parent/community culture. Various participants made statements to this effect: "Students lack a sense of belonging—big school, lack of involvement." "Kids need some kind of bond to Anycity High, such as mentors or peer helpers to show new kids around." "Kids aren't bonding to anything; parents may not be responsible—are working." "Care for the kids who need care—people here cared or I wouldn't be where I am today." As a cultural factor, lack of bonding is rated as "Weak" (see Figure 4.8) in its level of influence in this parent/community culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 4.8  Continuum showing the level of relative strength of lack of bonding

Other Concerns  A splash of other concerns for students surfaced through the inductive analysis of the data. The concerns included personal responsibility, pregnancy, drop out rates, and respect for adults. These issues did not carry much weight individually, but collectively were deemed as a "Moderate" factor (see Figure 4.9). Statements such as these were made: "Some drop out if they are not Anycity students originally—they do not seem to get enough individual attention." "Concerns include a big drop out rate—in 1988 it was 50% and the pregnancy rate in 1992 was very high." "Kids don't respect parents, teachers, administrators—they don't help carry things; they use four letter words (though this is the same at other schools)."
A long and deep history of racial and social class issues permeated throughout the Anycity High School's parent/community culture during this study. Anycity High has traditionally served a significant minority population. The minority enrollment at the time of this study, in 1994, was 16.4%. During the 1993-94 school year 1,743 students were enrolled in grades 9-12 with 155 (8.9%) African American, 83 (4.8%) Asian, 43 (2.5%) Hispanic and five (0.3%) American Indian. Caucasian student numbered 1,457 (83.6%) of the student population.

Anycity High also served a diverse population in regards to socio-economic (SES) status. Most students come from blue collar, middle to low income homes. Three hundred and sixty-two students (20.7%) received free or reduced price lunch in 1993-94. Nearly one-third (29.2%) of students lived below the poverty level. Parents’ educational levels were also identified. Thirty-seven point three percent (over one third) of students’ parents graduated from high school, but considerably fewer (20.3%) had college degrees. The North Central Association (NCA) self study from 1989 revealed that 23.9% of students were affected by divorce; 4.2% by separation; and 5.1% by death or desertion of a parent. A significant number of students with less than ideal home situations attend school each day at Anycity High.
Three factors emerged from the cultural element of Race/SES. The three factors are: diversity (positive), racism, and social class image. Table 4.10 shows the factor strength for each. Each cultural factor is described in the following paragraphs along with their relative strengths.

Diversity (positive) Any city High School's community has had a long history of cultural and ethnic diversity. Specific European groups from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark settled in the area and school district. The Swedish culture was particularly strong.

Table 4.10 Factor strength for race/socioeconomic status by number of small groups and number of references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race/Socioeconomic Status: Diversity (positive)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Socioeconomic Status: Social Class Image</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Socioeconomic Status: Racism</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Very Strong = 14-18 small groups  
Strong = 9-13 small groups  
Moderate = 5-8 small groups  
Weak = 1-4 small groups

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.
German and Italian communities were also present in the greater community surrounding Anycity High. The languages, religions, and cultural traditions were positive attributes in the local community and cultural tradition and pride were celebrated. Black Americans have traditionally made up the largest segment of the school’s ethnic minority population. Asian American, Hispanic Americans, and some Indian populations have also made homes in the community.

Parents and community members made several comments related to positive feelings regarding diversity at the high school. “I want my kids to go to Anycity High. I like the divergent culture...have strong feeling of community among staff...” Another stated, “...the divergent, multicultural student population gives a unique cosmopolitan flavor to school...[it’s] good for kids—gives a taste of the real world.” Yet, another said, “[Anycity High] is culturally diverse—glad our kids have it. It’s a broader spectrum of people than it was 30 years ago.” One parent lumped diversity and socio-economic status together in his support for diversity in the school:

“You know, we have so many different facets at Anycity High. I think it’s one of the biggest plusses and why I kept my kids in this system at [elementary school] and [middle school] and then Anycity High School which in my business you hear ‘Oh, my God, that’s terrible.’ You know, I mean, you know, ‘Isn’t there a lot of Blacks: isn’t there a lot of poverty: how can you get a good education?’ and all those kids of things. And you’re like, where are you going to live that there isn’t Blacks and there isn’t poverty and there isn’t all these things going on as part of your life?”

The respect and appreciation for racial and cultural diversity was refreshingly high in this parent/community culture. The diversity of the community is treasured and welcomed in most respects. The relative strength of this factor is characterized in Figure 4.10.
Racism In sharp contrast to the previous factor, almost the opposite of a positive perspective on diversity was reflected. It appears that though there was racial strife during the civil rights era of the 1960s and early 1970s, racial concerns are evident today. Though few minority parents and community members (6 of 79, or 8%) were interviewed in the small groups, stronger feelings of racial issues surfaced. An African American parent described a disciplinary incident with her child in which she felt racist or unfair treatment. The parent stated that she had “negative vibes” about a vice-principal who seemed “unconcerned, doesn’t follow through...her demeanor was familiar (in a racist sense)” during a meeting about her child’s fight.

Other participants also expressed concerns. A youth shelter counselor also felt a vice-principal was prejudiced towards an African American student that wore a hat to school and had disciplinary action taken. The counselor felt the situation was “blown out of proportion.” Other feedback from parents and community members bore these comments, “Some racial difficulties are still experienced, as in society, with kids acting Black or White.” “There are concerns of some students and faculty about racism—issues of gangs [in the metropolitan community], Black gangs and a rise in Asian.” “There’s a lack of mixing in student groups. Not all races are represented. There’s a lack of representation of minorities in student
leadership, band, color guard...adults should make efforts to achieve diversity in student groups.” Racism was implicated in motivating people to move from the community as this participant relates: “You know, and that’s not even getting into the whole race thing and people being motivated to move their kids away because they perceive a contact with a racial mix of students will taint them somehow, you know, which is ludicrous. But it’s very prevalent.”

One former coach was credited with forming a “solidarity” movement after racial riots in the early 1970s. A sense of the school’s poor reputation was expressed due to the bad publicity that came from what many considered to be “a snowball fight that escalated out of proportion” in the media. Parents stated that the “...Black/White community came together to solve the problem [but] other people’s views of Anycity became clouded because of bad publicity. These views and ignorance have stuck today.” Racial issues have been part of this school and community mirroring the issues of the greater society. Issues and concerns are still surfacing in the present day as reflected by several parents and community members. Figure 4.11 shows the relative strength of this cultural factor.

Social Class Image Social class image is a “Strong” cultural factor in this parent/community culture (see Figure 4.12). The community of Anycity High School was consistently portrayed by the participants as hard-working, friendly, and blue-collar. Unfortunately to these parents and community members, the image held by surrounding communities was unjustly clouded, especially by negative press. This negative social class image proved to be an impetus for the school and community to prove that they are as good as anyone else. The many statements made by participants support this factor: “Others think
that Anycity kids are inferior, poorer, rougher, and less educated.” “The socio-economic status [in this community] has implications of second class status, second class image, no matter what they do. It’s a blue-collar community. [The newer suburb] is seen as the upper class; Anycity is seen as lower class.” “There is a stigma attached... Anycity is lower class, noted as toughest school in the city. Some others think Anycity is not safe because of racial problems, gangs...” “People are tired of being put down for living on the Anycity side [of town].” “There is a stigma of the Anycity side—poor, blue-collar, a bit backward, bad side of town, high crime, more Blacks, people perceive an ethnic/racial imbalance as a negative factor attributed to poor, ethnic people.”

One participant characterized the Anycity community as being lower economically and stated that the people make up for it in other ways such as being successful in athletics. Part of this lower image for this community is in their perception of being “cheated” on in ways by the greater metropolitan city. A city dump was placed in the Anycity community. Large malls were built outside of the Anycity community where the so-called “upper-class”
resides. The Anycity Chamber of Commerce has been more active in recent years in
supporting local growth and development. This enhances the local image but does not
remove the poor image already enacted.

Cultural Element Four: Communication

Communication surfaced as a cultural element in this particular parent/community
culture. The points that emerged through the interview process mainly focused on Anycity
High School's ability or inability to provide information to the parents and community.
Issues from perceived negative press through the newspaper were also detected. The factors
that emerged in this cultural element are: types of communication, problems, and public
relations. Table 4.11 shows the factor strength for each factor. Each is described in the
following paragraphs along with their relative strengths.

Types of Communication  Parents and community members were aware of a
variety of communication tools used by Anycity High School to provide school information.
Such methods of communication included the school calendar, policy and rule information,
school newsletter, student newspaper, flyers at games, word of mouth from students, and
involvement in school activities. Parents and community members (mainly parents)
appreciated the methods of communication utilized. Statements such as these were made:
"The school newsletter is sent home; the calendar provides
information...the school paper; we get a copy of the policies each year and staff get a weekly
activity list." "Kids come home and tell [what's going on], being involved helps. We know
about school through kids' activities and newsletters." The relative strength of this factor is
"Moderate" (see Figure 4.13).
Table 4.11  Factor strength for *communication* by number of small groups and number of references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Communication</em>: Types of Communication</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Communication</em>: Problems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Communication</em>: Public Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Very Strong = 14-18 small groups
Strong = 9-13 small groups
Moderate = 5-8 small groups
Weak = 1-4 small groups

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.

Figure 4.13  Continuum showing the level of relative strength of types of communication

**Problems**  Though many participants expressed a variety of communication methods used by the school, several felt these no longer existed or were ineffective. The following comments reflect the participants' views: "[the school] needs to effectively communicate with parents about being involved, etc.; convince kids to convince their parents to be involved. The kids don’t deliver the mailers home." "We need more communication to
parents. We used to have a newsletter every quarter." "They try to communicate but run into some snags..." "Parents don't get information. We need calendars. Kids don't bring them home." "Improve [the communication process]. There needs to be more for academics and activities, like D slips. Teachers lack aggressiveness in communication about grades and problems."

Though some parents and community members knew of the school's communication tools, some did not or they felt they did not receive the newsletters, calendars, etc. The cultural factor, "problems," in relation to the element of communication has a "Moderate" relative strength (see Figure 4.14).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.14 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of communication problems

Public Relations Public relations especially with the local media has been perceived to be less than positive by some participants. The message that Anycity High and its community gets a "bad rap" is clear throughout the data. Media (the greater metropolitan city newspaper) gets the proverbial "finger" pointed most directly at them. Though surfacing as a "Weak" cultural factor (see Figure 4.15) in terms of this study, the poor public image surrounding Anycity High and its community is blamed on the media to a large degree.

The following statements provide illustrative examples: "The media feeds fire to the ignorance people have. Anycity High is on the wrong side of the political track." "O.K., the
[newspaper] has been one of our problems with giving us a fair break on the Anycityside and another one is the Chamber of Commerce.” “…just reading the [newspaper] there are many good students out there and they’re the ones that do not get the publicity…I think so much of that gets ignored by the media. That’s not news when kids get together and mow the neighbors yard, but they break out their neighbor’s windows, it’s news.” Bad publicity was blamed for escalating the race issues of the late 1960s. Another participant added, “Black/White community came together to solve the problem [but] other people’s views of Anycity became clouded because of bad publicity. These views and ignorance have stuck today.”

Parents suggested more public relations to overcome this perceived media obstacle. They said, “Organize small groups for communication about the school and include alumni…”, “[The school needs] more public relations…”, “Keep contacting parents. Don’t give up on us even if we’re not responsive. Keep going at them.” Figure 4.15 shows the relative strength of the public relations cultural factor.

Cultural Element Five: Sports/Activities

There is a deep history related to Anycity High’s sports and activities programs. It was clearly expressed that in the old days, especially in the 1940s and 1950s, Anycity High had winning athletic teams. Many participants related that the “stands were full” in those days, unlike they were at the time of this study. The deep history and importance of athletics centers on issues of school pride and tradition. Stories were told of wonderful pep assemblies in which teachers and coaches led the charge in building up enthusiasm and spirit.
The current school parents were more centered on the needs of athletics and activities today. They had hopes of improving and expanding the current programs and facilities.

Though needs and improvements were suggested in the interviews, respondents to the Parent Survey indicated that sufficient and meaningful, non-academic programs and activities, such as clubs and athletics, were offered by the school. The dimension Student Activities had a composite mean of 4.63 on a six point Likert scale. This means that the participants rated Student Activities between "Good" and "Very Good" quality.

Four themes or cultural factors emerged from the small group interviews. They are: sports are important, coaches, problems/needs, and band/other activities. Table 4.12 shows the factor strength of this element. The factors are presented in the following paragraphs along with their relative strengths.

**Sports are Important** The importance of winning athletic teams seems high in many schools and communities. It was especially important in the Anycity High community. Athletics and activities build a sense of team and family among the students and their families. The stories and comments of the participants say it best:

“They had some strong athletic teams in the '30s, '40s, '50s, and '60s. Not so much in the '70s, '80s, and even the '90s. You know, strong athletic teams develop spirit, too. They had 17 straight track championships, as I recall, that grew out of the '20s, '30s, and '40s.”
Table 4.12  Factor strength for *sports/activities* by number of small groups and number of references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Sports/Activities</em>: Sports are Important</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sports/Activities</em>: Problems/Needs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sports/Activities</em>: Coaches</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sports/Activities</em>: Band/Other Activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Very Strong = 14-18 small groups  
Strong = 9-13 small groups  
Moderate = 5-8 small groups  
Weak = 1-4 small groups

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.

“I remember when you went to an Anycity High football game there was a huge section in the middle of the field—the 50 yard line and the cheerleaders in front like that—and if you weren’t an Anycity High student, you didn’t sit there. Parents...no parent ever had a good 50-yard line seat, I mean that was unheard of, that’s where the students all sat.”

“When we played for the championship in football, the great stadium would be full. Twenty thousand people, because as I said, there was no television and that was the entertainment. Papers gave the great play. And we won, as we usually did. They would carry the team around the track on their shoulders.”

“And the fact of the matter is that alumni brag about sports teams—if they went to college or they went to high school or whatever like that—when their sports team is doing well, they brag about it.”
The current "slump" in winning was a concern to many that did not wish to see school spirit suffer. Unfortunately, when winning goes down, it appears that team support and spirit also suffer as the following comments relate:

"My kids aren’t real interested in sports, umm, mainly they come to play with the pep band. Any maybe that, you know, that’s the problem—maybe kids aren’t interested. But I wasn’t a big...I didn’t care for football, but there was, when I was in school, but there’s always a bunch. When I went to Anycity High the bleachers were full. I mean they were bumper to bumper."

"I hear that a lot of support is dwindling...when our kids were younger and before they got here...the athletic teams were doing well and the crowds were there. When the athletic teams are not doing well, the crowds aren’t there."

"Sports are important. Families and school support the kids’ programs in athletics...nice stadium...a sense of community at football but not as much support as they had 20 years ago."

"Pride comes with winning in athletics."

The importance of athletic success has changed over the years, though it is still strong today. Anycity High’s history of athletic greatness is a tradition that is not easily forgotten. Though times have changed, as has the success of recent teams, there continues to be support and spirit for the athletic programs. Parents and alumni help reinforce the spirit through the stories they tell. They are worried that things are changing too much and this spirit and athletic success may be lost. The results of the “Alumni Survey” indicated that 9% of the respondents suggested improving athletics when listing any suggestions they may have for improving Anycity High School (question #9). The cultural factor sports are important has a deep history that enhances its overall strength as shown in Figure 4.16.

Coaches With the current slump in the overall athletic program, coaches are getting some of the blame. As a "Weak" factor in the cultural element of sports/activities
(see Figure 4.17), issues of coaching squabbles and poor coaching arose as these statements indicate: "There used to be a problem with coaches bad-mouthing each other. Coaches should work together. It seems better today; some of the coaches have left." "Kids don’t like the [basketball] coach and won’t play for him; the parents want a new coach. They should persuade kids to play even though they don’t like the coach—it’s part of life.” “Take out the politics, especially in athletics—if parents know the coach, the kids plays…” “You’ve got to be able to lose…but not so consistently. And I think because they have had very, very poor coaching.”

When asked what one participant thought parents and community members might want for their kids in terms of improving the school, the response was, “New coaches. We need new coaches. We got to win more in terms of athletic teams. Uh, you know, they might say...some of them may say staff should be more demanding.” The relative strength of this factor is shown in Figure 4.17.

Problems/Needs A variety of problems and needs were offered by participants regarding athletics and activities at Anycity High School. A need for more student involvement, more offerings, more and better equipment, more enthusiasm, more inclusion, and lower costs to students were among the issues gleaned from the interview data. Examples of the statements from parents and community members are: “Kids are not
wanting to participate on losing teams—kids are working (car, money, need to support family)…” “The costs for school activities are too much—books, supplies, class fees. Some kids are isolated and penalized due to financial circumstances. Money is significant for many people in hourly rate jobs. These people are not treated with dignity on the job.” “There needs to be efforts for inclusion of all kids regardless of ability (but still have much competition here). Some kids are denied access to sports and activities.” “Identify more extra-curricular activities and get more kids pulled back into the mainstream. Make activities part of the school day—build pride and community. Make the school day longer to add activities—find a way for kids to want to be here.” “We need more athletic equipment and uniforms.” This factor has a “Moderate” relative strength (see Figure 4.18).

