

FACTORS MOTIVATING BLACK MALE STUDENTS  
TO PASS THE VIRGINIA LITERACY PASSPORT TEST  
AFTER FAILING SEVERAL ADMINISTRATIONS  
AND BEING LABELED "UNGRADED"

by

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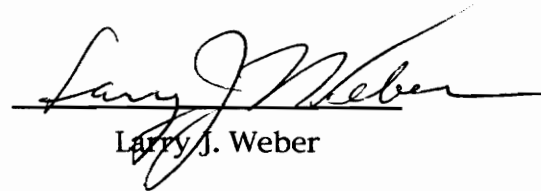
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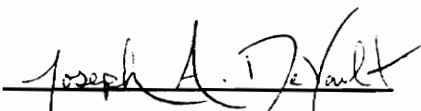
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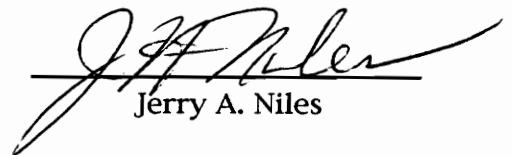
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(ABSTRACT)

This study contains four case study reports. Each case has an introduction, a detailed story of a student's scholastic trials while trying to pass Virginia's Literacy Passport Test (LPT), a behavioral record, and a summary which includes graphic illustrations of grades and attendance.

Three interview instruments were developed to gather data from the students, their parents, and the teachers who had helped with LPT remediation. Using these data, along with transcripts and test results, case study databases were constructed. Contact forms, document forms, and case-level matrices helped provide a formal organization of the data. Multiple sources of evidence and triangulation of data assured reasonable construct validity. Conclusions were drawn from a cross-case analysis of the data.

The primary conclusion was that the consequences of the "ungraded" status given to high school students who hadn't completed LPT requirements (no sports, non-graded label, and tracking) acted to motivate them by creating extrinsic and intrinsic pressures. However, it was discovered that once the LPT requirements were met academic achievement dropped.

Because the anticipated result of the consequences of failing the LPT seems to be working, it was recommended that similar consequences be added

for middle school students. Furthermore, it was recommended that meaningful consequences (maintaining a driver's license) beyond those associated with the LPT be aligned with achievement in order to keep students motivated through graduation. Improving parental involvement in the academic endeavors of at-risk students and sanctions for derelict parents were also recommended.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	vi
Dedication	vii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
<b>Chapters:</b>	
1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
Student Responses to Failing a Barrier Test	1
Thesis	3
Review of Related Literature	3
Minimum Competency Tests	3
Effects of Minimum Competency Tests	6
Virginia's Literacy Passport Test	11
Effects of the LPT on Students	11
Need for Further Investigation of the Thesis	13
Summary	14
2. FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF THE THESIS: METHODS AND PROCEDURES	15
Research Question	15
Context of the Study	15
Population and Sample	15
Data Collection	17
Interview Instruments	18
Documents	19
Reliability and Validity	19
Data Organization (Management)	20
Data Analysis	21
Summary	24
3. INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY REPORTS	25
Case Study Report for Alex	25
Scholastic Trials and Endeavors	26
Behavioral Record	33
Summary	34
Case Study Report for Derrick	37
Scholastic Trials and Endeavors	37
Behavioral Record	44
Summary	45
Case Study Report for Frederick	48
Scholastic Trials and Endeavors	48
Behavioral Record	52
Summary	53
Case Study Report for Gregory	56
Scholastic Trials and Endeavors	56
Behavioral Record	62
Summary	62
4. CROSS CASE ANALYSIS	66
Examining the Four Cases	67

Student Responses to Being Ungraded	70
Parent and Teacher Responses to Students' Ungraded Status	71
Academic Achievement Before, During, and After the Ungraded Status	72
Motivational Factors	73
Summary	77
5. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	79
Findings	79
Conclusions	81
Explanations for the Boys' Behavior	83
Recommendations	86
Practice	86
Further Research	88
References	90
Appendixes:	93
A. Interview Instruments	94
B. Contact Summary Form	97
C. Document Summary Form	98
D. Codes	99
E. Sample Matrix: Student--Single Case-Level Display by Student and Responses	101
F. Sample Partitioned Matrix: Student A--Partitioned Case-Level Display by Student, Respondent, and Responses	102
G. Sample Stacked Matrix: Parents--Stacked Case-Level Display by Student and Responses	103
H. Matrix for Variables Associated With Path Model #2	104
I. Interview Transcriptions	105
J. Glossary	157
Vita	159

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To Joe, who opened his school to me and has always been a good friend.

And my special gratitude to my chairman, Dave, for his patience, caring, and understanding as we diligently prepared this dissertation.

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family:

To my wife who has put up with me for 13 years and given me constant love and support.

To my boys, Nick and Austin, for all the Saturdays when I couldn't play.

To my Dad for loving me enough to kick my butt when I needed it most.

To my Mom for being supportive and believing in me when no one else did.

To Jerry for helping to give me a direction and showing me I could still achieve excellence.

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## List of Tables

### Tables

1. Population	16
2. Sample	17
3. First Response to the Question of the Most Motivating Factor for Passing the Literacy Passport Test	74
4. Second Response to the Question of the Most Motivating Factor for Passing the Literacy Passport Test	75
5. Combination of First and Second Responses to the Question of the Most Motivating Factor for Passing the Literacy Passport Test	76

## List of Figures

### Figures

1. Hypothetical Path Model (From Readings)	2
2. Hypothetical Path Model (From Initial Research and Observations)	3
3. Organizational Flow Diagram	21
4. Change in Grade Point Average (GPA) by Grade for Alex	35
5. Number of Absenses by Grade for Alex	36
6. Change in Grade Point Average (GPA) by Grade for Derrick	46
7. Number of Absenses by Grade for Derrick	47
8. Change in Grade Point Average (GPA) by Grade for Frederic	54
9. Number of Absenses by Grade for Frederick	55
10. Change in Grade Point Average (GPA) by Grade for Gregory	64
11. Number of Absenses by Grade for Gregory	65
12. Final Path Model	82

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This chapter contains a description of two student responses to failing minimum competency tests used as barriers to participation in extra curricular activities and graduation, the thesis of the study, a review of related literature, and a rationale for further study.

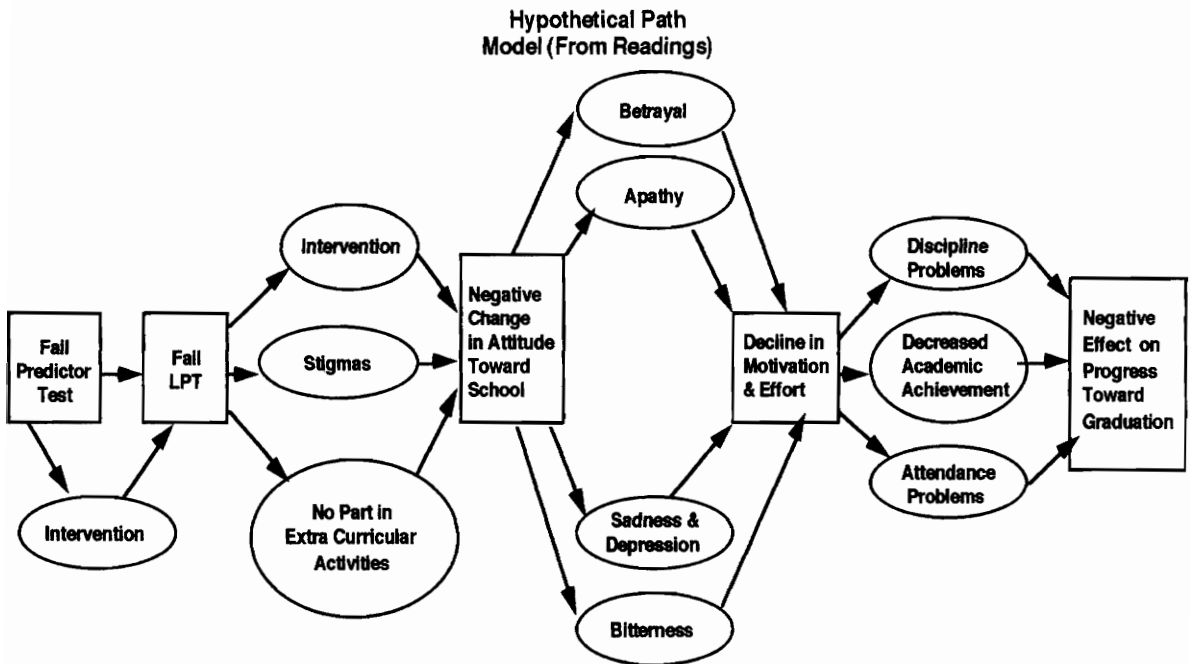
#### Student Responses to Failing a Barrier Test