**Band/Other Activities** Participants discussed band and other activities during the interview process. Band was considered to be a program that deteriorated but has made gains in recent years. Like the long, successful history of athletics, band and other activities also had some history of success. Unfortunately, there is not the same level of success today.
Other activities mentioned were National Honor Society, activities pep club, a group that helps welcome new students, music, drama, plays, debate, and special activities for post prom. One parent expressed her wish:

"It's that they can get the band back into where they can place in the top seven again in the state. For marching band to have—we need to buy fifty new uniforms. You know, when they're under a hundred, it just takes a lot of work to make a showing because they have all this field—lots of space and it means more programming for the program to make it look nice."

This same parent has been a member of the band boosters and served on its board. She expressed concerns with parent involvement stating that they had eliminated the $5.00 annual dues so no barriers would exist for parents' involvement. She calculated that the band numbered 50-60 students at the time of the interview. In the past it had numbered 100. Her feelings were that the junior high feeder schools to Anycity High had not done as well in recruiting and beginning students in band due to some teachers getting ill or retiring. This parent knew of some new enthusiastic junior high band teachers and hoped new enthusiasm would grow. In the view of the parent/community culture, band and other activities was rated "Weak" in relative strength (see Figure 4.19).

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<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
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Figure 4.19 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of band/other activities
Cultural Element Six: Policies

Issues of school policy emerged as a cultural element from the data. Two specific policies were the focus for parents and community members, the new attendance policy and discipline (or the lack, thereof). Parents and community members expressed both positive and negative views of the new attendance policy. Though parents and community members characterize the students as “good kids,” concerns of discipline at school were evident. Three factors emerged in relation to the cultural element of Policies. They are: attendance policy (positive), attendance policy (negative), and improve discipline. Table 4.13 Shows the relative strength of each factor. The following paragraphs describe each factor along with its relative strength.

Attendance Policy (positive) Parents and community members expressed that the new attendance policy is having success. This factor is measured as “Moderate” in its impact on the culture (see Figure 4.20). Statements in support of the new policy are: “The attendance policy is really making a difference here.” “One of the biggest problems in the last ten years is the attendance problem—kids coming to school—the new attendance policy is addressing this.” Some participants expressed a need to refine the policy though they supported it. They said: “The attendance policy is on the right track but it does need some refinements. Those who don’t abuse it are the most fearful of it. It does help kids think twice about missing. It’s a real positive thing for Anycity.” “The attendance policy is serving its purpose. Night school offers the basic courses. There have been some glitches in the system but they are working them out.”
Table 4.13  Factor strength for *policies* by number of small groups and number of references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policies: Attendance Policy (positive)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies: Attendance Policy (negative)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies: Improve Discipline</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>++Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Very Strong = 14-18 small groups  
    Strong = 9-13 small groups  
    Moderate = 5-8 small groups  
    Weak = 1-4 small groups

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.

Figure 4.20  Continuum showing the level of relative strength of attendance policy (positive)

**Attendance Policy (negative)**  Participants expressed concerns regarding the strict, new attendance policy. Most concerns regarded issues of student illness. The comments from participants gave insight to these concerns: “The policy puts parents in an adversarial role to justify sick kid’s absences—it’s beaurocratic—a district issue (not just Anycity).”
“There needs to be some flexibility. We do account for our kids’ whereabouts; school doesn’t take into account the reason why kids miss school.” “It’s a problem for an honor student who has asthma (must go to school when sick). It should be evaluated on an individual basis—think it’s good but make exceptions for illness.” This cultural factor is rated as “Moderate” as shown is Figure 4.21.

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<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
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Figure 4.21 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of attendance policy (negative)

**Improve Discipline** Participants expressed a need for the school to enforce discipline policies or improve the discipline plan. There was a sense that in today’s society, teachers have little power or control in discipline due to the laws protecting children. This factor is rated “Moderate” in its relative strength (see Figure 4.22). Comments such as these provide illustration: “Discipline is key. Set rules and follow through and enforce them. Keep consistent consequences (teachers can’t discipline anymore).” “The courts gave kids

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<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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Figure 4.22 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of improve discipline
their rights. This causes problems at many schools and for parents.” “Improve discipline—can’t do much today. What the school is allowed to do is overrated—must come from parents.” One alumnus described his experiences from Anycity High:

“We didn’t have the problems with race or with discipline at that time as there is today. Um, the administration then was the law and I guess you could almost say you were afraid of the administration—not true fear, but you stayed in line better because you were afraid of them—of what would happen...morality is not taught in the home anymore with all the parents working and discipline is left to the school.”

Tradition/History

The history and tradition of Anycity High School and its community are deeply embedded and rich in content. A fierce loyalty to the school and community developed early in its history and has been handed down through generations. Anycity High developed an “underdog” mentality that has helped it gather strength as a community in standing against adversity in life or even school athletics. Six cultural factors emerged from the data: motto, alumni association/boosters club, boundary change, people, image, tradition/loyalty. Table 4.14 shows the relative strength for each factor. Rich descriptions of the factors are found in the following paragraphs.

Motto  “Anycity Township against the World.” This motto or rallying cry was heard loudly and clearly throughout the data collection process. Even when asking open-ended questions, such as When you think of Anycity High...what comes to mind?, the motto popped up without prompting. This motto was closely entwined within the school and the greater Anyside community. For example, one participant stated, “Once an Anycitsider, always an Anycitsider.” It was expressed that you come into the community strictly by birth and/or by living there your entire life. Outsiders moving into the community and living
there for many years were not acknowledged as "Anycitysiders." The many poignant
statements of the participants reflect the loyalty their motto carries:

"Anycity spirit—you learn to stick together. The Anycityside has been cramped on for so
long—landfill—we've had many good things happening. Anycityside has to fight hard to
prove it is good. We've always had to prove ourselves and we're stronger and better people
because of it."

Table 4.14 Factor strength for tradition/history by number of small groups and number of
references

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tradition/History: Tradition/Loyalty</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Tradition/History: Alumni
  Association/Booster Club         | 15                  | 36               | Very Strong    |
| Tradition/History: Motto         | 12                  | 28               | +Very Strong   |
| Tradition/History: Image         | 10                  | 28               | Strong         |
| Tradition/History: People        | 8                   | 22               | +Strong        |
| Tradition/History: Boundary
  Change                          | 4                   | 8                | +Moderate      |

Note: Very Strong = 14-18 small groups
Strong = 9-13 small groups
Moderate = 5-8 small groups
Weak = 1-4 small groups

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.
"It's a reverse kind of discrimination. You know, we've—we pride ourselves on 'We don't need the rest of [the greater community]'—that's their loss. We know that we have to stick together—that's the 'Anycity Township against the world.'—because nobody else is going to give us a break."

"Anycity Township against the world. Our motto—any Anycity Higher can remember it. We're out after the world. We automatically knew this when we came in—learned this in junior high. Rivalry started between [the two sides of town]. We didn't care what football team we won except [our biggest rival]."

"If we didn't have Anycity Township against the world, we wouldn't have anything."

"And there's always, in terms of their own psyche, that we're being picked some over here—that's the negative side of things. That—that they've had a hard time overcoming. The township against the world. You know, those old-timers, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, that defensive kind of thing. It's been a rallying cry—a banner. Banners—the township against the world—trying to unite, I guess, whatever that external force was that always tying to put 'em down."

Some participants felt the motto was a bit outdated and negative. They didn't want others to feel that "Anycity was against anything as these comments relate: "Anycity Township against the world—this is not good today. It should be 'for' instead of 'against.' There is not a strong enough movement to change this." "It's unfair that people think that Anycity is against everything. There are some negative aspects about 'Anycity Township against the world'."

The Anycity High School Alumni Association Survey distributed to the participants at their alumni dinner provided interesting information supporting the small group interview data. One question was specifically focused on the motto: Question #7—What does the phrase "Anycity against the world" mean to you? Categories that emerged from the responses were: community strength and pride (52%), good school (14%), negative connotation (13%), we work hard to get ahead (8%), tight knit/close bonds (7%), and no response or unclear response (6%). Eighty percent of the 92 respondents viewed the motto
positively for the school and community. Only 14% of the respondents felt that the motto carried a negative connotation.

Anycity High School is the center of its community. The community motto envelops the school. Students and alumni have used this rallying cry in effort to pull people together and provide a sense of community spirit. The relative strength of this cultural factor is rated as “Very Strong” as shown in Figure 4.23.

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Figure 4.23 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of motto

Alumni Association/Booster Club Direct parent involvement appears to need improvement according to the findings of the Parent Survey and those in the next section for the cultural element Parent/Community. Nevertheless, parents are involved through two major venues at Anycity High: the Athletic Booster Club and the Alumni Association. Fifteen of the 18 small groups interviewed credited the Booster Club and the Alumni Association for supporting the school, offering student scholarships, forging school spirit, and carrying on the traditions of the school. The Alumni Association was acknowledged more often than the Booster Club as a support for the school.

The Booster Club is much like any you find at the high school level. An elected board of parents runs it. The organization functions to support and raise funds for athletic teams. The funds are used to purchase new uniforms, run concession stands, and provide
other assistance to teams as needed. The Boosters offer a scholarship that is presented at the annual Alumni Reunion Banquet. They also donated money to the post prom party committee. Though parent involvement appears to be strong (19 people attended the Booster Club meeting attended by the researcher), the same parents seem to volunteer and participate holding most of the responsibility. The statements given by participants reflect the esteem held for the Booster Club: “The Booster Club is very active and supports athletics more.” “The Booster Club is excellent—in involved. They look out for Anycity and do things to help. [The coach] and Boosters built the stadium. They held the Spotlight Parade—variety show—to raise money for the stadium.” “We have a strong Booster Club—they support sports and activities.”

The Anycity High Alumni Association is a one of a kind entity. Its beginnings come from an alumni picnic, potluck style, that was started in 1936 by the Anycity High Principal. The annual picnic carried on with little change until about 1970. The costs of holding the picnic had risen, so the new leaders of the alumni group decided to double the dues to $1.00 per person and create a non-profit association. The Anycity High Alumni Association was officially born. The scholarship program was also developed at this time by the alumni leadership. The sitting president donated $1000 from his own pocket to offer the first scholarships. The scholarship program has grown by leaps and bounds and is entrusted in a foundation of nearly $500,000. The scholarships now come from the interest from the foundation.

Other unique aspects of the Alumni Association are its claims to be the largest in the world. This may very well be true. With a mailing list of about 7,000 and an annual reunion
attendance of about 1,000, there appears to be no other high school alumni group as large or active. This researcher attended the 117th Annual Alumni Reunion in May of 1994. The evening began with a tasty, but not too elegant, boxed dinner. The oldest graduates and classes were seated in the big gym. It was filled. If you were younger than the class of 1950, the seating continued into the smaller gym. The evening's activities were started promptly including a roll call of the all the classes present. Scholarships were awarded, 25, 50, and 60 year Honor Classes were honored, and a business meeting was held. It was easy to become swept up in the unique spirit of the school and alumni and become part of it. The many comments of the participants paint a picture of their pride in the Alumni Association:

"There are 2,000 people attending every year and they attend. Why do they attend? They attend because of the pride and regard, self regard and respect for each other. And why do they do that? I said the AnyCity High had more spirit and pride and esteem in a school and the alumni because of their heritage. Their background is not affluent. It is not affluent—but hard working, honest people and those who you might say, toil, or struggle together, stay together."

"The Alumni Association is the largest—groups around the country get together. They're loyal. One thousand people come back to the annual reunion. There's an endowment of $450,000 and scholarships are awarded each year."

"Many people have strong, emotional ties (mainly the older alumni). Alumni of the 1950s and up sit in the little gym at the reunion (big gym will only hold the older alumni)."

"We have the largest Alumni Association in the world."

"The Alumni Association is large. It furnishes many scholarships—loyalty and tradition—alumni stay involved. There are other ‘state chapters’—in Texas 20-25 people gather regularly."

"Many people come to the alumni dinner, young and old. They have pride in coming back. Their heart is really at AnyCity High. It's a real educational experience for the students who serve the meal."
This cultural factor, *Alumni Association/Booster Club*, is rated as “Very Strong” in its relative strength (see Figure 4.24). The Alumni Association especially holds strong bonds for the high school and community that have lasted through the test of time and seem to maintain themselves especially through the older alumni.

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**Figure 4.24** Continuum showing the level of relative strength of alumni association/booster club

**Boundary Change** The large, metropolitan school district made the decision to make boundary changes for its high schools in 1988. Some older schools like Anycity High were crowded and newer schools had plenty of room. There was little community support in the Anycity Township due to the fierce loyalty to their school. Parents and grandparents did not want to see their children and grandchildren changing to different schools. Some felt the changes would take away the best students and most affluent residents. The comments from participants indicated their displeasure with the boundary changes:

“Oh, was that a big fight when the school board changed the boundaries…and it was just like a civil war and it was a mistake. I still view it as a mistake…Well, so when the boundary changed, you know, that they wanted to beef up [another high school]. So, they set this area away from Anycity which is the upper socio-economic area…When you looked at the leadership of Anycity High School, most of it came out of this area…They placed it with the southeast—students from the southeast side which is generally a lower socio-economic level. So it changes the demographics of it.”

“The boundary change took the best of the junior high away. It changed the caliber of students that came to Anycity. Parent support was also lost with the kids.”
“A lot of people were upset with the boundary change.”

“They should have left the boundaries. It was one year of living hell for families—traumatic for families who were districted out of Anycity area. This created conflict and hardship. Then came open enrollment, so it didn’t serve a purpose.”

“Some loyal neighborhoods were changed to [another] area. In 1988, Anycity gained kids who had no attachment to the school from newly gained neighborhoods. Some families moved back into the Anycity area...Anycity lost higher SES families on the north side but gained some higher SES families on the south side...The boundaries don’t make sense because a dividing line is a few blocks from Anycity High.”

This factor has a “Moderate” relative strength in this parent/community culture (see Figure 4.25). The boundary change seemed to have a deep impact on several participants and may have contributed to weakening loyalties to the school. Loyalties were stretched, but those that wanted to stay at Anycity High found ways to do so in many cases.

People  Strength and pride in Anycity High stems from the people who made up the school and community. Past school principals, teachers, and coaches were named and remembered by parents, alumni, and community members. They were remembered for providing an excellent education. They were remembered for “hanging off the balconies” to cheer at pep assemblies. They were remembered for promoting solidarity during the times of racial rioting. They were remembered for being Anycity community members. They were remembered for “staying” at Anycity High.

The Alumni Association survey posed the following question: Question #8—*What, in your estimation, is the best thing about Anycity High School?* The greatest response named good, quality teachers and students (33%) as the top response. Other responses included: good education (17%), school spirit (17%), school loyalty (12%), tradition (12%), no response (7%), and the school building (3%). The findings of the Parent Survey for Teacher
Behavior and Leadership were both rated in the "Good" to "Very Good" quality range; (4.21) and (4.51) respectively (see Table 4.1).

People have been central to the strength and endurance of the close knit school and community. The following quotes paint a picture: "The outpouring of support was—was fantastic. The nucleus of that support was Anycity High people." "[a former vice principal] said, 'just remember this, three years at Anycity High is worth more than four years at [the university] any day.' We walked out of there believing that. We had a wonderful faculty when I was in school." "We had nothing but awe and respect for the principal and vice principal at the time." "We had pride in all of our coaches and our administrators and teachers." "And there was a family—family in terms of spirit there that I think is different from anyplace else here in the city." "See the kids I found when I was there—I always characterized them there as the most friendly group in the world." "We had a fine education and teachers—and had an absolutely wonderful high school experience (mid-1940s). We got an excellent education and personal attention from the teachers. I have a real debt of gratitude to the school."

People are key to this parent/community culture. Strong, important people laid a foundation in the lives of the students at Anycity High and instilled a sense of family, belonging, and pride. The relative strength for the factor people is shown in Figure 4.26.
Figure 4.26 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of people

Image Clearly, a negative image haunts the parents and community of Anycity High. They have grown into and spent lifetimes trying to undo an image that has been placed upon them. The image is one of being rough and rowdy, poor and blue collar. The division of the river through the community separates Anycity from the “other” side of town. An “underdog” image has pulled together the school and community luring them to stick together and prove their worth. This has been a helpful side of the underdog image.

It seems the respondents are quite tired now of trying to prove themselves, and fighting for a positive community image. Listening to the words of the respondents themselves provides a view into their perceptions: “Anycity has a mystique of rough and rowdy—has the reputation of being the rowdiest. This reputation is not deserved—because we stand as one, others have to fight all of us.” “People used to be afraid to cross the river to the Anycity side. This doesn’t happen as much today.” “We are our own worst enemy. We don’t brag enough.” “Parents from other schools are afraid to come to the Anycity stadium even today.” “People are tired of being put down for living on the Anycity side.” “Realtors still tell people not to live on the Anycity side.”

One participant related a story of a newspaper article done in the early 1990s. A reporter asked students of high schools (from other parts of the city) about Anycity High. He related,
"Oh, God, did that cause problems. You know, second rate, tough people, second rate people, poor people, crime infested, thieves. That was their impression of people that lived on the Anycity side. Well, that makes the Anycity side people very defensive. And they are defensive. They kind of have a chip on their shoulder when they cross that river."

Another participant reflected on his beliefs about the image of the community stating, "Why do they stick together? It is because of the prejudice. Prejudice I call it...subtle indignation is about the best way I can describe it because on the Anycity side, the people of [the greater community], they have some prejudiced concepts and also stigmatism attached to Anycity Side. I know this for a fact...."

Hard feelings and old wounds nurse the perceived image problems for the Anycity community. As the center of the community, Anycity High reflects the feelings of the surrounding community because the school and community tend to stand as one. The relative strength of this cultural factor is rated as "Strong" as shown in Figure 4.27.

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<th>Weak</th>
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Figure 4.27 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of image

Tradition/Loyalty  As the strongest single factor emerging from the small group interviews, individual interviews, and supported by the Alumni Association Survey, as well as in the level of support for Anycity High reported in the Parent Survey, tradition and loyalty for Anycity High is very, very strong. Seventeen of the eighteen small groups interviewed provided information about the Anycity tradition and loyalty. The participants made seventy separate references regarding tradition or loyalty. Eleven of the twelve
individual interviewees made specific references to school tradition and loyalty. The Alumni Association Survey asked questions regarding school loyalty. The results are below:

Question #5—*How strong is your loyalty to Anycity High School?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: very high (82%), medium (10%), no response or unclear response (7%), and fair (1%).

Question #6—*If you are loyal to Anycity High, what is the reason for your loyalty?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: good school (27%), family tradition (18%), Anycity pride and loyalty (18%), school spirit and pride (17%), the people [friends and teachers] (11%), and no response or unclear response (9%).

Alumni respondents were overwhelming loyal to Anycity High School with 82% rating themselves as having a *very high* strength in loyalty. The reason given for their loyalty is spread among having a good school, the tradition of family attending Anycity High, community pride and loyalty, school spirit and pride, and the friends and teachers at Anycity High.

The *Parent Survey*, distributed to parents and some community members, included six questions related to support for the school (see Appendix G and Table 4.3). The overall level of support for the school was in the “Moderate” to “Strong” range with a rating of 4.78. Support indicates that there is loyalty for the school. As reflected in the data, the loyalty stems from family and community tradition in attending Anycity High School. This tremendous level of community and school loyalty and tradition is part of the culture of Anycity High. Many feel that it is still strong and continues on today through the activities of the school, athletics, and especially through the Alumni Association and its annual reunion.
dinner. A sample of the many comments made are listed below to help capture the essence of this unique phenomenon:

"The community has been there forever—there’s a long tradition in education and loyalty."

"We have older traditions—the oldest high school in the [city]. The area has gone through transitions."

"The tradition—I can’t imagine my kids going anywhere else. I want my kids to go here. I feel it is a good school."

"My parents talked about carrying books to the new building in 1912."

"The pep assemblies in the auditorium in the 1940s—[two teachers] would hang over the balconies and fire up the kids. This was a unique thing that keeps people connected."

"The Spotlight Parade was a musical show to raise money to build the stadium. It was a very important event and many were involved."

"The tradition of Anycity High is very strong."

"Anycity is part of our personalities. It’s what we cling to—it’s just part of us. This is true for all of us."

"I moved back specifically to [have kids go to Anycity]. We have four generations of graduates. There are many families like this who moved in the boundaries."

"But Anycity High was college to many of those graduates..."

"They had, you know, that’s just a tradition there. I guess. A unique, special feeling."

"The greatest strength—I think it’s the generational commitment to the school. Umm, it’s hard to put your finger on it, and, you know, or get your arms around it."

"She said she graduated from Anycity High School and someone said to her, ‘Well, you know, you graduated from the greatest high school there is.’ And she realized there is this camaraderie of the alumni that doesn’t exist anywhere."

The tradition and loyalty to Anycity High School can be summarized possibly by one participant’s words, “It goes back to the beginning.” The school was begun with a strong
principal and staff. They generated success and pride in students which, in turn, created pride in the community. The community also prided itself in its diversity and hard working people. The alumni carried on the traditions and stories passing them on to children as they grew up. The students went to Anycity High knowing its great traditions, areas of pride, and somehow a feeling of carrying on the tradition was instilled. The Alumni Association has continued to grow stronger and larger and helps carry on the tradition and loyalty. The relative strength of this "Very Strong" factor is shown in Figure 4.28.

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<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
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Figure 4.28 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of tradition/loyalty

**Cultural Element Eight: Parents/Community**

This cultural element examines the relationships Anycity High has with parents and community organizations and businesses. Six main categories (factors) emerged from the analysis of the small group interview data. They are *business, community connection/outreach, church, need parent involvement, family breakdown, and parent support*. Table 4.15 Shows the factor strength for each. The perspective of this cultural element examines how parents and community members view themselves in relation to the school. They also offer some suggestions for improving the parent/community/school relationship. Each factor is described in the following paragraphs along with its relative strength as cultural factor in this parent/community culture.
Table 4.15  Factor strength for *parents/community* by number of small groups and number of references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Element: Cultural Factor</th>
<th>No. of Small Groups</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
<th>Factor Strength</th>
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<td><em>Parents/Community:</em> Churches</td>
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Note:  Very Strong = 14-18 small groups  
       Strong = 9-13 small groups  
       Moderate = 5-8 small groups  
       Weak = 1-4 small groups  

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.
Business  The local business community for Anycity High expressed some involvement with the school, interest in helping the school, and ideas for supporting students. Local fast food restaurants, a bank, a gas station, and a funeral home were represented by participants in this study. Some businesses hire students, others advertise in school literature, some make donations to school activities, and others provide career awareness and/or mentoring. Some concerns were also expressed by business representatives regarding a perceived lack of preparation of students for the world of work. The business community does have a relationship with the school, especially businesses with Anycity High School alumni. A general expression of strengthening and improving this relationship came from the words of the participants:

"Businesses are connected with career days where business people come in to talk to kids—kids listen better that way—to communicate values and standards of the work force. Career awareness for Sophomores."

"Alumni and businesses would be open to providing mentors, shadowing with businesses. Expose kids to jobs—let them explore Anycity Side businesses and alumni. Kids can see successful Anycity alumni."

"The school should work closer with bigger businesses for opportunities for careers and jobs for students."

"There is a connection with Anycity Side business."

"We need to get more business and community involvement."

"Maybe businesses can provide some of the skills kids need—work with the school to do this. Summer work programs through the school—kids can feel what it’s like to be employed. It provides insight into their futures—what it takes to do certain jobs. Student shadows an engineer for a day or week."

The business community does have involvement with the school and is open to further involvement. A concern of businesses to help improve job skills of the future work
force enhances their need for involvement in schooling. The business factor is rated as “Strong” in relative strength as shown in Figure 4.29.

**Community Connection/Outreach** Parents and community members expressed desire and interest in enhancing the connection and outreach Anycity High students have with their community. As a strong factor (see Figure 4.30), the participants felt that an enhanced community connection would help keep students grounded in their school and community. Students could benefit from different types of activities, service projects to the community, and from the exposure to positive role models and values. This type of interaction is a win-win situation for students and the community. The community gains from the services students may provide and from the commitment and investment they make within their own community. Students gain from the foundation and support provided by the community. The following comments provide insight and depth into this cultural factor:

"The school needs to stay involved with the community and make the community aware of what is happening at Anycity High—student programs that the community can attend or be involved with. Adopt-a-school—projects a good image for the school and helps kids build self-esteem."

"More community involvement is needed. Kids could go out and help the elderly; work with the Neighborhood Association."

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Figure 4.29 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of business
"The school needs a lot more community outreach and community involvement. Anycity High has a shell around it. If you are not a current parent, you have no involvement here."

"We need to stress school loyalty while stressing citywide interests."

"There's a resurgence in neighborhood groups...trying to improve the image of the Anycityside community."

"Kids need a personal connection with someone in the community—role models—one on one basis."

"There are big issues in society. Kids need a sense of community, belonging, and involvement."

"Community involvement is more important today than in the past."

The participants in this study exhibited interest and insight into the needs of improving, enhancing, and maintaining students' connections to their community. They desired the school to continue its efforts to reach out to the community to help build this connection and relationship.

**Church** Churches do not have an official role in public education. They do have a role in the community in support of children and families. In particular, a church across the street from Anycity High has a relationship with the school. The church uses the school's parking lots for Sunday services and supplies students with pop and cookies each Monday. A few participants expressed that the churches are there to support students if the students
want to be involved. The following statements reflect this desire to support students:

"Schools are too big. Kids don't get support and fall through the cracks. Churches could help provide a sense of belonging for kids." "The church could provide a community youth center for kids to meet, discuss values, provide positive role models." "The school needs to know you've got support from the church community, businesses and community organizations."

This factor could be considered to add depth to the preceding community connection/outreach factor. On its own merit, though, it is rated as "Weak" in relative strength as shown below in Figure 4.31.

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Figure 4.31 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of church

**Need Parent Involvement** Parent involvement emerged as a "Strong" factor in this parent/community culture (see Figure 4.32). Interview participants lamented on the need for more parent involvement, especially in the day to day happenings of students at school. According to the results of the Parent Survey, parents and community members identified the weakest element of the school's quality as the dimension of parent involvement and the ability of the school to promote and encourage parent involvement opportunities. All but one of the 14 dimensions of school quality in this survey ranged in the "Good" to "Very Good" level of quality (see Table 4.1). Only Parent Involvement scored below a "Good" quality
rating with a mean of 3.93. *Parent Involvement* was rated at the higher end of "Mediocre" quality.

Participants expressed concerns that parents don’t get involved enough in their child’s education, don’t attend events like they did in the past, and don’t advocate for their kids. It was perceived that the same parents end up volunteering and showing up for activities. The following comments provide the insiders’ points of view for this cultural factor:

“Anycity High has more community support than parent support. Many community organizations are trying to get in the school to do things for it but parents don’t attend school meetings or events. Parents are looking for kids to get a good job but don’t really have expectations or interest in school for college preparation.”

“We see the same parents doing the same jobs—chaperones at mixers, games—some parents are never asked. Parents should be involved as much as possible and show they care.”

“Parents with problem kids don’t come to school.”

“I wish all parents cared enough to be involved—some really don’t care. Education is not getting the same emphasis as 20 years ago. You can get many at football games, but not as many to help with homework.”

“We need to get more involvement by parents in all activities like Boosters. Parents need to take main responsibility for kids.”

“Parents show up for sports, jamborees, but not for educational stuff.”

“But it seems like, you know, the same few and I think they have the same thing, you know, down at the ticket windows and things at the athletic events. It’s always just the same few.”

“I think generally not just Anycity High, but all, so many families become two employee families with both husband and wife and maybe they lose track of their kids and what they’re doing...Parents do not have the time to be active in the PTAs and many other functions that really takes an effort to do.”

Participants felt strongly that parents need to be more involved in their children’s lives and schooling. Though pressures may be greater on families today, expressions of a
lack of caring and concern, and a lack of parent involvement are disturbing, though not surprising. The relative strength of this factor is shown in Figure 4.32.

**Family Breakdown** Some participants expressed concerns that today’s families are troubled due to a breakdown in the family structure. This family breakdown included a lack of morals, manners, dress, and discipline. The perception held was that there were more single parents, parents who did not care, and parents that worked too much to be involved in their child’s life. The participants own words expressed these perceptions:

"Families are broken—there’s a lack of moral fiber." "It’s tough being a parent—you need to be careful about what you do and say to your child due to child protection laws." "Parents defend students when kids are in trouble and do not support the teachers. This started in the 1970s through today." "Families used to have better manners and dress than today. Now there are more single parents." "Attitudes are different—lack of discipline, more laid back, and many families don’t do much together. They send the kids to the mall instead of doing family activities." The relative strength of this factor is shown in Figure 4.33.

**Parent Support** The participants themselves felt strongly about parent support. Though parent involvement is perceived to need improvement, parent support rated fairly...
According to the Parent Survey, Table 4.3 shows that overall school support was rated 4.78 on a six-point Likert scale and is rated in the "Moderate" to "Strong" level of support. It appears that there is a non-scientific correlation between willingness to participate and support for the school. It was clear early in the study that non-supportive parents and community members were unlikely to volunteer to participate. Attempts were made to identify and invite parents that were perceived as negative or non-supportive. Few of those parents were willing to participate.

The participants cited various ways in which parents supported the school including Boosters, Band Boosters, Post Prom Committee, PTSA and the Alumni Association. The organizations were proud of the financial and other support they provided the school. Some participants also expressed willingness to help Anycity High in any way by volunteering, or providing financial support. The comments made by the participants reflected their supportive nature and pride in supporting the school:

"There are a number of interest groups—PTSA, Boosters, Band Boosters, vocal music possibly, Post Prom—parents are very willing if they are asked."

"The [PTSA] funds assist recognitions for students and faculty, a student attendance lottery, faculty recognition, peer recognitions for contributions staff make to Anycity High. All written recognitions are put in teachers' boxes. Random drawings are held for prizes like a cookie, hotel stay—this boosts morale and positive attitudes. Staff feel they are valued and important."

"Many parents are also alumni and involved in support."
"The Boosters support sports and students—amazing concession stands."

"We're supportive for the school and kids—we're at games whether my kids are involved or not."

"Support comes from volunteering and financial support to the school."

"As a concerned parent, we're willing to help out any way possible whether educational stuff or student problems."

"But generally, they have found that all people have to do is be asked and they have more volunteers than they can deal with. You know, you basically turn people away sometimes because you have too many. So that might be a reason that people aren't involved, because they're not being asked."

Some participants expressed a need for even more support from parents. Though rated as "Strong" in its relative strength as a cultural factor (see Figure 4.34), parent support is perceived to be less strong than it has been in the past. The following comments provide illustration:

"I don't think there is near enough at Anycity. You know, I think there's a strong group of people that have a lot of support. Umm, you know, I mean it's completely from an outsider, but I think there's more support in Little League than there is in school. I think people spend more time supporting their kids in Little League and soccer, and you know, things like that than they do supporting them in the school system. It's kind of a shame."

"You know, sometimes their support is not at big PTA events, in terms of Anycity High School, because they're busy blue collar people. But they still supported them and—I'm not that close anymore, but I doubt if that's changed much."

"The [scout] troop was in this area. And I don't know what the answer is to getting parents interested...we tried having like a free chili supper. We tried numerous things and we really never found anything that worked."

Parent support is evident through the parent organizations at the school and from the statements made by participants. Some participants suggest more parent support is needed.

The relative strength of this factor is shown in Figure 4.34.
Cultural Element Nine: Education/Teachers

Eleven cultural factors emerged from the data in relation to education and teachers at Anycity High School. The participants demonstrated interest and concern for the purpose of education, the people involved in providing schooling including teachers and school leaders, and for the programs available to students. It is comforting to see that the largest cultural element of this high school parent/community culture is centered on education itself. Each of the factors identified will be described, illustrated with quotes from the participants to provide rich depth, and graphically portrayed to show its relative strength. The factors that emerged from this cultural element are: educate child for life, prepare child for work or college, key leaders, good teachers, problems with teachers, improve counseling program, teach basics/life skills, improve technology, special programs, activities, and mentors/careers. Table 4.16 shows the factor strength for each. The following paragraphs provide rich descriptions of each factor and their relative strengths.

Educate Child for Life  As the second strongest factor identified in this study, participants clearly expressed the idea that children should be educated so as to prepare them for life in general. This sentiment was expressed in 56 different statements in 16 of the 18 small groups interviewed. Teaching life skills, basic academics, and responsibility were
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**Note:** Very Strong = 14-18 small groups  
Strong = 9-13 small groups  
Moderate = 5-8 small groups  
Weak = 1-4 small groups  

+ Increased factor strength due to data triangulation.
frequently proposed. Preparation for life in the outside world was a main purpose along with
personal exploration and development of self-esteem. The emphasis was on the child and not
necessarily on academics. The following examples of the participants’ views provide an in-
depth illustration:

"[The purpose it to] provide an environment for kids to explore who they are."

"It’s to teach life skills—checkbook, home budget, how to save money—the school doesn’t
do enough of this."