A review of the relevant literature (Draba & Henderson, 1983; Linn, Madaus & Pedulla, 1982; Madaus & Airasian, 1977) indicates that minimum competency tests (MCTs), when used as barrier or graduation tests, negatively impact student achievement and graduation rates. Furthermore, research (Airasian, 1987; Corcoran, 1985; Palardy, 1984) shows that stigmas and consequences associated with failure may negatively affect students' attitudes, motivation, and behavior.

Virginia's Literacy Passport Test (LPT) is a minimum competency test used as a barrier to graduation. Research supports the thesis that failing the LPT produces negative effects. Figure 1 is a model of the variables which might lead to these negative effects.

Contrary to this conclusion, preliminary research indicated an alternative thesis. In May 1994 a purposive sample of three students at a middle school in south central Virginia was drawn from a pool of eighth graders who had failed several administrations of the LPT and were going to high school as "ungraded" students (entering ninth grade without satisfying LPT requirements). They were asked about their feelings at having failed the test again and about their uncertain high school status. The responses from

Figure 1

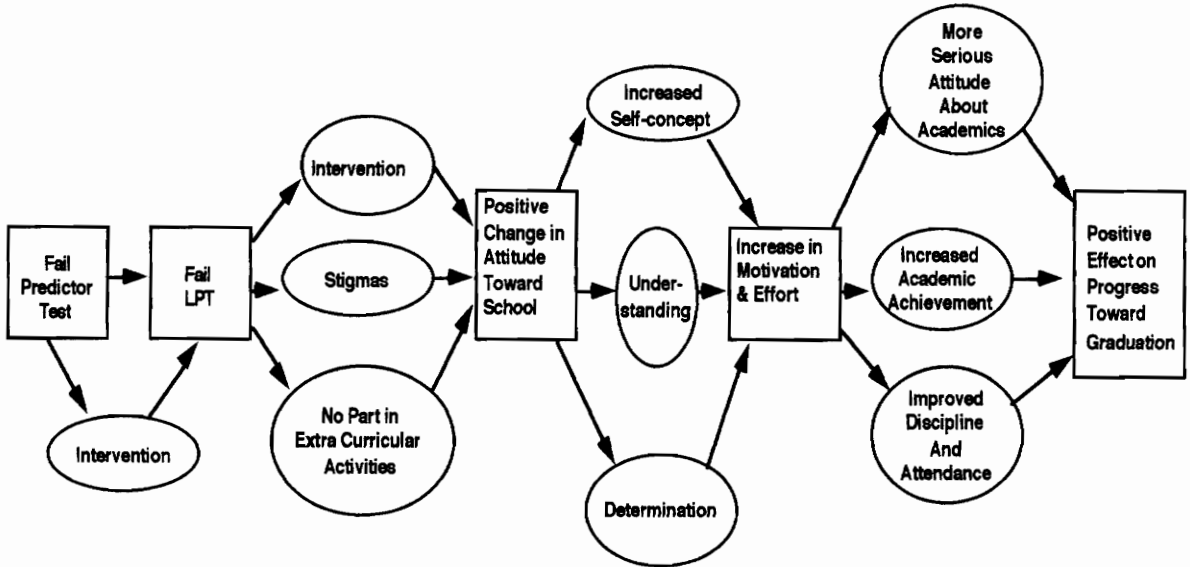


this group were very interesting and exciting. The review of the literature had seemed to indicate a very negative atmosphere surrounding the failure of this type of test (minimum competency test used as a barrier). However, the students responded unanimously, enthusiastically, and in-depth about their determination to work harder and to pass the test on its next administration.

With the researcher's curiosity piqued the emphasis shifted to students already in high school. Initial interviews with four students from Drewry Mason Middle School who had failed the Literacy Passport Test and gone to Magna Vista High School as "ungraded" supported a new proposition. These interviews, along with reviews of documents, indicated that failure had had a positive effect, with each student passing the test during a subsequent trial as well as showing improved attendance, grades, and behavior. The path model in Figure 2 is an explanation of these positive effects.

Figure 2

Hypothetical Path Model (From Initial Research and Observation)



### Thesis

The purpose of this study is to examine the thesis that failing the LPT has a positive impact, rather than a negative one, on student achievement and behavior. In order to pursue this thesis it was necessary to review in more detail what research had said about minimum competency testing and specifically the LPT.

### Review of Related Literature

This review contains research on minimum competency tests in general and their uses as "barriers." Furthermore, the effects of such testing are addressed. Moreover, research on Virginia's Literacy Passport Test (LPT) was examined, as well as the specific effects of this test.

### Minimum Competency Tests

Minimum Competency Tests (MCTs) have been given to students at many

different academic levels to assess their grasp of basics. The majority of MCT programs have focused on improving students' basic skills (Ed. Commission of the States, 1984). An underlying premise for implementing such programs was that the tests clearly specify learning objectives and encourage schools and teachers to focus instruction more precisely. In addition, MCT results have provided a basis for the diagnosis and remediation of academic skills and may possibly have lead to higher student achievement (Winfield, 1991).

It was clear that predominant public perception during the decade from 1980 to 1990 had been one of an educational system in which standards had eroded and competence diminished (Stedman & Kaestle, 1985). What was beyond debate was the fact that the majority of Americans had accepted the perception and endorsed efforts to "shape up" the schools by various means intended to raise standards (Airasian, 1987).

There was, in many of the recent educational reforms, a punitive dimension that sought as much to punish incompetence as to reward competence. Nowhere was this punitive dimension more evident than in the many certification testing programs that assumed prominence in the school reform movement. Perhaps because of it, the rise of testing programs with new uses and new consequences for test-takers had become the most visible and crucial aspect of state government efforts to improve educational standards and to gain increased control over the process of education in local school districts (Wirt & Kirst, 1982).

Although Americans had very little prior experience with state mandated tests used to certify pupil and teacher competence in academic areas (Madaus & Airasian, 1977), the use of such tests had been widely endorsed and

the speed of their adoption was little short of phenomenal.

During the decade of the 80s, a powerful and controversial tool for educational improvement was the introduction of competency testing in the basic skills. While competency tests were introduced by both local school districts and state government, the trend had been toward the development of statewide testing programs. In 1984, 40 states had adopted such programs (Corcoran, 1985). By 1987 the number increased to 44 (OERI, 1988) before dropping back to 40 in 1992 (OERI, 1992). Many of the competency testing programs were originally developed as part of accountability programs in the early 1970s, but the expansion and strengthening of state testing programs became a central feature of the late 1980s reform agenda (Corcoran, 1985).

Growing concern about the quality of public education and the impetus toward higher standards generated by the reform reports led to changes in the purposes of competency testing. The tests, particularly those administered by the states, had been intended to stimulate improvements in public education. These testing programs typically were designed to reduce the number of students lacking essential skills by ensuring that those skills were more effectively taught and that remediation was provided where necessary.