"[The purpose is to] teach personal responsibility and develop self-esteem—provide
opportunities to build this through achievement—respect for authority and others."

"[The purpose is to teach kids to] follow rules, get along with others, clean up, put stuff
away, be responsible for themselves and others—attendance, go to school like they will for a
job."

"The purpose is of living out our forefathers’ dream that Anycity High should be here."

"...develop the ability to communicate with others—build self esteem, confidence. Kids
need stronger support from more people for a longer period of time."

"School should give kids a feeling of community, teach social skills, conflict management
skills, study skills, citizenship, responsibility for actions..."

As a “Very Strong” cultural factor in this parent community culture (see Figure 4.35),
the purpose of education for many parents and community members is a broad and general
preparation for life. Frequently mentioned by participants are some specific life skills, basic
academics, personal responsibility, and self-esteem. Many of these areas of preparation are

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Figure 4.35 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of educate child for life
those that in the past were taught and reinforced by parents and families. What appears to be absent in this broad purpose of education is a more focused, academic outcome or an "end" of some sort to the educational process of high school. This more focused, academic type of purpose was in the hearts and minds of some participants and is revealed in the next section.

**Prepare Child for Work or College** This cultural factor demonstrates a different perspective for the purpose of Any city High School. Several participants expressed ideas directly relating to college preparation and work force preparation. The number of different comments made by small group participants (14 comments) pales in comparison to the number gathered for *educate for life* (56 comments). Ten of the 18 small groups interviewed reflected the idea of preparing students for work or college, thus rating it as "Strong" in relative strength (see Figure 4.36). A clear-cut goal for completion of a vocational program or for a college preparation program is important to many participants and reflects past and present strengths of the school's academic program. It appears that a much larger portion of the parent/community group is less focused on an actual result or product as a result of completing high school as described in the previous section (see Figure 4.35).

No one expresses the participant's perceptions better than they do. The following statements provide a rich description of this cultural factor:

"Any city is preparing for both the work force and college."

"[The purpose is to] further prepare kids for success in the future—college preparation, diversity, tolerance as adults, build on their dreams, provide counseling about college and what it means to be in the workforce—vocational preparation."

"[The purpose is to] develop career paths."

"Education—the final four years—it's preparation for college and vocations."
"The purpose of education is preparation to go to college or into a career—develop responsible adults, good kids, upstanding citizens."

"[The purpose is to] prepare kids for what is next in life—job market, college, military, survival."

Though much less prevalent in the minds of the parents and community members participating in this study than is preparation for life (in general), preparing students for college or work is rated as "Strong" as shown in Figure 4.36.

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Figure 4.36 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of prepare child for work or college

**Key Leaders**  
People are important to Anycity High School’s parent/community culture. Key leaders throughout the school’s history, from Anycity’s first principal to the current principal, have played an especially important role. The participants related stories and good memories throughout the interview process. It began with the first Anycity High principal. Students, parents, and the community held this fine woman in high esteem. It was this first principal who started the first “alumni reunion picnics” which grew into the huge alumni association of today. The school motto, “Service to Humanity” developed during the reign of this principal, still holds strong in its meaning of serving humankind. Favorite teachers, principals, and assistant principals are also remembered fondly by the participants. A librarian worked at Anycity High for 50 years. Her presence and dedication is still felt by
the school. These key leaders instilled pride in the students. Parents told the stories to their children and the stories and memories continue to live.

The current principal received high accolades by several participants. They described him with these statements: "This is an educator." "Kids comment on him. He is visible and attends activities." "The Principal is open minded, will try new things. Anycity is lucky to have him."

"The Principal is visible and active, but not involved in all groups." "The Principal and Vice-Principals are available to students. They're at different functions—at least one or more of them there. They always talk to students and know kids on a first name basis. [He's] there talking, listening, participating (past principals didn't do this). He has a genuine concern for kids."

Additional descriptive statements provide added depth to this cultural factor. The following statements include fictional names in place of the names of the real people described by the participants.

"Bonnie Pritchard—former principal— Brian Sage was a coach for football—these people were role models and helped keep kids in line."

"Gil Ogden is a retired counselor, alumni—he had a positive impact on kids."

"Pop Williams was a 1930s civics teacher who made you think at the level of the community and city. He had a great impact on many students."

"Brian Sage, a 1950s coach and teacher had longevity here. He was a successful coach, Sage Field was named for him."

"Deke Warren was a former principal and coach. He's now in the Hall of Fame at Anycity."

Key leaders, especially the current principal of Anycity high, past principals and favored teachers and coaches helped continue the mission of the school, instilled pride in students, and provided the students with solid educations. The relative strength of this factor is "Strong" as shown in Figure 4.37.
Good Teachers  Participants have fond memories of the teachers that served Anycity High and feel that the current staff is forward thinking and visionary. The “hey day” of the 1940s is still remembered by several participants. In fact, the faculty of the late 1940s is still considered to be “well known” by participants. Today’s faculty is seen to be strong and loyal for the most part with a small percentage of teachers that are detrimental. The parents and community members recognize the loyalty of staff and feel that many stay at the school and even live in the neighborhood (though it is not the “best” area in which to live).

The Anycity High School Alumni Association Survey provides support for this cultural factor. Alumni have strong, positive feelings for their former Anycity High teachers. It is one of the best things about the school, in their opinion, according to Question #8—

*What, in your estimation, is the best thing about Anycity High School?* Categories that emerged from the responses were: good/quality teachers and students (33%), good education (17%), school spirit (17%), school loyalty (12%), tradition (12%), no response (7%), and the school building (3%). Good, quality teachers were number one in the eyes of the respondents.

Another survey question provides support for the importance of the faculty as shown in the following survey results: Question #6—*If you are loyal to Anycity High, what is the
reason for your loyalty? Categories that emerged from the responses were: good school (27%), family tradition (18%), Anycity pride and loyalty (18%), school spirit and pride (17%), the people [friends and teachers] (11%), and no response or unclear response (9%).

Though lower on the list of responses, 11% of the respondents felt that Anycity High people (friends and teachers) were the reason for their loyalty to the school.

The statements of the participants provide a rich description of their perceptions about the school's present and past faculty: “It’s a visionary faculty—dedicated.”

“The staff stays here—they would never request a transfer. They’re happy here—the kind of people who teach here are very dedicated to helping kids (80-90%). The staff worked on their own time and through the summer to develop a program for individual attention with kids.”

“It’s a supportive staff—always open to talk to you, answer questions. They’re willing to discuss problems—from the principal to the teachers; they provide much support.”

“The teachers are a big influence to help kids through the maturity process. Many do a good job at this. Conferences are good for interacting.”

“The most important people are anybody who works with the kids—principal, teachers, janitorial staff, counselors, food service, etc. They are all role models for kids.”

“We had a really fine education and teachers—had an absolutely wonderful high school experience (1940s). We had an excellent education and personal attention from the teachers. There’s a real debt of gratitude to the school.”

“The faculty of the late 1940s was well known. Today there is a stable faculty—they don’t leave the school and many teachers lived on the Anycityside in the past.”

“This faculty has always been, you know, there are always exceptions—it’s a big staff—what 200 people? Umm, just this faculty has been known as a very strong faculty, working together. Umm, and being innovative, new ideas, certainly the Social Science team is an example of that. And last summer, PTSA gave them a grant to develop a new curriculum and gave them money to spend over the summer to buy materials and that.”

“…the staff that I know—I know are not doing this for the money that’s in it. They do it because they like working with kids. They like teaching or they wouldn’t be in the thing.”
Anycity High parents and alumni boast of a strong, dedicated faculty that has stayed strong through the test of time. They believe that most teachers are loyal and caring. The relative strength of this factor is rated as “Very Strong” as shown in Figure 4.38.

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Figure 4.38 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of good teachers

**Problems with Teachers** There are perceptions that a small percentage of the teachers at Anycity High are not as loyal, dedicated, or caring about kids. Participants tended to view these teachers as harmful to students and felt they should be removed or transferred. The strong, loyal staff from the past set a “standard” for the current teachers to follow and parents and alumni want this standard upheld. This factor has a “Strong” relative strength (see Figure 4.39). The following comments portray the viewpoints of the participants:

“Some [teachers] don’t want to be here. They don’t care—maybe 20 teachers here like this—as a guess.”

“Today there are fewer teachers who are loyal and live on the Anycityside.”

“Kids are terrified [of the nurse], afraid, and don’t want to deal with her about illness because of the way she talks to kids. She should call the parent, explain the situation, and show caring and concern, not hostility.”

“In general, teachers need to be evaluated. Some who are damaging kids need to go—the union protects them.”

“There are ‘coasters’—teachers who just coast along. Kids know which teachers don’t care and aren’t good teachers.”
“Some teachers don’t respect kids—a few on staff who don’t give any extra. They just get by.”

It doesn’t take many negatives to overwhelm what is positive. Though the faculty is considered to be very strong, loyal, and caring of kids, there are enough “bad” teachers to cause parents, alumni, and community members concern. The relative strength of this factor is shown in Figure 4.39.

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Figure 4.39 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of problems with teachers

**Improve Counseling Program** Several concerns were expressed regarding the counseling program at Anycity High. Some participants were not satisfied with the counselors themselves, some wanted improvements to the program, and some felt more counselors were needed to serve the student population. This factor is rated as “Strong” in its relative strength (see Figure 4.40). The following comments provide a rich background into the participants’ perceptions: “In general, they need to review what they do. They are not strong enough, helpful enough, and are too busy.” “The counselors need to be concerned about kids.” “The counselors should improve their skills, need inservice, empathy, questioning, listening...”

“More guidance counselors are needed. They need more time to spend with kids because they are too busy with paper work and scheduling. We need more individualized service and smaller case loads. There should be counseling for career direction, help with scheduling classes, and provide kids with individual attention.”
"Counselors need to do counseling instead of secretarial work (not scheduling). They should be counseling for success and problems. If you have a major problem in school and you’re not sure where to go. Have academic counseling for career choices and have problem counseling. It is very important that there is a link to someone that kids can talk to and be comfortable with—not the principal."

"I think sometimes we set up counselors, an opinion I don’t know how much fact this is based on, we set up counselors and they are teachers that are still in the system that maybe we don’t know what else to do with. Or they’ve graduated to the counselor level where they earn a good living, but don’t have to be accountable to a lot of students."

Few comments were made regarding the positive aspects of the counseling program.

Parents made comments such as these in support of the counseling program: "Counseling does provide the college counseling session in evenings (this was a positive for the parent)."

"Counselors are good at enrolling our kids in appropriate classes. I know because I sit in with the counseling session." "Some counselors are good."

The counseling program was perceived to need improvements in many areas. Participants provided specific ideas to address their concerns such as adding more counselors, focusing more on class selection and career preparation, and providing better information and communication. The relative strength of this cultural factor is shown in Figure 4.40.

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<th>Very Strong</th>
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Figure 4.40 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of improve (counseling) program
**Teach Basics/Life Skills**  As shown previously, participants felt that the overwhelming purpose of Anycity High was to *prepare students for life*. It fits, then, that a "Strong" factor (see Figure 4.41) is the desire to have more basic academics and life skills taught at Anycity High. Not only are basic math and reading suggested, personal responsibility, balancing a checkbook, changing the oil, tolerance, social skills, and keyboarding are offered as well. The participants implied that times have changed and students need these areas addressed in their formal education. Their own statements tell their viewpoints quite well:

"Need to provide basic math courses. I employ kids from Anycity who can't make change."

"The school needs to teach life skills for whatever kids will do. This is the primary goal of any education—balance a checkbook, change oil, gain marketable skills, read, write, do math, and computer skills."

"Look outside traditional parameters—teach life skills and prepare kids for vocations not just professions."

"Teach thinking skills, problem solving, conflict resolution, basic social skills, tolerance of different kinds of people, understanding of ethnic or other differences, interpersonal relationship skills, dealing with authority, and accepting consequences."

"Provide kids with an education whether they go on to college or to work—kids need to be taught good basic skills: read, speak, write, basic spelling, simple math. The foundation is not there before they get to Anycity. We need to go back to the basics—basics for business—typing, keyboarding, business machines—computer skills are needed today."

"They need life skills courses—how to apply for jobs, how to get along in the world."

A need is perceived by the participants to enhance the educational program with more emphasis and courses in basic academics and various life skills. This philosophy tends to "fit" with the higher purpose the parents and community members feel is most important to them in preparing kids for life beyond high school.
Improve Technology  Several participants expressed a need for improvements in Anycity High’s technology systems and instruction. They want students to have adequate access to technology in the library as well as adequate instruction for computer and science courses. Participants did cite the school’s Computer Assisted Drawing (CAD) unit as a strength in their technology program. Looking towards the increasing technological demands society is placing on people, the parents and community expressed the following sentiments:

“They need to upgrade the library with videos, new computers—better access to computers/laptops. Have the library open during the evenings—for a quiet, safe place. A staff member could be there to help.”

“We need to look more hi-tech and towards the future so kids aren’t left behind. More computers and futuristic equipment. The responsibility is even more on the school to expose kids.”

“They need to provide computer skills/training for every student—make it a standard, required course. Businesses spend a lot of money to train people on basic computer skills—teach keyboarding and typing.”

“We need to use more technology and in different ways. More equipment—train staff, integrate into curriculum, new methods and strategies for teaching and learning, hands-on activities. A major shift on the part of the faculty is needed…”

Though the school district had a long-term, master plan in development that included technology, the participants clearly saw the importance and need for schools to keep current and abreast of technology growth and development, and to furnish the equipment and
instruction to the students. The relative strength of this factor is “Strong” as shown in Figure 4.42.

**Special Programs** Participants expressed knowledge about special programs offered for students at Anycity High to meet their diverse needs. Several programs were named including special education, school within a school or 9th grade house concept, DECCA, journalism, and business. Many felt that an effort was made to be inclusive of students in the various offerings. It was also expressed that some students still have trouble participating in areas such as athletics due to exclusiveness of the activities. Interest was also expressed in enhancing the vocational program for the students. The history of the vocational program reveals that Anycity High had a strong vocational-technical program in the past. Apparently, the district centralized the program for all six high schools and moved it to a single location. The loss of their program is still felt by some participants though some feel that Anycity continues to have a strong technical program. The participants’ perceptions are illustrated by their statements:

“‘The school has programs to meet the needs of all levels of students both high and low skills.’”

“‘It’s a good program for some kids—a half day of school, a half day of work. Then, they can go into a job situation after high school.’”

<table>
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<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
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Figure 4.42 Continuum showing the level of relative strength of improve technology
"The House Concept for 9th grade is an excellent program. They can target the student who may need closer monitoring. There's a whole spectrum of abilities in kids. Teachers work together and keep kids the whole day. Teachers plan together and put in lots of time."

"Look at BD, MD, LD kids as kids who need to be prepared to function in life and provide them support. These kids have the same right to participate and learn. All kids can learn—don't put a lid on their learning."

"Printing, journalism, and photography work together for producing first rate publications. This is career training."

"We used to have the best Tech Prep school—prepared kids to go to work, taught skills, and life skills. Center Campus does not provide the same programs as Tech did. Other schools have eliminated much of the tech programs."

"They need more trade school programs, apprenticeship training—go out and work in jobs..."

"Anycity has the strongest technical program in the city. In May, tech students from all schools participate in the Technical Education Fair. Anycity High does not have strictly college prep courses."

Many programs are available to meet the diverse needs of students at Anycity High. Many programs are very inclusive though some, such as athletics, continues to be exclusive of students that are not competitive. This is not inconsistent with most high school programs. Participants feel that Anycity High is a good school and offers options for its students. They wanted as much inclusion for students as possible and continued enhancement of the vocational programs. The relative strength of this cultural factor is shown in Figure 4.43.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Figure 4.43  Continuum showing the level of relative strength of special programs
Activities  Some participants expressed a need for improving the activities offered for students. There was a feeling that kids need to be pulled into school with things other than academics to hold their interest. A strong athletic program is one avenue offered by participants. The history of a strong athletic program tends to compel the school to work to carry on this tradition though athletics have waned in recent years. As one participant put it, “As the football team goes, so goes Anycity High.” Much of the pride of the school was centered around winning athletic teams in days gone by.

Other activities were suggested by participants such as clubs, interactive classes, after school activities, and classroom or school pets. The ideas of the participants are best reflected in their own words:

“They need to make school a neat place to come. Have programs for kids to get involved and help them make friends.”

“Make school fun—have music in the hallways.”

“Provide athletics, clubs, and organizations for kids. Get the community and Boosters involved. Gain funds for sports and activities—95% of the businesses asked, gave something for Post Prom.”

“Identify more extra curricular activities and get more kids pulled back into the mainstream. Make activities part of the school day—build pride and community. Make the school day longer to add activities. Find a way for kids to want to be here—one problem is that many kids work.”

Anycity High does provide a host of student activities from athletics to band to drama, yet, participants feel that activities still need to be more readily available and open for students. There was a felt need to make sure students were actively involved and interested in attending school. The relative strength of this factor is shown in Figure 4.44.
Mentors/Careers Participants provided ideas on how to improve school programs and help students gain real life experiences. Their suggestions centered around mentoring opportunities for students with an emphasis on exploring careers. Alumni are proud of the Anycity High alumni that have been successful in businesses in the local area and greater metropolitan area. Many have worked cooperatively with the school already but more business involvement is still suggested. Faculty members were also targeted as possible mentors for students. Participants feel that students need more access to positive role models and careers. Below are some of their ideas and perceptions:

“Provide mentors and shadowing with businesses. Expose kids to jobs and let them explore with Anycityside business and alumni. Kids can see successful Anycity alumni. Have a mentor program where alumni can talk to kids who want to drop out or are thinking about it. You could maintain a pool of resource people.”

“Provide kids opportunities to go out to businesses for experience in the work world.”

“They need mentors for kids—coaches and counselors could do this.”

“Kids need exposure to different programs, career interests. Need more than a career day. Some teachers do help with this and spot students’ talents.”

“Kids need some kind of bond to Anycity, kids who are from other places and new kids. Mentors or peer helpers could show new kids around.”

As a “Moderate” factor in this parent community culture (see Figure 4.45), emphasis here leans towards preparing students for vocations after high school and preparing for the
Summary of Findings

As a result of this study, nine cultural elements and 45 cultural factors were discovered and determined to contribute to the Anycity High School’s parent/community culture. The cultural elements comprising the parent/community culture of a comprehensive high school are: (1) Building/Physical Space, (2) Students, (3) Race/Socio-Economic Status, (4) Communication, (5) Sports/Activities, (6) Policies, (7) Tradition/History, (8) Parents/Community, and (9) Education/Teachers. Forty-five separate factors were determined to comprise the nine cultural elements.

Table 4.17 shows each of the nine cultural elements and the number of factors for each by relative strength. Five factors were determined to have a “Very Strong” relative strength. Eighteen factors had a “Strong” relative strength. Twelve had a “Moderate” strength and 10 had a “Weak” relative strength. Three of the “Very Strong” cultural factors were from the cultural element Tradition/History. They are: Tradition/Loyalty, Alumni Association/Booster Club, and Motto. The remaining two “Very Strong” cultural
Table 4.17  Cultural elements and the number of factors by relative strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURAL ELEMENT</th>
<th>WEAK FACTORS</th>
<th>MODERATE FACTORS</th>
<th>STRONG FACTORS</th>
<th>VERY STRONG FACTORS</th>
<th>TOTAL FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building/ Physical Space</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ Socio Economic Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Sports/ Activities</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition/ History</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/ Community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/ Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
factors were from the cultural element *Education/Teachers*. They are Educate Child for Life and Good Teachers.

**Education related beliefs, values, and attitudes**

Each of the factors expressed particular values, attitudes, or beliefs of the participants. The researcher developed summary statements for each factor. These education-related beliefs, values, or attitudes of this parent/community culture are described and listed in the following statements with each preceded by its relative strengths.

**Building/Physical Space**

Strong—Our school building needs upgrades and improvements.

Weak—Our school needs better parking.

Weak—Our school building is big.

Weak—We are proud of the classic styling of our school.

Weak—The school is used for community use.

**Students**

Moderate—We are concerned that some students drop out, get pregnant, or lack respect.

Weak—We are concerned about drug problems, but our kids are no different from kids at other schools.

Weak—Some students lack a bond to our school and community.

Weak—More students work today to pay for their cars.
Racism/Socioeconomic Status

Strong—Cultural and ethnic diversity benefits our school and students.

Strong—Racism is still a strong issue here.

Strong—We are proud to be working class people and are tired of being put-down.

Communication

Moderate—The school makes efforts to communicate with parents.

Moderate—Communication needs to be more effective and get into the hands of parents.

Weak—The media perpetuates a negative image of our community, and we need more positive public relations.

Sports/Activities

Strong—We have a long history of athletic success, and sports are important to our school and community.

Moderate—Students need more access to sports and activities to keep them involved in school.

Weak—We have had recent problems with coaches that may have hurt our athletic programs.

Weak—Band and other activities need to be enhanced and improved to interest students.

Policies

Moderate—The new attendance policy is tough but it’s working.

Moderate—The new attendance policy is unfair for kids with good records and real health issues.
Moderate—Discipline needs to improve but the law is on the students’ sides which hampers teachers and parents.

**Traditions/History**

Very Strong—Tradition and fierce loyalty make us unique and special, and we must carry on the tradition and pride of those who came before us.

Very Strong—Our unique history with our Alumni Association and Booster Club are points of pride. These groups provide tremendous support to our school.

Very Strong—We are proud people and our community stands together against any issue—

Our motto is: “Anycity Township Against the World.”

Strong—Our rough and rowdy image is undeserved, but being the underdog keeps us strong.

Strong—Our people are important; teachers, principals, and students provide a sense of community and a source of pride for our school.

Moderate—The school district boundary change negatively impacted our school and divided loyalties. We are still angry after many years.

**Parents/Community**

Strong—There is a strong need for parents to be more involved in the lives and education of our children.

Strong—There are many parents and alumni that support our school and students through active involvement and scholarships, but more parent support is needed.

Strong—The business community fears that students are less prepared, and they invite more involvement between the school and local businesses.
Strong—Our students need more connection and involvement with our community to rebuild bonds and relationships.

Moderate—We fear that many families are broken and lack morals, discipline, and togetherness which causes students more problems at school.

Weak—As part of the community, the local churches can and some do offer support to our students.

*Education/Teachers*

Very Strong—Our students should be educated with basics, life skills, personal responsibility, and citizenship along with building self-esteem.

Very Strong—We've had many good, committed teachers that have been a strength of our school, especially the staff of the 1940s.

Strong—Our school does offer a variety of special programs to meet the various needs of students and enhance inclusion.

Strong—Our students need more instruction in the basics and in life skills.

Strong—Key leaders have built the pride and tradition of our school and we pass the stories on to our children.

Strong—Our counseling program and counselors need to improve and provide career and college information to students.

Strong—Our students should be prepared for work or college by completing vocational or college prep courses.

Strong—We need to improve technology programs in our school so our students can stay current with the latest technology.
Strong—There are some current teachers that are damaging to our kids and they need to go.
Moderate—Students need more access to positive role models, mentors, and career options.
Moderate—There needs to be more extracurricular programs available to students to enhance their interest and involvement in school.

Development and maintenance of the culture

Anycity High School tends to be synonymous with the Anycity community. As part of a greater, metropolitan school district, Anycity High tends to keep to itself and its smaller local community. The strongest factors identified in this study emerged as the pillars upholding and perpetuating a loyal support culture among parents and community. These factors are: tradition/loyalty, alumni association/booster club, motto, educate child for life, and good teachers. Each factor is further examined and richly described in the following paragraphs.

Tradition/loyalty  Tradition is central to perpetuating the strong culture of Anycity High School and its community. Many current students are grandchildren or great-grandchildren of Anycity High alumni. There is an expectation and desire for family members to attend and graduate from Anycity High. Some families even accomplish this by moving back to the community to ensure the family tradition is carried on. Pride in graduating from Anycity High has been passed down from generation to generation.

An indescribable school loyalty and community spirit exists in the Anycity High School’s parent/community culture. This loyalty and spirit is spread through the many traditions and activities surrounding the school, especially through the alumni. Alumni have the vivid memories of Anycity High in its “hey day.” They lived during the times of winning
athletic teams and academic competitiveness. Teachers helped lead cheers and pep assemblies as they hung off the school balconies. A sense of belonging and family were instilled in each student just because they lived in Anycity and attended Anycity High. Community and school membership was reason enough to tie individuals together. Graduating from Anycity High was touted as “graduating from the best high school in the world.” Alumni gather for regular activities across the nation and sometimes through travels across the world.

Tremendous pride in athletics and winning teams goes back to days gone by. Spirited coaches, standing room only crowds, and winning teams brought pride to Anycity High and the community. As one participant stated, “Pride comes with winning.” A strong tradition of winning teams, school spirit, and pride in the 1920s through the 1940s and 1950s. The community and school came together to raise funds for an athletic stadium by holding an annual variety show. The variety show became a well-known event for community entertainment. The community and school’s pride in “paying for” their own stadium is also a sore spot due to the fact that the school district later paid for other high schools’ stadiums. In effect, Anycity once again felt slighted and cheated. Some participants reasoned that winning helped Anycity High overcome other perceived shortcomings.

**Alumni association/booster club** The Alumni Association may be the single most important element in promoting and perpetuating pride and tradition for Anycity High School. The Annual Alumni Reunion held each spring attracted and continues to attract around 1,000 alumnus each year. This tradition was started as a school picnic by the first Anycity High School principal and grew into a major annual event. The most involved are
the oldest alumni. In fact, graduates of the past several decades are too young to be seated in
the main room for the reunion dinner because the older graduates attend in great numbers and
need the space of the main "big" gym. Much reverence is given to the oldest graduates in the
sense of honoring them. Younger and recent graduates are kept involved through the
scholarship program that has become a main part of the banquet.

The Booster Club is also a strong support to the school. The Booster Club operates to
support and promote athletics. Funds are raised to help with athletic costs such as uniforms,
equipment, and traveling expenses. Boosters also run, staff, and maintain the concessions at
athletic events. The support of this club enriches the athletic tradition at Anycity High.

Though winning teams have been fewer and far between than in the glory days in the first
half of the 20th century, athletics are still very important to this school and community.

Motto An underdog mentality, in the face of regular adversity, has made the
Any city community and its local high school stronger. The motto, "Any city Township
against the world," is well known by everyone old and young. Most participants continued
to feel that this “battle cry” pushed their school and community to excel in whatever feat was
at hand. Any city is perceived to be on the “wrong” side of town and has been given the
“short end of the stick” in community development projects, school enhancement and
recognition, and been portrayed negatively in the media. Though such issues have plagued
the community for decades, the people stick together with fierce loyalty to their school and
community. According to this loyal support subculture, the community is so tight that you
aren’t really a member unless you were born there, no matter how long you may have lived
within the community.
Educate child for life  Working class expectations for education are evidenced in the overwhelmingly high desire for students to receive a basic education that focuses on teaching students for "life." The desired foci were life skills, personal responsibility, citizenship and self-esteem. Though not undesirable, these expectations appear to be stronger than the desire to prepare students for work or college specifically. Many participants wanted students to learn how to balance their checkbooks or count back change along with basic academics. Though these expectations may have served the students and community well in the past, they do not appear to "fit" as well in today's high-tech and career oriented society. High academic expectations and offering a "good education" have been part of the culture at Anycity High and its parent/community. These expectations may not be as rigorous and challenging as the parents and community actually desire.

Good teachers  In the historical perspective of the participants, committed, involved teachers were well known in Anycity's community. Many stayed at the school for many years and some even lived in the community. The extra hours and dedication of teachers, coaches, and a special librarian were well known and appreciated. Key leaders, especially principals and certain teachers and coaches, had a tremendous impact on Anycity High School and were greatly responsible for establishing customs and traditions that are at the heart of the school's culture. The first principal established the first reunion picnics that would eventually grow into the great, annual alumni reunion banquets. Other key leaders were involved in leading spirited, pep assemblies, student groups and activities, coaching sports, and providing a strong education to students. Key, dynamic teachers and leaders
often stayed at the school for many years. They were honored and respected. The current principal, at the time of this research, was also regarded highly.

Summary

The parent/community culture was developed and maintained through a consistent pattern of behaviors, traditions, values, beliefs, and attitudes. The Anycity High community mobilized themselves against adversity as a community and in support for their high school from as far back as anyone can remember. Their motto “Anycity Township Against the World” still provides unity, clarity of purpose, and strength in a family sense to the community and school. The parents, community members, and alumni transfer these beliefs and values by telling stories to their children, the students at Anycity High. Though times have changed, the behaviors, traditions, values, beliefs, and attitudes generally remain due to the consistency in which they are handed down from generation to generation.

The behaviors and traditions, especially of the Alumni Association, are nearly etched in stone as special activities such as the annual alumni reunion are carried on and on and on. Spirited, positive teachers and leaders from the earliest days had the fortitude and foresight to impress pride, loyalty, academics, and athletics on the youngsters at Anycity High. Pride was built on early successes, especially in athletics and Anycity High students truly believed they were “as good as anyone else.”

The lines between parents, community members, and alumni that participated in the study were often blurred because many times the community members were both parents and alumni of Anycity High. The school and community have been and remain very tightly knit. True (born there) Anycitysiders sensed that changes in the community, school, boundaries,
society, and technology are changing the make-up of their school and community to some extent and they are angry that these changes may have affected school loyalty and pride. Though expectations for a “good education” are high, the expectations are not clearly defined and do not necessarily fit with what current expectations are for reaching high academic achievement.

The unique intermingling of the strong cultural factors (community spirit and pride expressed through a motto, tremendous tradition, strong teachers and leaders, an alumni association like no other, and expectations for students that focused on basic skills and life skills) allowed the school and community of Anycity High to maintain pride, spirit, and tradition even in the face of dwindling and fading academic and athletic success.

Description of the parent/community culture

The Anycity High School’s parent/community culture is comprised of nine cultural elements. In order from the strongest to the weakest they are: tradition/history, education/teachers, parents/community, race/socioeconomic status, sports/activities, policies, students, communication, and building/physical space. This culture has succeeded in transmitting itself from generation to generation through the traditions, activities, and stories related to the high school. The “invisible force or energy that moves people to action (Kilmann, 1989)” is a strong culture surrounding Anycity High School in which change is hard.

Anycity High School appears to be a reflection of its parents, alumni, and community. In studying the outside parent/community culture rather than the inside school culture, the researcher is open to find what cultural elements actually drive the workings of the school.
Saranson's (1971) description of the nature of school culture is described as "a reflection of [our] society as well as the principal vehicle by which its young are socialized or prepared for life in adult society" (p.7). Anycity High School carries out the expectations of its parent/community culture. The following paragraphs describe the nature of the nine cultural elements found to exist in this parent/community culture.

The Anycity parent/community culture indicates a pride in the physical building of the high school but that it is in need of upgrades and repairs to keep it up to the desired standard. There is a nostalgic desire to maintain its original design while providing the desired upgrades.

Students are certainly important but there are more issues today. Students have many distractions today as in jobs, drugs, and shaky home lives that concern the parents and community. The "bond" and familial ties to the school and community are lacking for many students today.

Diversity is described as a strength at Anycity High School and for its community. Parents and community members pride themselves on having a diverse, metropolitan "flavor." In strong opposition is a continued sense of racial strife and racism. Issues of the 60s and 70s are not forgotten and new issues with gangs deter from the strength of having cultural and ethnic diversity. Lower socioeconomic status is a thorn for this parent/community culture. Decade upon decade of parents and community members have worked doubly hard to instill pride in any way possible for the members of the school and community. Though proud of being "working class" or "blue collar," this lower social class image continues to plague the entire school and community. From generation to generation,
pride has been developed through successes. Success in past athletics and in producing successful community members and businesspersons is the torch that provided the light for Anycitysiders. Current weakness in athletics and academics is shaking the pride of this community.

The high school does try to communicate with its parents and community. More effective means of communicating are needed to ensure the lines of communication are maintained. The high school and community need to “toot their own horn” more to overcome the perceived bad press that has been received in the past.

Parents and community members miss the grandeur of athletic success. They desire to improve the activities and sports programs through maintaining strong coaches and providing students with better access to all the activities. It appears that the participants hope that excellence in sports and activities will once again “level the playing field” with their more affluent neighbors.

Policies work to help the school operate. The attendance policy is good but it is tough on the good students that have true health issues. This policy has helped improve student attendance. Discipline is everyone’s responsibility. Parents and community members do sense the struggle that educators face with the more lax family emphases on manners and social skills. Educators can only do so much at school and the rest is up to parents. The participants were at a loss as to how to overcome discipline issues because the “law” is on the students’ sides.

The overwhelming sense of tradition and history provide the Anycity High School and community with an identity. This identity has been built through the years through a
string of key leaders, strong and dedicated teachers, and "good" students. "Anycity Township Against the World" is their motto and battle cry. Membership comes by birth. You aren’t considered a real Anycitiesider unless you were born there. The “underdog” image keeps them strong though they maintain the “rough and rowdy” image is much undeserved. People are the most important resource in this moderate to lower income community. Parents and alumni carry on school spirit and tradition through the Alumni Association and Booster Club. They try to help today’s students know that their school was considered to be somewhat of a “powerhouse” back in days gone by. Change is not taken easily or lightly and there is still anger over the boundary changes made several years ago. This change split members of a fiercely proud community and divided loyalties.