Over the course of several years, however, the functions of state testing began shifting from the allocation of remedial funds and the evaluation of schools to the certification of achievement and the elevation of academic standards. Instead of just serving to identify students in need of assistance, the tests increasingly were being used as prerequisites for promotion and graduation. Whereas the sanctions associated with the tests had fallen most heavily on schools and their staffs, they fell equally heavily on the students

themselves. Over 20 states used competency tests as requirements for graduation from high school in 1985 (Corcoran, 1985), and by 1992, 24 states used the tests for that purpose (OERI, 1992).

Furthermore, in some states, such as New Jersey, MCTs initially developed for the purpose of ensuring basic skills competency were criticized as being too easy and they were revised to reflect the higher standards of the "excellence movement." Writing samples, more complex mathematics problems, and more demanding reading and language arts sections were being added to the tests in order to incorporate higher-order skills as reformers attempted to raise academic standards in the public schools (Corcoran, 1985).

Competency tests were now being used to foster excellence as well as equity, and the tensions between these two agendas brought increasing controversy over their content and functions. Policy-makers defended the development of more difficult tests as a necessary step in the struggle to restore the value of the high school diploma. Reformers who once sought the introduction of such tests to protect the interests of students whose needs were being neglected began raising questions about their fairness and their impact on educational programs.

#### Effects of Minimum Competency Tests

The educational community was divided on the issue of MCTs. Although it was difficult to measure the exact impact, some educators felt that higher standards would cause many students to be denied a high school diploma (Linn, Madaus, & Pedulla, 1982). They asked whether this denial was the natural price of the push for excellence and if this was an appropriate use of standardized testing. There have been arguments that a test alone should not be the sole



determinant of student promotion or graduation because standards were judgmental and no test could be absolutely reliable and valid (Linn, Madaus, & Pedulla, 1982). Some educators maintained that our educational system was based upon teaching toward individual student differences, and students who worked to their capacity should receive a reward even if they were unable to meet a minimum standard (Palardy, 1984). On the other hand, the possibility of the denial of a diploma forced students and teachers to work harder in the basic skills and emphasized the national commitment to excellence in education (Draba & Henderson, 1983).

Other critics of MCT programs raised the objection that such programs led to "teaching to the test" and narrowed the focus of instruction by neglecting skills not on the tests. If this were true, then the overall quality of school programs would be adversely affected. Consequently, there was a need to examine not only the outcomes, but also the extent of school organizational changes that accompanied MCT mandates (Winfield, 1991).

Although the stated purpose of MCT reform was clear, that is, to improve schooling outcomes and to increase accountability, the little information available did not indicate whether implementing MCT programs would result in internal changes in delivery or content of instruction within schools. Some researchers suggested that school reorganizations around content, rather than time, might result from competency testing programs. Others suggested that teachers' and students' expectations might be lowered and that over time, the curriculum would narrow to include only the content tested in the MCT program (Winfield, 1991).

A comparison of local school system implementations of the state testing

programs found that in the highly-intrusive MCT programs tied to graduation requirements teachers and administrators focused more directly on improving student test scores. These same teachers and administrators also altered their curriculum to a greater extent than did their colleagues in states where MCT programs were used mainly for targeting remediation (Corbett & Wilson, 1987).

Another study found a positive relationship between school MCT programs and eighth grade reading proficiency (Winfield, 1990). After adjusting for age, gender, family background, academic behaviors, school-level composition, and SES, students in schools with MCT programs averaged an 8 to 10 percent improvement in scores.

There were latent positive and negative aspects associated with raising standards through implementation of "barrier" or "exit level" tests. The potential positive aspects of raising standards for student achievement were discussed by McDill, Natriello, and Pallas (1985): "Several different lines of research...give some hope that raising standards will lead students to work somewhat harder, at least when the standards are originally quite low, and that greater student effort will lead to somewhat greater student achievement" (p. 424). These positive aspects appeared to be true for some low-achieving students; however, they may not affect the student who was already at risk of leaving school.

The potential negative effects of raising standards also were outlined by McDill, Natriello, and Pallas (1985): "If academic standards are raised and students are not provided substantial additional help to attain them, we predict that socially and academically disadvantaged students will be more likely to experience frustration and failure resulting in notable increases in

absenteeism, truancy, school-related behavior problems, and dropping out" (p. 425). Adherence to rigid graduation requirements may well frustrate some borderline students so much that they quit school.

The controversy continued as proponents of graduation testing argued that scores went up over time and the percentage of failure dropped to "acceptable" levels. They felt scores improved because pupils were motivated, standards were clear, and remediation was provided when needed (Airasian, 1987).

Opponents of graduation testing argued that scores went up because teachers focus disproportionate amounts of instructional time on teaching tested material and because the low scorers, especially those from minority groups, gave up and left school, thereby becoming "ghosts." By their absence, the "ghosts" increased the average scores of the remaining minority pupils (Airasian, 1987).

Other research pointed to a disparity between the failure rates for members of racial or language minorities taking such tests. In many states, hundreds of minority students had failed the graduation test multiple times and had been denied a regular high school diploma that they likely would have received under the prior graduation requirements. The impact of testing programs on these pupils had been substantial (Airasian, 1987).

These tests clearly had more adverse effects on minorities than on members of the majority group. For example, in 1983, blacks in Florida represented 20 percent of the high school seniors in the state, but 57 percent of those who failed the high school graduation examination (Linn, Madaus, & Pedulla, 1982). In Virginia, in 1982, the percentage of first-time test takers

who passed both the math and reading parts of the state graduation test was 82.2 for black students and 96 for white students (Ayars, 1983). Similar results had been found in other states.

Here there was no controversy. The main impact of high school graduation tests was upon the 10 to 15 percent of pupils in most high schools who were academically "at-risk" and upon schools that had large proportions of such "at-risk" pupils. It was this group of at-risk students who were put in greatest jeopardy by graduation testing. They were the ones who suffered the stigma of failure, placement in remedial classes, and, for many, ultimate denial of a regular high school diploma. Further, the curriculum and instructional impact of the tests was likely to be greater on this group than on other, non-risk groups (Airasian, 1987)

If there was a general case against testing, it was this: It was becoming so pervasive in the schools, with the same tests being used for so many different purposes--from diagnosing student learning problems to evaluating programs, from teacher evaluation to system-wide accountability--that test results, curriculum, and instruction were becoming warped, if not corrupted (Hammond & Wise, 1985).

Despite the arguments of educators, the MCT movement appeared to be a national reality, and the marginal students who left school because of the new guidelines would not return unless organizational changes were made (Hamilton, 1986). It became the task of researchers to determine the impact of this movement on student retention and to recommend programs for intervention.

## Virginia's Literacy Passport Test

Barrier or "graduation" tests are simply MCTs used as a basis for promotion or receiving a diploma. Virginia's Literacy Passport Test (LPT) is an MCT which, when failed, not only affects students' academic lives, but limits their participation in extra-curricular activities.

Since July 1988, the key policies of the LPT program have been embodied in the Code of Virginia and the regulations of the State Board of Education. Section 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia, requires all students to earn the literacy passport to (1) be promoted to ninth grade, except those students who are identified as disabled; and (2) obtain a standard diploma (Spagnolo & Redfield, 1993).

Under Virginia's rules, as students progress through high school, they can accrue graduation credits in a "bank." If the students receive their passport during their tenure in high school, these credits apply toward a diploma. However, should they not complete all requirements to receive the literacy passport, they would not receive a diploma; they would receive a certificate of completion.

Along with being a barrier to normal graduation, the "ungraded" status carries another serious stipulation. The Virginia High School League (VHSL), under pressure from the Virginia Board of Education, interpreted unclassified students as ineligible for participation in interscholastic extra-curricular activities; i.e., sports and cheerleading (Chiappinelli, 1993).