Parents admit themselves that parents are not involved enough in their children’s educational lives. Though several parents provide support through active involvement, the majority of them do not. The fear and reality of broken families, lack of discipline, and apathy is real and discomforting. Improving parent participation was especially important to the parents and community members. Local business also expressed a need for more involvement between businesses and school. Businesspeople are not impressed by the caliber of student graduating in recent years. Even churches offered to support the school in any way they could.

The overwhelming attitude of educating students with basics, life skills, self-esteem, and citizenship overpowers any push for improving student achievement to higher levels. The participants were going about the business of maintaining a culture that already exists, one of a blue collar, working class tradition. The inability, desire, or concern to press for
higher academic achievement and standards appears to be at the heart of this parent/community culture. It’s not that they don’t care, because they do. It’s that the socioeconomic conditions have a very strong place in the culture. The parents and community continue to support that which has always been supported and to “settle” for what they get in terms of student achievement. When the community does not press for more, the teachers continue blissfully along the same path. Strong and dedicated teachers have always been respected and admired, especially those of the grand 40s era. Key leaders have helped build the tradition of the high school. Today’s counseling, technology, and activity programs need enrichment and improvement. Students need more access to positive role models, mentors, and career options. Though not as strong as the desire to “educate students for life,” there is a desire to make sure students are prepared for work or college through vocational or college prep programs.

This parent/community culture is strong and vital as evidenced in its ability to continue through decades and decades continuing to maintain itself. Unfortunately, this strength in culture may be the very thing that holds the Anycity High School back from furthering itself in higher level academics and programs. The pride and tradition of the school and community are not centered on high level academics and achievement, though a “good education” is desired and has been maintained. This parent/community culture succeeds in maintaining itself by protecting the values of working class, blue collar citizens as has been done for generations.

The “Iron Law of Social Class” as described by Lewis and Smith (1992) unfortunately rings true with this study of Anycity High School’s parent/community culture.
The “Iron Law” suggests: (1) The higher the socioeconomic status of the community, the higher the value placed on education; (2) the higher the value placed on education, the more the system will press teachers to perform; (3) the greater the pressure on teachers to deliver, the higher the performance of the students (p. 124). Though the participants want a “good education” for their children, they do not place a high enough value on high level academics, nor do they press teachers to deliver. This parent/community culture does not support high level academic performance over a basic education. For real change to occur for Anycity High School in terms of educational excellence, a cultural shift must begin with its parents, community, and alumni.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to investigate the parent/community culture of a comprehensive high school in a mid-sized city in the Midwest. The purpose of this study was to: (1) discover and describe the basic elements of a high school parent/community culture, (2) identify the specific factors which influenced a high school parent/community culture and describe the relative strength of these factors, (3) determine the specific education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of a high school parent/community culture, (4) identify the traditions and behaviors that primarily influenced the development and maintenance of a parent/community culture, and (5) provide a rich description of the high school parent/community culture.

As the study unfolded, it was clear that the participants selected for the study and those that participated voluntarily were primarily “loyal supporters” of the school. Interviews were conducted with volunteer parents and community members. Data began to emerge that were overwhelmingly positive and supportive especially from parents and alumni. Efforts were made to identify those who had negative or opposing views. There was little success in getting participation from those with negative points of view, though a couple non-supportive (negative) were interviewed. Thus, the study evolved into a study of parent/community culture within a frame of its “loyal support culture” because little data were collected to support any opposing points of view. Though clear suggestions and recommendations were made by the loyal supporters to improve aspects of the school, their loyal support did not appear diminished by their wishes to see improvements.
The first section of this chapter presents a summary of the study and the findings. Next, conclusions, a discussion of the implications of the findings and conclusions, limitations of this study, and recommendations for further research complete this chapter.

Summary of the study

The selected high school in this study agreed to participate in an investigation of its parent/community culture. This school was also part of a larger “case study” in which other researchers investigated its student culture, faculty work culture, and the parent/community culture. In this study, interviewing was the primary method of data collection. Small group interviews were conducted with 79 participants, individual interviews were conducted with 12 participants, and informal interviews were conducted throughout 24 days spent in the field. Participants were identified with the help of the school administrators and culture audit contact person. After the interview process began, it was clear that nearly all the participants were generally positive and supportive of the school. The study was then framed through the lens of a “loyal support” culture. Though suggestions were made for improving aspects of the school, few negative or non-supportive viewpoints were gathered. This interview method provided a means for the researcher to gain the perspective of the participants as fully and completely as possible. The beliefs, values, and attitudes were collapsed through an inductive process to provide key ideas and themes.

Another means of data collection included distribution of the Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices (O’Connell, 1993) investigating the impact and quality of school practices and the level of support for the school. The survey was distributed three times, as described in Chapter 3, in order to get a well-rounded perspective and adequate return. Four
hundred forty-three surveys were distributed and 130 were received for a return of 29%. Means were calculated for each of the questions comprising the 14 dimensions of school practice measured by the instrument (see Appendix G). In addition, an informal survey was provided to school alumni at their annual alumni reunion banquet. Ninety-two of the 659 surveys were returned for a rate of 14%. This data provided valuable insights into school loyalty and was used in data triangulation.

Summary of findings

Triangulation of the small group, individual, and informal interview data, parent survey, and alumni survey resulted in validation of several cultural elements and factors. Detailed information of all the major findings is presented in Chapter 4 of this study. A summary of those findings is presented here.

1. The cultural element Building/Physical Space emerged with five cultural factors presenting themselves. Four of these factors were rated as “Weak” and one was rated “Strong.” Overall, this cultural element was weak in its contribution to the parent/community culture.

2. The cultural element Students emerged from the data with four cultural factors. Two factors were rated as “Moderate” and two were “Weak.” This cultural element had a moderate contribution to the parent/community culture.

3. The cultural element Race/Socioeconomic Status (SES) had only three cultural factors that emerged from the data but all three were rated as “Strong” factors. Overall, this cultural element was a strong contributor to the parent/community culture.
4. The cultural element *Communication* emerged from the data sources with three cultural factors. One factor was rated as “Weak” and two were “Moderate.” This cultural element had moderate contribution to the parent/community culture.

5. The cultural element *Sports/Activities* emerged through the study with four cultural factors. Two factors were rated as “Weak,” one rated as “Moderate,” and one “Strong.” This element had a moderate overall contribution to the parent/community culture with some decidedly strong overtones.

6. The cultural element *Policies* emerged from the data with three cultural elements, all of which were rated as “Moderate.” This cultural element had a moderate overall contribution to this parent/community culture.

7. The cultural element *Tradition/History* emerged from the data with six cultural factors. One cultural factor rated “Moderate,” two were rated as “Strong,” and three were rated “Very Strong.” The overall contribution of this element on the parent/community culture was very strong.

8. The cultural element *Parents/Community* that emerged from the data sources had six cultural factors. One factor was rated “Weak,” one was rated “Moderate,” and four factors rated as “Strong.” This element had a strong overall contribution to the parent/community culture.

9. The cultural element *Education/Teachers* emerged with the most cultural factors of any other element found in this study. Eleven cultural factors were determined to have the following relative strengths: two factors were rated as “Moderate,” seven factors were rated as “Strong,” and two were rated “Very Strong.” This cultural
element had a strong contribution to the parent/community culture with some very
strong cultural overtones.

10. Of the nine cultural elements that emerged from this study, Building/Physical Space
had the weakest contribution to the parent/community culture. Four of the cultural
elements had moderate contributions to the parent/community culture. They are
Students, Communication, Sports/Activities, and Policies. The cultural elements
Race/Socio Economic Status, Parents/Community, and Education/Teachers all had
strong contributions to the parent/community culture. One cultural element,
Tradition/History had a very strong contribution to the parent/community culture.

11. Of the 45 cultural factors that emerged and were grouped into the nine cultural
elements, eleven cultural factors were rated "Weak," eleven were rated "Moderate,"
eighteen were rated as "Strong," and five were "Very Strong."

12. The parent/community culture at Anycity High School is strong. The traditions,
especially the annual alumni reunion, and those traditions handed down from alumni,
parents, and the community help perpetuate the unique and loyal culture that
surrounds and envelops the school.

Discussion

The parents, alumni, and community members participating in this study were indeed
integral players in the actual existence, development, and maintenance of the high school’s
parent/community culture. The values, beliefs, and attitudes (culture) shape what is thought
to be possible and define what does and does not exist in the world (Erickson, 1987). The
Anycity High School's parent/community culture reflects pride and determination to be as good or better than their more affluent neighbors.

It makes sense that the Anycity High School is a reflection of its community. Schools serve their respective communities. The socioeconomic characteristics of the local community, Anycity, appear to have a significant impact on the parent/community culture. The impact of social class image of being "blue collar" or "working class" permeated throughout the study through the identified cultural elements and factors. It was clearly understood through interviewing participants that the lower social class status of their community and school had an important role in unifying and rallying the people to "fight" together as one. The "underdog" mentality worked well for the high school in the glorious past by pressing students and athletes to succeed and be acknowledged to be "as good as anyone else." Distinguishing between the high school and the community was definitely blurred as the rallying cry, "Anycityside Against the World" worked equally well for the community as it did for the high school.

The "Iron Law of Social Class" (Lewis and Smith, 1992) appears to ring true in light of the findings of this study. This "Law" suggests that a higher value is placed on education in communities with higher socioeconomic status. Additionally, the higher the value on education, the more the community presses teachers to perform. Thus, the increased pressure on teachers to deliver results in higher performance by the students. Though the cultural element Education/Teachers was a strong component of the parent/community culture, the participants themselves expressed more importance on teaching students basic skills, life skills, and other less academic objectives. Less importance was placed on rigorous, high
level academics such as in math or science. Higher level academic expectations tend to promote college bound educational pathways rather than general or technical preparation. The Anycity parent/community is more strongly inclined to expect that a “good education,” as they define it, is good enough rather than demand higher academic achievement. The students, then, are bound by the culture in which they live.

Regardless of the vocational or career paths that parents and community members wish for their children and students, a solid high school education that prepares students to go beyond “counting back change” or “balancing a checkbook” should reasonably be more beneficial to students.

Communities and citizens are quick to lay blame on teachers, schools, districts, states, and curriculum when student achievement is lower than expected (Bell, 1993). The findings in this study support the notion that parents, communities, and socioeconomic status dictate and control the factors affecting the total culture of a school. School and teacher culture tend to conform to local community norms about education which are socioeconomically based (Metz, 1990). The school culture and teacher culture are critical components to ensuring student engagement and student achievement as outlined in the model for this study (see Figure 2.1).

The original model for this study (see Figure 2.1) depicts the parent/community culture enveloping the school culture which is comprised of the student culture, teacher culture, and leadership. At the heart of this school culture is teacher engagement, student engagement, and student achievement. These together, the school culture and parent/community culture comprise the “total culture” of the school. The school does not
operate independently from the parent/community culture. The findings of this study suggest that further attention, inclusion, and education of the parents, alumni, and community is necessary to promote the desired educational values and changes at the school level.

The components of the parent/community culture model (see Figure 2.1) that were found to be of greatest importance to the parent/community culture of Anycity High School were: traditions, loyal support, community values, ethnic or racial minority status, the “Iron Law of Social Class,” socioeconomic status, and parental support (or lack thereof).

The findings indicate that the parent/community culture is strong, though not always in positive ways that would support student achievement. It appears that the components listed in the paragraph above would have the most promise for contributing to cultural change in the community and school. One could reason that changing the parent/community culture to support factors for student achievement would affect the remaining components of the school’s culture ultimately reaching and positively changing student achievement.

Keeping the positive cultural components and enhancing or changing the less positive components of the culture is at the heart of educational reform. The culture of the school must support change. In a study of 3,380 high schools, Cawelti (1994) found that changing only the structures and processes of the schools produced little change in their effectiveness, and that most high schools reflect little change over time.

In this particular case, the traditions at Anycity High School should be maintained and enhanced. The annual alumni reunion, a unique tradition, serves to unite the students over many generations. The community’s strength through its motto along with the traditions should be maintained to perpetuate the loyal support Anycity High School is
afforded. The values placed on education by the parents, alumni, and community could be strengthened, challenged, and enhanced to promote the desired levels of student achievement. Changing these educational values may help “break” the “Iron Law of Social Class” that tends to hold students to the educational expectations aligned with their socioeconomic status. Continuous efforts to promote, celebrate, and unite ethnically and racially diverse groups of students, parents, and community members may help solidify the supportive culture desired. Parents must make their children’s education a priority. Parents, by their own admission, need to be more involved, better informed, and welcomed to work directly with educators.

Limitations

The following limitations should be considered by others who wish to apply these findings to other settings. Limitations related to this research include:

1. This research was part of a larger culture audit case study and the findings are not intended to be generalized to other settings.

2. The sample of parents and community members was not broad enough to encompass other possible subcultures of the participating high school and, therefore, the voices of other possible subcultures are missing from this study. It was clear that generally supportive parents and community members volunteered to participate. Parents were defined as mothers, fathers, and guardians of students. Community members were those members identified as having close proximity or a business or community relationship with the selected high school.

3. A limited amount of time was available to spend on site visits for data collection.
4. This study examined the present perceptions of the participants at one point in time and does not show changes over time.

5. This study did not specifically examine the student culture, teacher culture, leadership, or overall school culture. The total culture of the greater school community encompasses all of these aspects simultaneously.

**Recommendations for further research**

Researchers often learn by practicing their craft of conducting research. This researcher learned much through the research process for this study and, as a result, the following recommendations are suggested for further research of similar content and methodology.

1. A follow up study with this particular high school parent/community may be conducted to determine whether the culture continues to maintain itself similarly or if it has changed over time.

2. A study with the selected high school in this study could be conducted to determine whether parent, community, and alumni educational expectations could be enhanced or raised through focus group awareness sessions or other promotional activities.

3. A study of the selected high school could be conducted to discover and describe other subcultures in the parent/community culture.

4. A study similar to this one could be conducted at a high achieving comprehensive high school using similar methodology to investigate the unique characteristics of its parent/community culture and determine whether the findings are consistent with those of this study.
5. Conduct a study focused on only one aspect of the model developed for this study. An example would be a study specifically addressing parental disengagement of a comprehensive high school.
APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL
Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects
Iowa State University
(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project: An examination of a parent/community culture in a comprehensive high school

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

Dr. Jim Sweeney
Typed Name of Principal Investigator

3/10/94
Date

Laura H. Studer
Ph. D. Student to Dr. Sweeney

3. Signatures of other investigators

4. Principal Investigator(s) (check all that apply)
   Faculty
   Staff
   Graduate Student
   Undergraduate Student

5. Project (check all that apply)
   Research
   Thesis or dissertation
   Class project
   Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)
   # Adults, non-students
   # ISU student
   # minors under 14
   # minors 14 - 17

7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See instructions, Item 7. Use an additional page if needed.)

See attachment.

8. Informed Consent:
   Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)
   Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 8.)
   Not applicable to this project.
9. Confidentiality of Data: Describe below the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

See attachment.

10. What risks or discomfort will be part of the study? Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 10.)

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts, of any nature, for the participants in this study.

11. CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:
   □ A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
   □ B. Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
   □ C. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
   □ D. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
   □ E. Deception of subjects
   □ F. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or □ Subjects 14 - 17 years of age
   □ G. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, prisons, etc.)
   □ H. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (Attach letters of approval)

If you checked any of the items in II, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

Items A - D Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions being taken.

Item E Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

Item F For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects will be obtained.

Items G & H Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research, and the letter of approval should be filed.
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

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   First Contact                                     Last Contact
   March 3, 1994                                     May 15, 1994
   Month / Day / Year                                Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:
   December 31, 1994
   Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer     Date                  Department or Administrative Unit
    [Signature]
    3/13/94
    3/13/94
    Professional Studies

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:
    ☑ Project Approved      ☐ Project Not Approved      ☐ No Action Required

    Patricia M. Keith
    Name of Committee Chairperson
    3/11/94
    Signature of Committee Chairperson

    Sample of questionnaire was given to parents during conference nights, March 3 & 4, 1994. The interviews will be done March 29.

    Per Laura Studer, PhD 3/11/94
    Student
The Problem
The problem for this study is to identify the basic components of a high school parent/community culture; the specific factors which influence a parent/community culture; the specific and integrated pattern of education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of a parent/community culture; and to determine the specific factors contributing to the development of a parent/community culture and the unique school-loyalty of community members and high school graduates.

Methods
The methods for gathering data will consist of:

1) Conducting individual interviews and small group interviews with a high school’s parents and community members (all of adult age)

   The individual interviews will be used to discover the school-related values, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants and elicit the factors that influence these values, beliefs, and attitudes. Small group interview sessions will utilize open-ended questions initially to determine school-related values, beliefs, and attitudes. More specific questions will be then be used to probe more deeply into initial responses throughout the interview session. No intrusive or personal questions will be asked at any time. Individual and small group interviews will last approximately 60 minutes in length.