## Effects of the LPT on Students

In reviewing dozens of articles on the consequences of failing the LPT, there seemed to be two distinct camps. On the one side were the parents of a

Narrows High School cheerleader. Their daughter was unable to cheer during the 1992-93 school year due to failing the reading portion of the LPT. Her parents brought her case to the attention of Del. Joan Munford, D-Blacksburg, and Munford was considering offering legislation that would eliminate the punitive consequences of the LPT (Edwards, 1992).

Munford agreed that educational standards need to be improved, but said that she didn't think anything was gained by punishing children for failing the tests. Such punishment held the potential for increasing dropouts and hurting children's self-esteem (Edwards, 1992).

Another position was taken by state board members. "I see this as an academic integrity issue," said board member Alvin J. Schexnider. "The term 'student athlete' has the word student before athlete for good reason" (Thiel, 1992, p. B-3). Robley S. Jones, president of the Virginia Education Association, praised the board's move. "Our first priority is learning," he said. "If you have a ninth grader who has yet to pass a sixth-grade test, perhaps he should put aside other activities" (Thiel, 1992, p. B-3).

Emotions ran high on both sides of the debate. Many high school coaches felt that their programs could and did promote academic as well as athletic excellence (Griffin, 1991). Robert Griffin is associate professor of education at the University of Vermont. He advocated the PASS (Promoting Achievement in School through Sports) project. PASS grounded itself in what program developers Joel and Susan Kirsch considered the self-definitions, personal qualities, and skills requisite to success in sports and, in their view, schoolwork as well. Essentially, students identified these characteristics and abilities, extended them, and then applied them to exceed their current

achievement standards in school and in their chosen sport (Griffin, 1991).

To the contrary, Leonard Haynes, assistant secretary for post-secondary education in the U.S. Department of Education, indicated that while student athletes are generally better students, those participating in football and basketball, as a group, were seriously lacking in literacy skills. He rued the fact that schools and communities placed an inordinate emphasis on athletics and that many student athletes were not being prepared for successful participation in various life roles (Haynes, 1990). Haynes argued that parents, principals, the community, guidance counselors, and society in general should be involved in changing the emphasis placed on athletics in high school, and he insisted that all students receive the kind of academic preparation necessary so that they can be successful in life (Haynes, 1990).

#### Need for Further Investigation of the Thesis

After reviewing the literature on minimum competency barrier or graduation tests, as well as literature on the LPT itself, the researcher was curious to see if local students were experiencing the negative outcomes that previous barrier tests seemed to engender. Thus, he set about the task of interviewing students, along with their parents and teachers, to see how failing the LPT had affected them.

Preliminary contacts suggested that the negative effects, as set forth in much of the literature, did not hold for all students when the LPT was used as the measuring stick. In fact, in 1994, 56 percent of Magna Vista students who had been ungraded when they entered ninth grade had since passed all sections of the LPT and were on course toward graduation. The researcher was further intrigued to find out what the motivating factors were that had helped

these students turn their academic careers around. For this reason, four of these "turnarounds" were selected for study.

### Summary

This chapter contains two responses to failing minimum competency barrier tests like Virginia's Literacy Passport Test. These responses touch on some of the positive and negative effects associated with failing such a "barrier" test. The relevant literature addresses both sides of the issue, especially as it pertains to "at-risk" students. It was learned that MCTs can help focus students and teachers on basic skills and that they may provide a basis for diagnosis and remediation of academic problems. However, it was also noted that the MCT can severely limit the content of curriculum, as what is taught becomes ever more focused on the content of the tests. Likewise, the creativity of students and teachers is bound by the consequences of test results. Lastly, it was found that many students may have their attitude and self-concept negatively affected by the stigmas attached to failure of MCTs.

Specific consequences of Virginia's Literacy Passport Test and their effects were reviewed. Two distinct camps had formed concerning how the test was being administered and the consequences of failure. One side viewed the sanctions, especially the no pass, no play rule, as detrimental. The other saw the rigid standards as necessary to improve the quality, and maintain the integrity, of education in Virginia.



## CHAPTER 2

### FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF THE THESIS: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter contains the specific research question, the context of the study, population and sample, data collection tools and procedures, data management techniques, and data analysis.

#### Research Question

Because a positive outcome for students having failed the LPT in eighth grade and going to high school as "ungraded" students is proposed, the primary concern centered on identifying the factors or consequences that might motivate students toward this positive outcome (passing the test and graduating). The specific query became: What factors motivate students to pass the Literacy Passport Test after failing several administrations and being labeled "ungraded?"

#### Context of the Study

The research was conducted on students at Magna Vista High School in Henry County, Virginia. These students had attended Drewry Mason Middle School prior to Magna Vista, failed the LPT at least once (in eighth grade) while at Drewry Mason, and had gone to Magna Vista as "ungraded" students.

These students became the focus of the study because of prior contact with the researcher while they attended Drewry Mason. A primary concern centered around finding out what motivated these students in order to gain better insight into ways to help other students pass the LPT before becoming "ungraded" or at least help others in the ungraded status to pass the LPT.

#### Population and Sample

Magna Vista High School had a total population of 759 students. At the

time of the study (94-95 school year) only 15 of these 759 students had entered Magna Vista as "ungraded" since the inception of the LPT. Two of these 15 students had dropped out of school or transferred and were not considered for the study. Table 1 describes the remaining 13 students.

Table 1  
Population

Student	Gender	Race	Grade	P or F <sup>a</sup>	No. of Takes <sup>b</sup>	Year Passed
A	M	B	11	P	4	92-93
B	M	B	11	F	6	NA
C	M	W	11	F	6	NA
D	M	B	11	P	5	93-94
E	M	B	11	F	6	NA
F	M	B	11	P	5	93-94
G	M	B	11	P	5	93-94
H	M	B	10	F	5	NA
I	F	B	10	P	4	93-94
J	F	B	9	F	4	NA
K	F	B	9	F	4	NA
L	M	W	9	F	4	NA
M	M	B	9	F	4	NA

<sup>a</sup> Passed or failed the LPT at last administration

<sup>b</sup> Number of times students had taken the LPT

From this population, a purposive sample of four students was drawn to study in more depth. Because the literature focused more attention on black students, the focus was narrowed to this group. The researcher also had personal interests, experiences, and curiosity about this group from early

teaching and coaching experiences. In discussions with committee members, it was also decided that further focus on males in eleventh grade who had passed the test after several failed attempts would provide appropriate subjects for the research. Table 2 contains the final sample consisting of Students A, D, F, and G, who were given the names Alex, Derrick, Frederick, and Gregory for the purposes of this study.

Table 2  
SAMPLE

Student	Gender	Race	Grade	P or F <sup>a</sup>	No. of Takes <sup>b</sup>	Year Passed
A	M	B	11	P	4	92-93
D	M	B	11	P	5	93-94
F	M	B	11	P	5	93-94
G	M	B	11	P	5	93-94

<sup>a</sup> Passed or failed the LPT at last administration

<sup>b</sup> Number of times student had taken the LPT

The research question was now further focused to: What factors motivate black, male students to pass the LPT after failing several administrations and being labeled "ungraded?"

#### Data Collection

A very basic and important principle of data collection, multiple sources of evidence, was used in this study. First, three separate interview

instruments were prepared for use with students, teachers, and parents (see Appendix A). A second component was document review. For each student in the study documents were reviewed to study grades, attendance, and discipline records before, during, and after their LPT experience.

### Interview Instruments

Three separate sets of questions were developed to gather information. The student instrument was constructed to get students to trace their academic path chronologically from their earliest experiences with the LPT (usually 6th grade), through remediation at the middle school level, into the experience of being an "ungraded" high school student, and finally to passing the LPT. Questions were developed which would elicit thoughtful, in-depth responses about the students' feelings, attitudes, and motivation toward academics in general and specifically the LPT. Probes, or follow up questions, were strategically placed throughout the instrument to help students reflect more deeply.