   Interview data will be recorded in written notes by the investigator and taped, with participant permission, during individual interviews. Newsprint will be used during small group interview sessions to record responses and notes will also be taken by the investigator. The information on newsprint will be typed so that it can be more easily preserved and examined. Tapes and notes will be guarded so that only the researcher and typist have access to them. Tapes will be destroyed at the completion of the dissertation.

2) Administering the survey Parent Survey: Quality of School Practices to a sample of parents and community members

   The parent survey will provide information related to parents’ perceptions about school quality.

3) Informally interviewing parents and adult community members while attending various meetings such as Boosters or PTA

   Informal interviews will be brief, non-intrusive, focus on school-related issues and will be conducted during the natural course of events at selected meetings with parents and community members (such as PTA). Notes will be taken by the researcher after informal interviews are conducted.
4) Surveying adult high school Alumni Association members with a brief instrument

The Alumni survey will provide insight to the development and maintenance of the organization and members' school loyalty. (see attachment for sample questions)

5) Analyzing artifacts such as yearbooks, meeting minutes, etc.

Artifacts will provide insight and historical data about the parent/community culture.

Subjects
Subjects participating in individual interviews will be selected from identified key informants (individuals with special knowledge about the culture, activities, and history of the high school) who volunteer to participate in the study. The key informants will be determined through the technique of "snowball sampling" that begins with the principal, parents, and community members. Subjects participating in small group interview sessions will be invited to participate through a letter sent to all parents and a sample of community members. Subject participation will consist of answering questions orally during interviews and a sample will be completing the Parent Survey. Consent forms (see attachment) will be provided to individual and small group interview participants. Interview schedules are yet to be developed to guide the sequence and flow of questions (see attachment for sample questions).

Subjects (parents) participating in the parent survey will be given the opportunity to complete the survey at parent conferences and some surveys will be distributed to randomly selected classes from each grade level 9-12; students will act as couriers to deliver the parent survey and return it to school in sealed envelopes (See attachment: cover letter sample). Surveys will be coded with identifying numbers and no names will be used. The parent survey takes about 15 minutes to complete. A copy of the instrument is attached. The Alumni survey will administered to a sample of alumni at a meeting. Completion and the return of the surveys will indicate modified informed consent by participants.

Subjects will not be provided any incentives or compensations for their involvement in this study. Follow-up techniques to obtain data from subjects are not a part of this study.

#9—Confidentiality

Confidentiality of Data

The confidentiality of all participants will be ensured in all methods utilized in this study. Individual and small group interviews will be conducted in a private room. Names or other identifiers will not be used to identify specific individual participants. Tapes will be destroyed at the completion of the dissertation. Codes will be used on the parent surveys to identify 1) the group to which it was administered such as: parent, alumni member, community member, and 2) which grade level parents' students belong to. No coding will be used to identify the specific person who completed the parent survey or alumni survey.
SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR PARENT SURVEY

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The administration and staff at High School want to provide high quality service to you and your child. The information you provide by responding to the parent survey will help us identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. We value your opinion. Please take the time to give us your opinion about the educational practices and services of High School. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Your participation in completing the survey is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, please return the survey in the return envelope provided.

There are three major sections to the survey. The purpose of the first section is to collect your perceptions of the level of quality of educational practices employed by High School. The second section asks you the extent to which school practices have helped or influenced you to help your child succeed in school. The third section asks you about your likelihood of providing various types of support to the school.

If the results of the survey are to be helpful it is important that you respond candidly to each question. If your perception of the level of quality for a specific educational practice is "Excellent", let us know. The same is true if you feel we need to improve on a given area.

To assure confidentiality, this survey does not identify you personally. Please do not put your name anywhere on the survey. Your returned survey will be sent to Iowa State University to be processed. Results of the survey will be reported in terms of the building as a whole rather than individual parent opinions.

High School is distributing 160 surveys to parents at conferences and 300 surveys to randomly selected parents. The usefulness of the results of the survey is dependent on the number of surveys returned. We value your opinion of the school and we need your responses to the survey to have adequate information on which to draw conclusions.

The last page of the survey contains four "Background Information Questions". These questions are optional. At High School it is our goal that the educational practices and services be non-discriminatory, that we provide quality service to all parents and students regardless of gender, race, ethnic background, family status, employment status, and income. To know how we are doing in this respect we have included these questions and hope you will respond. If you believe it will be helpful for the school to know this information, please complete this section.

When you have completed the survey please fold it on the lines indicated and return it in a sealed envelope to the school staff at conferences. Thank you for completing the survey. Your responses will provide topics for conversation for parents and school personnel so that both can work together toward the common goal of providing quality educational practices and services that better serve you and your child.

If you have questions regarding the survey, please feel free to contact me at 242-7788.

Sincerely,

Building Principal
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Purpose of the Audit

The purpose of this "high school audit" is to provide you with information that will help you better understand the culture in your school and community and the factors that appear to influence it. With the help of reviews of your school's policies, observations of programs and events, and interviews with parents, community members, faculty, staff, and administrators, the researchers will develop a detailed description of the culture in your high school. We would like to talk with you for about an hour about topics related to culture.

I. ____________________________________________ understand that:

(please print)

1. the information obtained during this project will be summarized for the purposes of writing a report for this institution and also to be used in a dissertation.

2. the recordings and notes obtained in the interview will not be reviewed by anyone other than the researchers.

3. my participation in this study is voluntary. I understand that I may withdraw at any time by speaking to an investigator and any information collected from me will not be used in the study.

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

__________________________________________
(Signature)

__________________________________________
(Date)

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

Researcher __________________________________ Date ___________________________
Small Group Interviews
Parents and Community Members
Sample Questions

1. What comes to mind when you think of High School?

2. What would you like the school to provide to your child?

3. What do you see as strengths/weaknesses of the school?

4. How do you see your role as a parent or community member in relation to the high school?

5. What are the important things that students must learn and be able to do to live and work in our world?

6. What are the two most important things in your student's life right now?

7. How much time do you spend talking/working with your child about school or homework?
High School Alumni Association
Informal Survey
Sample Questions

1. How long have you been a member of the Alumni Association?

2. What does the Alumni Association do that is important to you?

3. What influenced you to become a member?

4. What makes this organization interesting or special to you?

5. What would you like to change about the Alumni Association?
APPENDIX B. PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION
January 28, 1994

Principal
High School

Dear Principal,

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some information for staff and parent/community newsletters to promote parent and community participation in the Culture Audit. I am planning to conduct individual and small group interviews with 8-10 teachers and several parents and community members to determine the culture of the AnyCity High community and how it influences the student, teacher, and school cultures. I plan to be conducting the interviews in March and possibly into April of 1994.

I would like to meet with you, or whomever you designate, to plan for the necessary details such as scheduling interviews, dates, times, and locations. I would also like to ask for your help in identifying teachers, parents, and community members you feel have a special understanding of the history of AnyCity High or are highly involved with AnyCity High. I will call soon to schedule this meeting with you. If you need to contact me, my office phone is 555-5450 or home 555-7936.

Enclosed is a copy of what I would like included in a parent newsletter or other appropriate media. This information will inform parents and community members as to the purpose of the Audit. If you feel more explanation is needed, we can add whatever is necessary. Thanks you for your help and support. I'll be talking to you soon.

Sincerely,

Laura S. Brock
Anycity High School Parents and Community Members Encouraged to Participate in Culture Audit Interviews

Anycity High School has initiated a Culture Audit designed to provide us with information about our school and community that will help us in planning for the future and improving our school. The Culture Audit is being conducted by a team of researchers led by Dr. Jim Sweeney from Iowa State University. Audit team members are in the process of interviewing the students, teachers, and staff at Anycity High. Laura Studer Brock, a graduate student, will be interviewing parents and community members.

The purpose of interviewing parents and community members is to gather information that will help provide us with vital information about how parents and community members view Anycity High School. Laura Brock will be contacting parents and community members about participating in the interviews. The interviews are confidential and participants will have the option of participating in an individual or small group interview. Your participation is important and will be greatly appreciated.

The results from the parent and community member interviews will be presented in a report to the Anycity High School Improvement Team. If you have questions about the Culture Audit or wish to participate, please contact Principal xxxxx at 555-5555 or Laura Studer Brock at 555-5450.
APPENDIX C. SURVEYS
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this survey is to collect your perceptions of: (1) The level of quality of educational practices employed by the school your child attends; (2) The overall level of quality of the school; (3) The level of impact school practices have had on you to enhance your support of your child's learning; and (4) The level of your support for the school. Your responses will assist school personnel in making decisions regarding school practices to better serve you and your child.

The first section of the survey addresses fourteen dimensions of educational practice:

1. School Climate
2. Communication
3. Accessibility
4. Responsiveness
5. Parent Involvement
6. Monitoring and Assessment
7. Student Equity
8. Physical Environment
9. School Program
10. Curriculum
11. Support Services
12. Student Activities/Athletics
13. Teacher Behavior
14. Leadership

Each dimension has a number of statements to which you are asked to respond. If the results are to be helpful to personnel at your child's school it is important that you respond thoughtfully and candidly. To assure confidentiality, this survey does not identify you personally. Please do not put your name anywhere on the survey.

Instructions precede each section of the survey. Please read the instructions and then respond to each statement. When responding to the statements, remember to think only of the school that provided you with the survey. Please do not consider other schools when responding to each statement.

Thank you for your cooperation in completing the survey. Your input will be very helpful in enhancing the quality of educational practices that affect you and your child.

When finished with the survey, please return it to the school in the manner requested.

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</table>

Information regarding the school district, school building, etc., has been pre-marked to identify the school that sent you this survey. You need not do anything with this part of the survey.
MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a Number 2 pencil only.
- Do not use ink or ballpoint pen.
- Fill in the oval completely.
- Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
- Do not make any stray marks on this form.

INSTRUCTIONS

The following statements describe a variety of educational practices employed by the school your child attends. Please read each statement and mark the response that best indicates your perception of the level of quality of the educational practice in your child's school. If you have no prior experience or knowledge of a specific educational practice, and do not feel you can assess the quality of the practice, please mark "0" indicating "Do Not Know."

Example

The School...

00. Maintains the interior of the building .........................

If you think the school does an excellent job of maintaining the interior of the building you should indicate "Excellent Quality" by marking the number "6" to the right of the statement. You should mark the number "4" indicating "Good Quality" if you think the school does a good job of maintaining the interior of the building. You should mark the number "1" indicating "Very Poor Quality" if you think the school does a very poor job of maintaining the interior of the building. If you have not been in the school and therefore do not know how well the school maintains the interior of the building, you should mark "0", indicating "Do Not Know."

SCHOOL CLIMATE

School personnel...

1. Make you feel welcome when you come to the school .....................
2. Are open to suggestions and questions ...................................
3. Treat you fairly ..............................................................
4. Treat you with respect ....................................................
COMMUNICATION

The school...

5. Informs you about school policies, rules, regulations, and procedures...

6. Provides information regarding upcoming school events, activities, and meetings.

7. Maintains open lines of communication for you to ask questions and express concerns.

8. Provides information about how you can help or support your child's learning at home.

ACCESSIBILITY

The school...

9. Provides adequate parent-teacher conferences and other opportunities for you to meet with school personnel.

10. Has teachers who are accessible to discuss your questions and concerns.

11. Has counselors, psychologists, and other support personnel who are accessible to discuss your questions and concerns.

RESPONSIVENESS

The school...

12. Strives to accommodate parent schedules and meet their needs.

13. Provides activities and programs that inform and are helpful to parents.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The school...

14. Promotes a partnership between home and school.

15. Encourages you to get involved in school affairs.

16. Informs you about procedures and opportunities for involvement in school affairs.

17. Provides opportunities for parents to be involved as volunteers, tutors, and in other supportive roles.

18. Provides opportunities for parent involvement in making decisions affecting school programs.

19. Involves parent groups such as PTA, PTO, Booster Club, and Band Parents in supporting and improving the school and its programs.
### MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

| The school... | 20. Reports student progress as frequently as needed | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 21. Provides report cards or other student progress reports that are informative | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 22. Monitors your child's attendance and contacts you if needed | ![Quality Rating] |

### STUDENT EQUITY

| The school... | 23. Treats students fairly | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 24. Ensures that all students regardless of race, ethnic background, gender, and/or disability are provided a quality education | ![Quality Rating] |

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| The school... | 25. Provides a good learning environment | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 26. Maintains the interior of the building | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 27. Maintains the school grounds | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 28. Provides classrooms and other facilities with adequate space and equipment for the educational program | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 29. Provides adequate building space, athletic fields and/or playgrounds for school activities such as basketball, drama, football, and children's play | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 30. Provides an environment in which you feel safe attending school meetings, programs, and activities | ![Quality Rating] |

### SCHOOL PROGRAM

| The school... | 31. Emphasizes academic learning | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 32. Challenges students to do their best | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 33. Honors and recognizes student achievements, accomplishments, and contributions | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 34. Provides a sound educational program that prepares students for future success | ![Quality Rating] |

### CURRICULUM

| The curriculum... | 35. Includes content and learning experiences that provide students the knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in society | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 36. Provides for the various interests of students | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 37. Provides for the different levels of student ability | ![Quality Rating] |
| | 38. Provides balance in the emphasis of basic skills as well as on other important student learning | ![Quality Rating] |
### SUPPORT SERVICES

**The school**

39. Provides transportation services that are efficient and effective. ...........................................  
40. Provides a lunch program appropriate for students. ...............................................................  
41. Provides guidance/counseling services that meet student needs. .........................................  
42. Provides a media center and/or library that meets student needs. ........................................  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Excellent Quality</th>
<th>Very Good Quality</th>
<th>Good Quality</th>
<th>Moderate Quality</th>
<th>Poor Quality</th>
<th>Very Poor Quality</th>
<th>Do Not Know</th>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

### STUDENT ACTIVITIES/ATHLETICS

**The school**

43. Offers sufficient non-academic programs and activities such as clubs, intramurals, plays, and athletics to meet the interests of students. ...........................................  
44. Has non-academic programs and activities that provide meaningful experiences for those students currently participating. ...........................................  

### TEACHER BEHAVIOR

**Teachers**

45. Care for students. .................................................................  
46. Help each child do his or her very best in school. ..............................................................  
47. Maintain high standards for students. .................................................................  
48. Provide effective instruction in the classroom. ..............................................................  
49. Are accessible to students who want or need help. ..........................................................  
50. Maintain student discipline in the classroom. ...............................................................  
51. Respond to your questions and concerns. .................................................................  
52. Inform you about your child's school work and progress. ..............................................  
53. Communicate ways you can help your child succeed in school. .......................................  

### LEADERSHIP

**The principal**

54. Provides leadership for the school. .................................................................  
55. Maintains high standards for the school. .................................................................  
56. Communicates with parents about school issues. ..............................................................  
57. Is visible in the community and at school functions. ......................................................  
58. Manages the daily operation of the school. .................................................................  
59. Manages student discipline. .................................................................  
60. Is accessible to discuss your questions and concerns. ....................................................  
61. Responds to your questions and concerns. .................................................................  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Excellent Quality</th>
<th>Very Good Quality</th>
<th>Good Quality</th>
<th>Moderate Quality</th>
<th>Poor Quality</th>
<th>Very Poor Quality</th>
<th>Do Not Know</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

-6-
The following statement asks you to rate the overall quality of your child’s school. Please mark the number to the right of the statement that best reflects your perception of the overall quality of the school.

62. Overall, I would rate the quality of the school as ...........................................

The following statements describe a variety of ways parents provide support to children that enhance their success in school. We want to know how much school practices have helped or influenced you to help your child succeed in school. Please mark the number of the response that best reflects the level of impact school practices have had on what you do to help your child succeed in school.

Example

The extent to which school practices have helped or influenced you to:

00. Help your child with homework or special projects..............

If you think school practices have had a very strong influence on you to help your child with homework, you should indicate "Very Strong Impact" by marking the number "6" to the right of the statement. You should mark the number "3" indicating "Some Impact" if you think school practices have had some influence on you to help your child with homework. You should mark the number "1" indicating "No Impact" if you think school practices have had no influence on you to help your child with homework.

SCHOOL PRACTICES - IMPACT

The extent to which school practices have helped or influenced you to:

63. Help your child with homework or special projects....................
64. Talk to your child about school topics..........................
65. Read to or with your child...........................................
66. Encourage your child to read, write, and participate in other important learning activities besides those assigned by the teacher...........
67. Praise your child’s efforts and hard work in school.................
68. Praise your child for school achievements........................
69. Express high expectations and encourage your child to do the very best in school........................................
70. Stress the importance and value of success in school............
71. Make homework a priority...........................................
72. Provide a quiet place for your child to do schoolwork at home...
73. Make sure your child attends school regularly......................
74. Initiate contact with your child’s teachers to discuss his or her progress........
75. Attend your child’s activities at school such as concerts, plays, and athletics...
76. Attend important conferences at school..........................

- 7 -
The following statements describe a variety of ways parents provide support to their child’s school. Please read each statement and mark the number of the response to the right of the statement that best reflects the likelihood of your providing that type of support to the school.

**SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL**

How likely are you to:

77. RiselothedtfaMeoftheficbflotifneafaL. 
78. Support school policies or rules if challenged. 
79. Support an increase in taxes to enhance the school program. 
80. Support an increase in taxes to improve an existing school facility or to construct a new one. 
81. Serve on a school committee or parent organization if asked. 

82. Volunteer to help as a classroom aide, office aide, guest speaker, tutor, chaperone for field trips and dances, concession stand worker or other similar activity.

The following statement asks you to rate your overall support for your child’s school. Please mark the number of the response to the right of the statement that best reflects the level of your overall support for the school.

83. Overall, I would rate my support for the school as...

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)**

The following questions are optional. It is the goal of the school to ensure equal opportunity and access for all parents and students. If you believe it will be helpful for the school to know your gender, race, family status, employment status, or income, please respond to the appropriate questions below. If you choose not to answer specific questions, please leave them blank.

Mark the space next to the response that describes you.

Gender
- Male
- Female

What Best Describes Your Race Or National Origin?
- African-American/Black
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Arab or Middle Eastern Origin
- Asian-American or Pacific Islander
- Caucasian/White
- Mexican-American or Hispanic Origin
- Other, Please Specify

What Best Describes Your Family Status And Employment Status?
- Single parent or guardian—Not employed
- Single parent or guardian—Employed
- Two parents or guardians—Both employed
- Two parents or guardians—One employed
- Two parents or guardians—Neither employed

What Is The Total Parent Or Guardian Household Income Per Year?
- $0 - $9,999
- $10,000 - $29,999
- $30,000 - $49,999
- $50,000 - $69,999
- $70,000 - $89,999
- $90,000 or more

When finished with the survey, please return it to the school in the manner requested. Please fold the survey on the lines indicated.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY
High School-Alumni Association Survey
May 12, 1994

High School and the Alumni Association would like to know what you think would make the school, Alumni Association, and Reunion even better. We value your opinion. Your responses to the following questions will be helpful for our future planning. The information you provide is confidential and will be compiled in a report that will help us understand your views about our school. Please do not write your name on this sheet. When completed, please return the survey to High School by May 18, 1994. Thank you for your participation.

1. What year did you graduate from High School?

2. About how many years have you been attending the Alumni Reunion?

3. What is the main reason you attend the Alumni Reunion Dinner?

4. Why do you belong to the Alumni Association?

5. How strong is your loyalty to High School?

6. If you are loyal to High, what is the reason for your loyalty?

7. What does the phrase "meant to be" mean to you?

8. What, in your estimation, is the best thing about High School?

9. Please list any suggestions you may have for improving High School.

10. Please list any suggestions you may have for improving the Alumni Association or the Reunion Dinner.

11. Are you active in the Alumni Association? Yes or No
If so, what do you do for the Association?

12. Should the reunion meeting continue to include a dinner? Yes or No Why?

13. Is there a better time of year to hold the reunion? If yes, when?

******PLEASE COMPLETE THE ITEMS ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE.******
PLEASE WRITE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS HERE.

*Optional—It is our goal to ensure equal opportunity and access for all our members. If you feel it is helpful for the Alumni Association to know your race, gender, and home state, please respond to the following:

Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

Race or National Origin: ______ African American/Black ______ American Indian/Alaskan Native
______ Arab or Middle Eastern ______ Asian American/Pacific Islander
______ Caucasian/White ______ Mexican American/Hispanic
______ Other ______ Please Specify: ______

Please tell us the state where you now live: ____________________________

Please return the survey to: Laura Studer and
APPENDIX D. DATA RECORDING FORMS
Small Group Interview Summary

Interview #__________
Date:_______________

1. Key points

2. Other salient, interesting, illuminating, or important points

3. Beliefs, values, and attitudes that surfaced

4. Factors that influence beliefs, values, and attitudes

5. Additional comments or thoughts
Individual Interview Notes

Interview #

Date:
Daily Summary Report

Date:________

1. What thoughts do I have about the parent/community culture?

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

3. What big questions will I ask tomorrow?

4. What can be done to improve the interviews, contacts, etc.?
APPENDIX E. SMALL GROUP PURPOSES AND PROCEDURES
Small Group Interview Purposes and Procedures

**Purposes:**

1. To identify the basic components which comprise the parent/community.
2. To determine the factors that influence the parent/community culture.
3. To identify the specific education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of the parent/community culture.
4. To determine the factors contributing to the history and development of the parent/community culture.
5. To identify key aspects of the unique school-loyalty factor demonstrated by community members and high school graduates.
6. To identify key informants.

**Approach:**

Five or so participants will be seated at a circular table. They will be provided with an explanation of the purposes for the interview and culture audit project. A description of culture will also be provided. Participants will be encouraged to ask questions about the purposes or culture. Informed consent will be explained and the participants will be provided an opportunity to sign the consent form.

When the form is signed and the researcher is satisfied that they are ready to proceed, the researcher will ask the participants a series of open-ended questions exploring their perceptions of Anycity High School and Anycity High's parent/community culture: "How would you describe Anycity High School? the parents? the community? What is important at Anycity High? How do you know this? These questions will be asked to determine the education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of the parent/community culture and the factors that influence them.
Further interview questions will also relate specifically to determining the education-related factors that influence parent/community beliefs, values, attitudes, and the factors that contribute to the history and development of Anycity High's parent/community culture. The specific process to be followed is provided below.

"Anycity High School is...The Anycity High community is..."

1. Participants are given the opportunity to respond in-turn and the researcher records key comments on newsprint and probes for clarification to assure that the researcher is interpreting correctly what the interviewee is saying and that comments are recorded as accurately as possible.

2. Participants are given the opportunity to discuss the responses and agree, disagree, or provide further information or clarification.

3. The researcher may probe for deeper understanding by asking, "What specifically occurred that led you to think in this way?" "Can you tell me more about that?"

4. Specific questions will be asked related to their expectations for the school and students, the purpose and importance of education, and their attitudes of identification, support, pride, trust, and empowerment.

4. The researcher may probe further concepts that have been developed in other interviews.

5. The researcher summarizes the session and thanks the parents and community members for participating. The participants are asked not to share the comments of the group with others.
APPENDIX F. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PURPOSES AND PROCEDURES
Individual Interview Purposes and Procedures

Purposes:

(1) To determine the factors that influence the parent/community culture.

(2) To identify the specific education-related beliefs, values, and attitudes of the parent/community culture.

(3) To determine the factors contributing to the history and development of the parent/community culture.

(4) To identify key aspects of the unique school-loyalty factor demonstrated by community members and high school graduates.

(5) To identify other key informants.

Approach:

Interviewing provides an opportunity for key informants to provide important information about the parent/community culture. The researcher will engage the key informant in a dialogue in a room that ensures privacy where they will not be interrupted. The key informant will be provided with the purposes of the study and interview and a description of culture. The key informant will be encouraged to ask questions about either of these. The purposes of tape recording and note taking will be explained. Informed consent will be explained and the staff member will be provided an opportunity to sign the consent form.

When the form is signed and the researcher is satisfied that they are ready to proceed, the researcher will ask the key informant a series of open-ended questions exploring their perceptions of Anycity High School and Anycity High's parent/community: "How would
you describe Anycity High School? the parents? the community? What is important at Anycity High? How do you know this? These questions will help gain specific insight into Anycity High and the parent/community culture. Latter questions will probe in depth about specific topics generated during the interview. Interview questions will also relate specifically to determining the education-related factors that influence parent/community beliefs, values, attitudes, and the factors that contribute to the history and development of Anycity High's parent/community. The specific process to be followed is provided below.

"Anycity High School is...The Anycity High community is..."

1. Researcher records key comments and probes for clarification to assure that the researcher is interpreting correctly what the interviewee is saying. The researcher summarizes the interviewee's comments to be sure that it is recorded as accurately as possible.

2. The researcher may probe for deeper understanding by asking, "What specifically occurred that led you to think in this way?" "Can you tell me more about that?"

3. The researcher may probe further concepts that have been developed in small group sessions.

4. The researcher summarizes the interview and thanks the key informant for participating. The key informant is asked not to share the questions of the interview with others who are participating.
APPENDIX G. PARENT SURVEY DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND RESULTS
## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or National Origin</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>African-American/Black</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab or Middle Eastern Origin</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-American or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican-American or Hispanic Origin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Status and Employment Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single parent or guardian—Not employed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single parent or guardian—Employed</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
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<td>Two parents or guardians—Neither employed</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two parents or guardians—One employed</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two parents or guardians—Both employed</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No response</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income Per Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 - $9,999</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $29,999</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $69,999</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$70,000 - $89,999</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000 or more</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceptions of Quality
High School

Mean Score

1 very poor quality
2 poor quality
3 mediocre quality
4 good quality
5 very good quality
6 excellent quality

- School Climate
- Communication
- Accessibility
- Responsiveness
- Parent Involvement
- Monitoring - Assessment
- Student Equity
- Physical Environment
- School Program
- Curriculum
- Support Services
- Student Activities
- Teacher Behavior
- Leadership
- School Practices-Impact
- School Quality

4.63
4.28
4.61
4.29
3.93
4.65
4.65
4.54
4.38
4.50
4.42
4.33
4.63
4.21
4.51
4.14
4.60
## SCHOOL CLIMATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Personnel...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>Rated quality</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Make you feel welcome when you come to the school.</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are open to suggestions and questions.</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Treat you fairly.</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Treat you with respect.</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Climate Composite Mean 4.63
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>Rated</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Informs you about school policies, rules, regulations, and procedures.</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provides information regarding upcoming school events, activities, and meetings.</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Maintains open lines of communication for you to ask questions and express concerns.</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Provides information about how you can help or support your child's learning at home.</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication Composite Mean 4.28
### ACCESSIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>Rated quality</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Provides adequate parent-teacher conferences and other opportunities for you to meet with school personnel.</td>
<td>33.1% 26.8% 34.6% 3.1% 2.4% 0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>127 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Employs teachers who are accessible to discuss your questions and concerns.</td>
<td>22.2% 25.4% 36.5% 11.1% 4.0% 0.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>126 3 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Employs counselors, psychologists, and other support personnel who are accessible to discuss your questions and concerns.</td>
<td>27.0% 25.2% 26.1% 16.5% 3.5% 1.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>115 13 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.50</td>
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</table>

**Accessibility Composite Mean**

4.61
## RESPONSIVENESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>rated</th>
<th>don't know</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Strives to accommodate the schedules and meet the needs of parents.</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Provides activities and programs that inform and are helpful to parents.</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responsiveness Composite Mean 4.29
## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>rated quality</th>
<th>don't know</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Promotes a partnership between home and school.</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Encourages you to get involved in school affairs.</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Informs you about procedures and opportunities for involvement in school affairs.</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Provides opportunities for parents to be involved as volunteers, tutors, and in other supportive roles.</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Provides opportunities for parent involvement in making decisions affecting school programs.</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Involves parent groups such as PTA, PTO, Booster Club, and Band Parents in supporting and improving the school and its programs.</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Involvement Composite Mean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3.93</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## MONITORING & ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>Rated quality</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20. Reports student progress as frequently as needed.</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Provides report cards or other student progress reports that are informative.</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Monitors your child's attendance and contacts you if needed.</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.87</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Monitoring & Assessment Composite Mean** 4.65
## STUDENT EQUITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>Rated quality</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. Treats students fairly.</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Ensures that all students regardless of race, ethnic background, gender, and/or disability are provided a quality education.</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Equity Composite Mean** 4.54
## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>rated quality</th>
<th>don't know</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. Provides a good learning environment.</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Maintains the interior of the building.</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Maintains the school grounds.</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Provides classrooms and other facilities with adequate space and equipment for the educational programs.</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Provides adequate building space, athletic fields and/or playgrounds for school activities such as basketball, drama, football, and children's play.</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Provides an environment in which you feel safe attending school meetings, programs, and activities.</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Physical Environment Composite Mean**: 4.38
<table>
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<tr>
<th>The School...</th>
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<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>don't know</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. Emphasizes academic learning.</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Challenges students to do their best.</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Honors and recognizes student achievements, accomplishments, and contributions.</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Provides a sound educational program that prepares students for future success.</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

School Program Composite Mean 4.50
The Curriculum...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>don't know</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. Includes content and learning experiences that provide students the knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in society.</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Provides for the various interests of students.</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Provides for the various levels of student ability.</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Provides balance in the emphasis of basic skills as well as on other important student learning.</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Curriculum Composite Mean 4.42
### SUPPORT SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>Rated quality</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39. Provides transportation services that are efficient and effective.</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Provides a lunch program appropriate for students.</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Provides guidance/counseling services that meet student needs.</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Provides a media center and/or library that meets student needs.</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.57</td>
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</table>

**Support Services Composite Mean** 4.33
### STUDENT ACTIVITIES/ATHLETICS

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<tr>
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<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>rated quality</th>
<th>don't know</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43. Offers sufficient non-academic programs and activities such as clubs,</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intramurals, plays, and athletics to meet the interests of students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Has non-academic programs and activities that provide meaningful</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiences for those students currently participating.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**Student Activities/Athletics Composite Mean** 4.63
### TEACHER BEHAVIOR

<table>
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<th>Teachers...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>rated quality</th>
<th>don't know</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45. Care for students.</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Help each child do his or her very best in school.</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Maintain high standards for students.</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Provide effective instruction in the classroom.</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Are accessible to students who want or need help.</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Maintain student discipline in the classroom.</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Respond to your questions and concerns.</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Inform you about your child's school work and progress.</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Communicate ways you can help your child succeed in school.</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Behavior Composite Mean** 4.21
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Principal...</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>Rated</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54. Provides leadership for the school.</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Maintains high standards for the school.</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Communicates with parents about school issues.</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Is visible in the community and at school functions.</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Manages the daily operation of the school.</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Manages student discipline.</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Is accessible to discuss your questions and concerns.</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Responds to your questions and concerns.</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leadership Composite Mean 4.51
### SCHOOL QUALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>6 - excellent quality</th>
<th>5 - very good quality</th>
<th>4 - good quality</th>
<th>3 - mediocre quality</th>
<th>2 - poor quality</th>
<th>1 - very poor quality</th>
<th>0.0%</th>
<th>no response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62. Overall, I would rate the quality of the school as...

**School Quality Composite Mean** 4.60
## IMPACT OF SCHOOL PRACTICES

The extent to which school practices have helped or influenced you to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The extent to which school practices have helped or influenced you to...</th>
<th>6 - very strong impact</th>
<th>5 - strong impact</th>
<th>4 - moderate impact</th>
<th>3 - some impact</th>
<th>2 - little impact</th>
<th>1 - no impact</th>
<th>Rated impact</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63. Help your child with homework or special projects.</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Talk to your child about school topics.</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Read to or with your child.</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. Encourage your child to read, write, and participate in other important learning activities besides those assigned by the teacher.</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. Praise your child's efforts and hard work in school.</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. Praise your child for school achievements.</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. Express high expectations and encourage your child to do the very best in school.</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### IMPACT OF SCHOOL PRACTICES (continued)

**The extent to which school practices have helped or influenced you to...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Practice</th>
<th>6 - very strong impact</th>
<th>5 - strong impact</th>
<th>4 - moderate impact</th>
<th>3 - some impact</th>
<th>2 - little impact</th>
<th>1 - no impact</th>
<th>Rated Impact</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70. Stress the importance and value of success in school.</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71. Make homework a priority.</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72. Provide a quiet place for your child to do schoolwork at home.</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73. Make sure your child attends school regularly.</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74. Initiate contact with your child's teachers to discuss his or her progress.</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75. Attend your child's activities at school such as concerts, plays, and athletics.</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76. Attend important conferences at school.</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impact of School Practices Composite Mean** 4.14
## SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How likely are you to...</th>
<th>1 - very unlikely</th>
<th>2 - unlikely</th>
<th>3 - somewhat unlikely</th>
<th>4 - somewhat likely</th>
<th>5 - likely</th>
<th>6 - very likely</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>no response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77. Rise to the defense of the school if needed.</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78. Support school policies or rules if challenged.</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79. Support an increase in taxes to enhance the school program.</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80. Support an increase in taxes to improve an existing school facility or to construct a new one.</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81. Serve on a school committee or parent organization if asked.</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82. Volunteer to help as a classroom aide, office aide, guest speaker, tutor, chaperone for field trips and dances, concession stand worker or other similar activity.</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support for School Composite Mean 4.65
### OVERALL SCHOOL SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 - very strong support</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - strong support</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - moderate support</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - some support</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - little support</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - no support</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no response</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean: 4.78

Overall School Support Composite Mean: 4.78
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Fuller, M.L. (1993). Today’s demographics don’t leave it to Beaver. *Education Digest*, 58(6), 54-56.


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