A second set of questions was developed for teachers who had remediated the students at the middle and high school levels. This was a two part instrument with questions specifically for teachers at Drewry Mason (questions 1-7) and questions specifically for teachers at Magna Vista (questions 8-12). The Magna Vista teachers were also asked question number two from the instrument which touched on support from home. This instrument moved the teacher along a chronological path from their earliest contact with the student and his LPT remediation to the point where the individual student passed the LPT. Questions on this instrument had a two-fold intent. The researcher was interested in both how the teachers felt during the

students' struggles and their perception of how the students felt throughout the process. Specific questions addressed support from home, student attitude and work habits and any transformation thereof, as well as teacher perceptions of the effects of the ungraded status on students and important motivational factors teachers noticed during the students' tenure with them. As with the student instrument, probes were placed throughout the teacher instrument to help participants give in-depth responses.

The third and final set of questions was developed for the students' parents. Nine questions were constructed in order to get parents to reflect on both their experience with the LPT as well as their children's. As with the teacher instrument, particular attention was paid to parents' feelings as well as their perceptions of their children's feelings throughout the LPT experience. Other questions touched on the type and adequacy of their children's preparation and remediation for the LPT, as well as changes or preparation made at home to help the children pass.

#### Documents

Transcripts of students' grade point averages (GPA) and attendance from eighth grade through their junior year (the year the study was conducted) were collected and examined. Discipline records and transcribed conversations with the assistant principal at Magna Vista gave further insight into student behavior and how that behavior may have changed over the course of the four year period.

#### Reliability and Validity

Several other forms or charts were developed to help assure the reliability of the data collected. Contact and document summary forms (see

Appendix B and C) along with case-level matrices (see Appendices E-H) helped to develop a case study database for each student. This tactic of providing a formal, in-depth, step-by-step organization and documentation of all data collected allowed for direct review of the evidence.

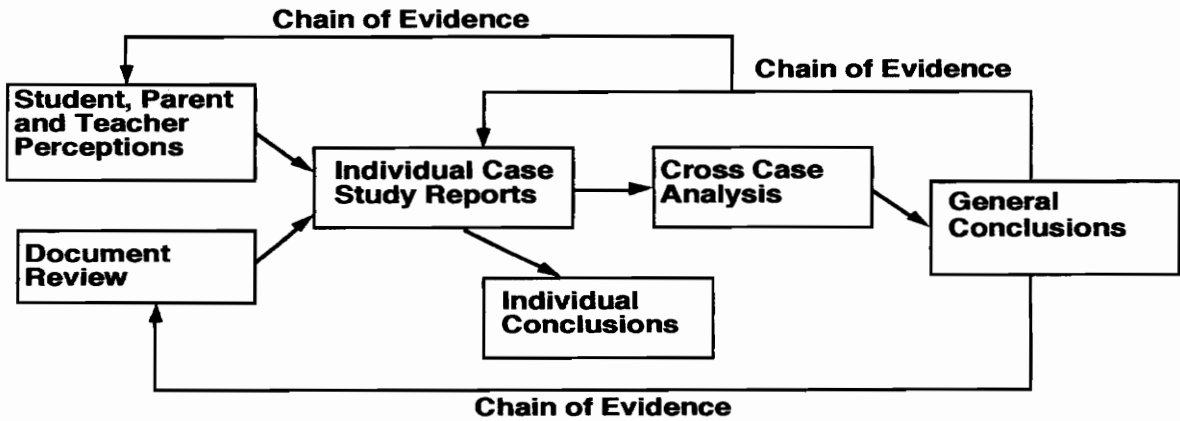
Also, two specific tactics were designed into the study to address construct validity. These were multiple sources of evidence and triangulation (Yin, 1994). By collecting data from students, parents, and teachers, the researcher got a much broader view than from any single-source interview. By triangulating the data gathered, it was possible to converge the data along similar lines of inquiry. This triangulation of sources provided multiple measures of the same phenomenon, in this case, factors related to academic change.

#### Data Organization (Management)

A database was used to manage data and organize information. Interview notes, records, and documents were maintained in a precise manner. By maintaining a comprehensive database, a chain of evidence was also documented. Maintaining a database and providing a chain of evidence were necessary to improve the reliability and reproductibility of the study. The reproductibility of the study depends on sufficient evidence being present to trace the steps from one part of the case to another. The individual case study reports and the cross-case analysis contain relevant portions of the database which reveal the actual evidence and also indicate the circumstances under which it was collected. This evidence is directly associated with the research question and the thesis. Figure 3 shows how the chain of evidence can be traced.

**Figure 3**

**Organizational Flow Diagram**



Using contact and document summary forms, as well as coding and pattern coding (see Appendix D for codes), each case was examined for those factors or variables which had created behavioral, academic, and attitudinal change. For cross-case analysis, matrices were used to stack single case displays for comparison. Pertinent factors or variables were further refined, summarized, and reduced through partitioning so that it became more ordered (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This narrowed focus of factors across cases provided some insight into what changed a student's motivation toward passing the LPT.

**Data Analysis**

This section of the study contains the tools and their specific uses in analyzing the data collected.

1. Contact summary form. This form was used when personal contact was made with a participant in the study. The contact summary was done immediately after the contact, but before the actual transcription of the field

interview. The information gathered here, therefore, was that which made great initial impact on the researcher. It "stuck out" in the researcher's mind. The same form was used for contacts with students, teachers, parents, and administrators. The form was ultimately used to summarize the field contacts using general questions about the main concepts or themes encountered during a visit.

2. Document summary form. The document summary form, like the contact form, allowed the researcher to clarify and summarize any document used during the study. It allowed for a quick assessment of the document's significance without having to review the entire document. Grade-point average (GPA), attendance, and disciplinary information for each student were summarized on a document summary form for rapid retrieval when needed.

3. Coding and pattern coding. Codes were used as data-labeling and data-retrieval devices. By coding cumbersome "chunks" of data they were more easily used on the meta-matrices. Also, after initial interviews took place, it became clear that coding certain recurrent and meaningful (supportive) information would speed up later analysis. As certain themes in the codes became apparent, the codes were grouped into smaller numbers of sets or constructs. For the purposes of this study coding and pattern coding served three important functions:

a. They permitted reduction of large amounts of data into smaller number of analytic units.

b. They provided a means for the researcher to get into analysis during data collection, helping further field work to be more focused.



c. They allowed the researcher to lay the groundwork for cross-case analysis by exposing common themes and motivational factors.

4. Single-case matrix. This matrix allowed the researcher to see large amounts of information on one or more participants at a single glance. Single case matrices were constructed for all participants with coded entries for each of eight categories (see Appendix E). The eight categories were established from the interview instrument and included experience with the LPT, type of help, feelings in eighth grade, feelings about failure, feelings about being ungraded, changes in attitude or study habits after failing, feelings when the LPT was passed, and motivational factors for passing. The basic principle was the inclusion of all relevant (condensed) data. These single case matrices allowed for quick comparisons of data both within and across cases.

5. Partitioned matrix. From the original matrix the data were partitioned further so that similarities between cases and variables of interest became clearer. The partitioning of data actually involved coding responses for the students, his parents, his middle school teacher, and his high school teacher in the eight categories mentioned above on a single matrix (see Appendix F). Each partitioned matrix allowed for an even more refined within-case comparison of data. The partitioned matrix also allowed for validation of student responses as they were compared to other respondents (parents and teachers) within the matrix.

6. Stacked matrix. The stacked matrix included student, parent, and teacher data for each of the four students within a single matrix (see Appendix G). The stacked matrix permitted cross-case comparisons of data within a single matrix. For example, parental responses for all four students were

stacked to compare data. This allowed the researcher to see patterns within the parental responses and focus on these important variables.

### Summary

Succinctly stated, four black, male high school juniors who had failed the Literacy Passport Test, been classified as "ungraded," and then passed the test during a subsequent administration were interviewed along with their parents and certain relevant teachers. An interview technique was used with specific questions generated from the major research question and thesis. Further evidence for conclusions was provided by documents, including grades, attendance reports, and discipline records.

Using multiple sources of evidence and triangulating the data improved the validity of the study, while reliability was increased by maintaining a chain of evidence through compiling a precise database.

By using contact and document summary forms, along with matrices and coding, certain variables which might affect positive academic change (ultimately passing the LPT) were identified. By stacking and partitioning the single case matrix displays, a cross-case analysis was done to further focus on pertinent factors or variables. As the variables became more refined and ordered some summary conclusions were drawn.

## CHAPTER 3

### INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY REPORTS

These case study reports were compiled using data from interview transcripts and documents detailing academic achievement and attendance during the period studied (This period varied by student and is detailed in the individual reports.).

#### Case Study Report for Alex

This case study report chronologically traces Alex's scholastic endeavors from the time he entered sixth grade at Drewry Mason Middle School (DMMS) in the fall of 1989 through the end of his eleventh grade year at Magna Vista High School (spring 1995). The report was compiled using information obtained through interviews with the student, his parents, and teachers from both the middle and high school levels (see Appendix I) as well as using documents on grade point average and attendance from grades six through eleven. A final source of information came from an interview with the assistant principal at Magna Vista High School. This interview focused on the student's department since entering Magna Vista.

While the report touches on various areas of academic achievement, its focus is on the attempts of Alex to pass the three sections of Virginia's Literacy Passport Test .

The final section of the report contains some summary conclusions as to the reasons (factors) for Alex finally passing the LPT as a freshman after failing several administrations earlier in his academic career. Graphic representations of both change in grade point average and attendance help to provide a visual illustration of Alex's overall scholastic improvement.

### Scholastic Trials and Endeavors

Alex's first experiences with the Literacy Passport Test were during his sixth grade year at Drewry Mason Middle School. Due to low Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores, Alex had been placed in a remedial reading class a DMMS. His teacher in this class (T<sub>1</sub> Rdg Rem) recalls that he was extremely shy and withdrawn at this time. It was in this remedial class that Alex began preparing for the LPT. Due to his extreme quiet nature his remedial reading teacher stated that it was very difficult to get feedback on what he was actually capable of doing academically. Unofficial testing showed that Alex fell in the "slow learner" category and probably would not qualify for any special education services. He continued to struggle academically throughout sixth grade as his grades for the year attest (69.6 avg.). By his own admission Alex did not take the test seriously in sixth grade, and despite remedial help he failed all sections of the test.

Due to his poor performance on the LPT in sixth grade Alex was placed in a self-contained seventh grade class. This class was specifically for remediation of LPT skills and was composed of students who had failed two or all three parts of the LPT in sixth grade. Parental contact was made prior to the start of this class to explain the need for remediation and the importance of the LPT. From an interview with Alex's parents (see Appendix I) it was discovered that while the school staff felt that they were explaining these needs and consequences quite well, these parents really did not understand what the LPT or the remediation were all about. They simply knew the school was attempting to help their son and they approved of that. The self-contained seventh grade environment helped Alex to improve his overall grade point

average (75.7), although he still failed all sections of the LPT.

During the spring of 1991 (Alex's seventh grade year), due to his continuing academic struggles, Alex was officially tested and found ineligible for special education as determined by a Henry County Schools eligibility committee. As predicted, Alex scored in a range that labeled him a "slow learner." It was decided by the administration at DMMS, along with consent from his parents, that Alex's best chance for success would be in the alternative education program.

It was during his eighth grade year in alternative education that his teachers saw some dramatic changes in Alex. His remedial reading teacher, who was now working with him for the third year, stated that it was during his eighth grade year that she saw positive changes in attitude. "He became more outgoing and talkative in the small-group situation of alternative education," she related. His alternative education teacher concurred, saying, "Alex's work habits seemed to improve, as did his effort as the year went on." Alex's father recalls the eighth grade alternative education experience as the turning point in his son's academic career. He explained, "The class at Drewry Mason is where he turned around." He continued, saying, "That last year he was down at Drewry Mason is where I saw the most improvement. Those classes seemed to help him more than anything. Then, when he went to Magna Vista, those habits took over. Those special courses helped him to get more organized. They helped teach him how to study." In fact, when asked what he thought was the single greatest motivating factor in getting his son to pass the Literacy Passport Test, the father said, "The last year down at Drewry Mason -- those courses."

While his teachers and parents recalled the alternative education program as a tremendous boost toward both academic and attitudinal improvement, Alex's memories were focused in a different area. When asked about the help he received at Drewry Mason, Alex responded, "Coach F helped me a lot." Coach F was a teacher at Drewry Mason Middle School who also coached the varsity basketball team at Magna Vista High School (as an assistant). Alex remembered, " Coach F took me in his office and talked to me a whole lot. He told me he really wanted me to play basketball. He would help me with verbs and writing sentences because that was one part I had failed. He taught me how to do that stuff."

The remedial reading teacher at DMMS recalled his infatuation with the game of basketball. In her interview she noted, "One way to get Alex into a discussion was to ask him about his brother, who at the time was playing college basketball. Alex said he was going to do this also." She went on to add, "With his academic record to that point, I did not see that as a possibility." However, later in the interview she injected, "I was hopeful that with basketball as an incentive he would pass the LPT."

Alex's mother, likewise, knew of the importance of basketball to her son's life. She spoke about her oldest son's athletic exploits (three consecutive state basketball championships while at Drewry Mason High School) and Alex's desire to follow in his footsteps. She said, "He's always been into sports. I think he began to realize he couldn't play sports if he didn't bring his grades up."

So, with improved study habits and attitude, and with playing basketball at Magna Vista as an incentive, Alex moved through his eighth grade year

toward yet another rematch with the LPT. As the test date approached, Alex's teachers had mixed emotions. While his alternative education teacher was "confident", his reading teacher was "uncertain" and "anxious". Alex's parents still didn't fully understand what was taking place, and Alex himself was somewhat apathetic, although he does admit to a certain amount of confusion about the consequences. When asked during his interview if anyone had explained the consequences (that he couldn't participate in sports), he stated, "Yeah, but I didn't think they were talking about Magna Vista High School basketball."

While his improved study habits and attitude raised his grade point average again (82.2), he admits that he did not prepare as he should have, nor did he give his best effort on the test itself. He passed one of the three sections of the LPT (math). He failed reading and writing again and headed to Magna Vista feeling scared and alone. But, while he said he was "ashamed" for his poor effort, he was "determined" to improve yet again and was going to pass the remaining two sections at their next administration.

Alex entered Magna Vista High School in the fall of 1992 as an "ungraded" student. This label was placed on all students entering Magna Vista High School without passing all three sections of the LPT. Due to their status all "ungraded" students were grouped into one homeroom for tracking purposes. These "ungraded" students were identified on all official documents, including absentee lists, with an "NG" which stood for "no grade".

Along with this status came two paramount consequences. First, "ungraded" students would receive no credit for their course work until they had completed the requirements of the LPT. Second, and most devastating, at

least to Alex, "ungraded" students could not participate in any extracurricular activity sanctioned by the Virginia High School League. This included varsity and junior varsity basketball. Another consequence involved taking certain remedial courses to help in future attempts at passing the LPT. This "ungraded" status and the stigmas it imposed became Alex's greatest motivator for passing the LPT, at least in his mind and that of his high school remedial English teacher.

Alex spoke of how "out of place" and "embarrassed" he felt during his ninth grade year. Early in the year he felt that he might be sent back to Drewry Mason. The worst feeling, he said, was of being "left out". He had been left out of regular classes, a normal homeroom, and any participation in sports. In his interview he said, "I thought I wasn't really over here [Magna Vista]. I didn't have a grade. I thought about a whole lot of things. I thought they might send me back to Drewry Mason. I knew I had to get it out of the way. I had to study for it every day."

When asked how his classmates reacted, he responded, "I tried not to tell them. I wanted them to think I was with them. I was keepin' it to myself, but it was getting to me inside." Further probing about whether any of his friends found out about his status indicates just how difficult this situation was for this young man. When asked about his friends, he looked down and answered, "Yeah, the ones I was in class with. They would see that 'NG.' They asked me what it meant. I had to tell them I hadn't passed the test. They would ask me if that was why I wasn't playing basketball. When I would tell them yes, they would just look at me funny."

When asked about his parents reaction to the "ungraded" status, Alex



said, "They were really upset. You know my brother was a really good basketball player and they wanted me to play just like him. But, I couldn't play that year." His parents, however, still seemed more confused than anything else. His father stated, "We knew something wasn't right." His mother added, "I didn't understand fully."

Much of this confusion arose from the fact that Alex kept his failure secret for much of the first semester of ninth grade. He said, "Well, you know, I didn't want them to know it was that bad. I tried to keep them out of it. I kept it to myself. I shouldn't have, I guess, I should have told them sooner."

When he finally did tell them everything, he said, "They just looked at me real hard. It really got me down because I was working, trying. They told me to keep working and try to do better and to make better grades."

His ninth grade remedial English teacher also noticed the effect the "ungraded" status had. When asked about this in her interview, she stated, "His self-esteem was affected in a very negative way."

As Alex progressed through this very difficult year he made some significant changes in how he perceived and prepared for his academic endeavors. His teachers, past and present, spoke of a more determined, more serious attitude about school. Alex spoke about improving his daily work habits both at school and at home. When asked if it were just a case of working harder on the test, he responded, "No sir, it was everywhere!" He likewise spoke of harder, more serious studying. His parents helped him with this. "They made me study harder at home," he stated. He continued, "Usually I would come home and watch television, but after they knew [about the failure] they made me do my homework first." His mother gave Alex much of the credit

for his turnaround. "From what I could see, it was just him. His grades started improving and he got more interested in his courses." When asked if the pressure of a year without basketball helped to produce change, his mother replied, "I think that had a lot to do with it." His father continued to emphasize the changes that had begun in eighth grade as reasons for his scholastic success (a grade point average of 75, with no F's in ninth grade, improving to an 80.1 in tenth grade).

Finally, in the spring of 1993, Alex passed the writing and reading sections of the LPT. When asked how he felt at hearing he had passed, Alex responded, "Man. Unbelievable. The first thing I wanted to do was see what grade I was in. That was the number one thing. I talked to Mrs. W, one of my guidance counselors, and she said I was going to the tenth grade. That's when I started realizing [what had happened]. That's when I got really happy. Then the head varsity basketball coach at Magna Vista started telling me I could play. He wanted me to play all summer to get ready. I was really happy because I didn't have to worry about it any more."

He also said that his mother was relieved it was over. She responded to a question about how she felt when her son passed, by saying, "Oh man! You don't even have to ask that, I mean perfect!"

While teachers were quite happy, some wished it could have happened sooner, so that Alex could have avoided that tough ninth grade year. Overall, though, the mood was one of joy and celebration.

The final, and perhaps (for the researcher) most important, question asked of each of the participants was, "What factors do you think motivated Alex to pass the LPT?" The responses here were most interesting and a bit

unexpected.

While the three teachers interviewed all responded that basketball was the number one factor, his high school teacher also placed great emphasis on the pressure exerted by the "ungraded" status. And, while Alex's mother responded robustly that basketball and the encouragement of the varsity basketball coach were the greatest motivating factors, the father stuck with the alternative education class at DMMS as the top motivator. Lastly, and most interesting of all, is the statement made by Alex himself. This student whose life had revolved around basketball and who had dreamed of a college basketball career since sixth grade responded to the query by stating, "The single greatest motivating factor for me was to be back with my classmates. Not just basketball, but to be in tenth grade with my classmates and no longer an 'NG.' Basketball was very important, but getting rid of that 'NG' was most important."

With the pain and embarrassment of the "ungraded" status behind him, Alex continued to improve academically. His grade point average rose, as his father alluded to earlier, from a 75 in ninth grade to an 80 in tenth grade. With a change at Magna Vista for the 1994-95 school term from traditional to block scheduling, Alex completed five courses (for credit) during the first semester. His grade point average rose to an 82. With 16.5 credits, Alex is well on his way to graduating with a regular diploma. He is also in line to start at forward for Magna Vista's basketball team as a junior.

#### Behavioral Record

In an interview with the assistant principal at Magna Vista High School, Alex was characterized as a "loner" who was "extremely quiet and shy." This

information mirrored that given by teachers in earlier contacts. The assistant principal went on to state, "Alex has never been a discipline problem." He continued, "My only contact with Alex was a situation in which he was coming out late to the bus in the afternoon. It was annoying for the driver, but I took care of it without any problem."

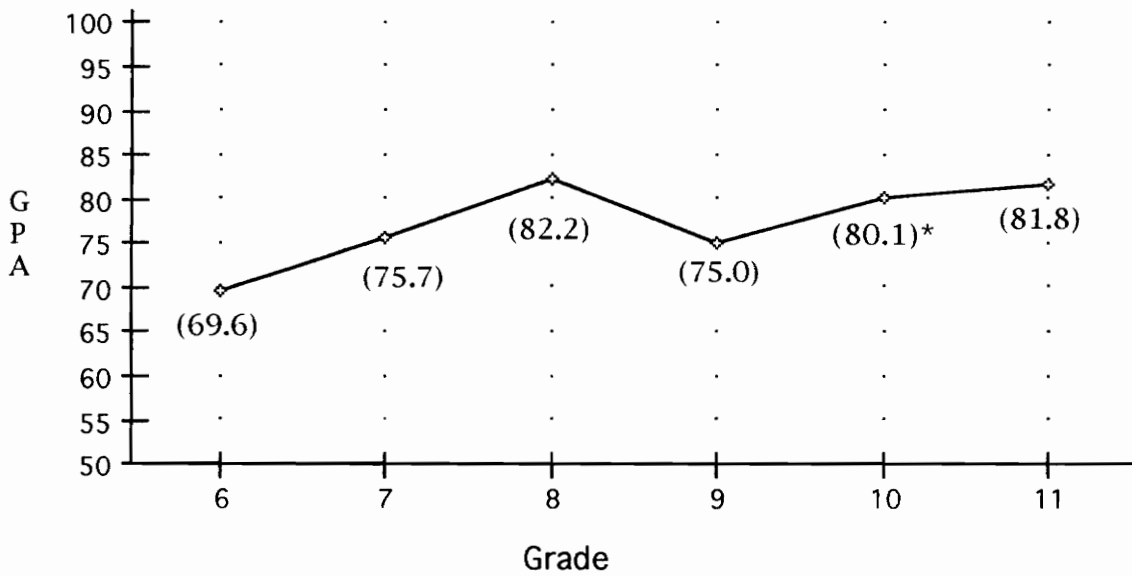
Everyone interviewed agreed that Alex's excellent deportment and overall good nature were significant factors in having so many people work so hard with him. This help, in turn, helped to improve his academic performance and helped him to pass the LPT.

### Summary

Alex was a quiet hard working student who entered the sixth grade lacking some of the skills necessary to be academically successful at that level. He was fortunate to be placed in remedial classroom settings where he not only received academic assistance, but his self-concept was buoyed as well.

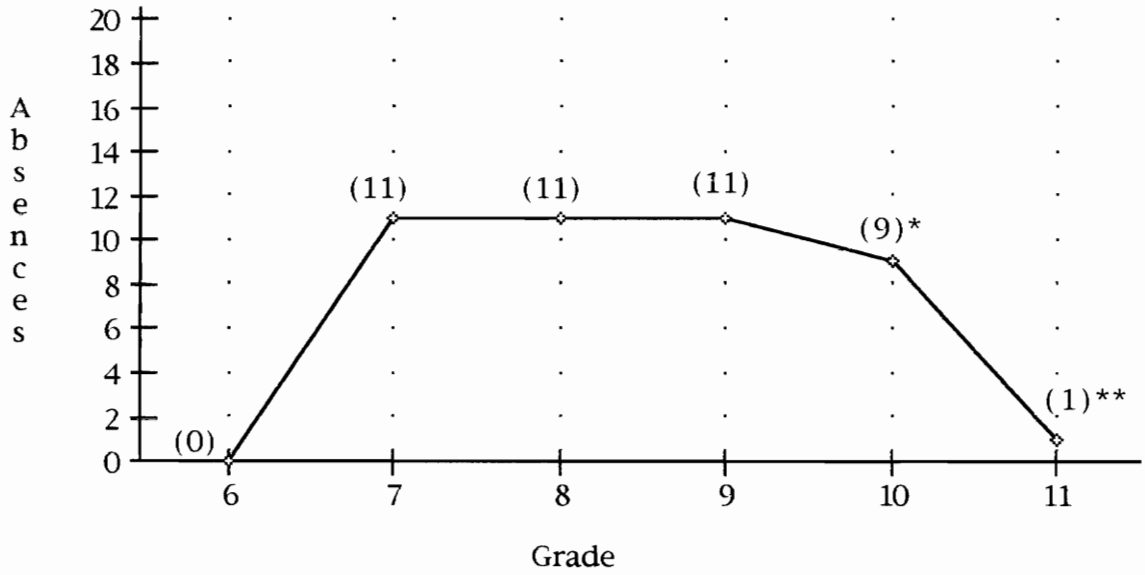
Alex struggled with the "ungraded" status at Magna Vista and the many stigmas that came with the "NG" label. These stigmas, along with the embarrassment they engendered, acted as a motivator for Alex rather than a deterrent or barrier. The special classes, special homeroom, the "NG" label, peer and family pressures and queries, along with exclusion from the sport he loved (basketball), led Alex to change his ideas and attitude about school. As his priorities changed, his work and study habits improved. He began to understand that improved daily work habits would make test taking (including the LPT) a less harrowing experience. As shown in Figures 4 and 5, Alex's success has been a slow, yet steady, climb to a level which makes all those who had suffered and celebrated with him proud beyond mere words.

Figure 4  
Change in Grade Point Average  
(GPA) by Grade for Alex



\* Completed Literacy Passport Test requirements during this term.

Figure 5  
Number of Absences by Grade  
for Alex



\* Completed Literacy Passport Test requirements during this term.

\*\* This only covers the first semester (Sept.-Jan.).

## Case Study Report for Derrick

This case study report chronologically traces Derrick's scholastic endeavors from the time he entered sixth grade at Drewry Mason Middle School (fall 1990) through the end of his eleventh grade year at Magna Vista High School (spring 1995). The report was compiled using information obtained through interviews with the student, his parents, and teachers from both the middle and high school levels (see Appendix I) as well as using documents on grade point average and attendance from grades six through eleven. A final source of information came from an interview with the assistant principal at Magna Vista High School. This interview focused on the student's department since entering Magna Vista.

While the report touches on various areas of academic achievement, its focus is on the attempts of Derrick to pass the three sections of Virginia's Literacy Passport Test.

The final section of the report contains some summary conclusions as to the reasons (factors) for Derrick finally passing the LPT as a sophomore after failing several administrations earlier in his academic career. Graphic representations of both change in grade point average and attendance help to provide a visual illustration of Derrick's overall scholastic journey.

### Scholastic Trials and Endeavors

Derrick's first experience with the Literacy Passport Test (LPT) was as a sixth grader at Drewry Mason Middle School (DMMS). Early in his sixth grade year Derrick was experiencing tremendous difficulty with his academic performance in the regular classroom. His reading and writing skills were very weak, and although he tried very hard, he was failing all of his classes at

the end of the first six-weeks grading period.

His parents met with the school's principal and Derrick's teachers shortly after the first marking period to discuss options for him. The school's reading specialist had already been working with Derrick and had done some preliminary testing on him. She presented her findings at the meeting. After a lengthy deliberation, during which Derrick's parents expressed their frustration at earlier attempts to get help (Derrick was tested and found ineligible for special education services in elementary school.), it was decided that a formal request would be made to retest Derrick to determine his eligibility for special education services. It was also decided that in the interim, Derrick would be placed in DMMS's alternative education program (Admission to this program merely requires joint parental and school administrative consent.). Derrick would also continue to see the school's reading specialist on a daily basis to help remediate his reading and writing skills.

The eligibility meeting to determine if Derrick would qualify for special education was a memorable one for all involved (The researcher was the principal at DMMS at that time.). Derrick fell a single point outside of the range which would have allowed him to be eligible for services. Since this was Derrick's second attempt at eligibility, retesting would not be considered. Likewise, "bending" the rules was out of the question according to the special education hierarchy. Needless to say, this created considerable tension, frustration, and down right hostility among the participants. Both teachers and parents cried, but to no avail. Derrick was not eligible for any special education services.



Derrick continued to work hard in both his alternative classes and with the reading specialist. The reading teacher noted, "The only program the school could offer was alternative education. After being placed in the program, I saw a totally different attitude develop toward school. Derrick was trying very hard and was able to see some success in this program due to the 'small group' instruction. I saw tremendous change in self-esteem [positive] although little academic improvement."

The alternative education teacher spoke in his interview about Derrick's hard work, but also added, "He did not express much in the way of feelings when not able to complete classwork or at failing most of his work. During that first year [sixth grade] I'm not sure if he was totally aware of what he was experiencing with his inability to complete assignments. Derrick gave me the feeling he was not concerned or, perhaps, that he thought it [failure] was OK [due to past experiences]."

Derrick took and failed all three parts of the LPT in sixth grade. His overall grade point average (GPA), even with the special instruction, was a 73.7 (75 was a passing score.).

The following year (1991-92), Derrick remained in the alternative education program. He began the year classified as a seventh grader due to his special (alternative) status. This year marked a turning point in Derrick's academic career in some respects. It was during this year that both Derrick and his parents first recall him receiving help on the LPT. When asked about being helped on the LPT, Derrick responded, "Mr. F helped me my last year at Drewry Mason. He taught me math. He really taught me all of it. He kept talking to me about passing it." He continued by saying, "I tried to help

myself. I studied harder. I read things and worked on my writing."

His parents concurred, "Mr. F was very helpful at Drewry Mason Middle School," the father explained. When asked how, he continued, "He was Derrick's alternative education teacher. He mostly encouraged him to study every day and to do what he needed to do to get prepared for the test."

Both of Derrick's teachers noted improved attitude and study habits during the 1991-92 school year. "He was very excited about getting an opportunity to go to high school. He wanted to do well," remembered his reading specialist. The alternative education teacher added, "Derrick maintained constant work habits throughout the school year. He would start an assignment and work on it constantly until time was up."

Due to his improved attitude, work before and after school, and sheer tenacity, Derrick was able to fulfill enough requirements (objectives) during one year to complete both the seventh and eighth grade alternative programs.

While these accomplishments were a boon to self-esteem, poise, and confidence, they had little effect on the results of the LPT. The LPT is not an open book test. Tenacity and persistence helped very little, and he could get none of the one-on-one assistance that had so improved his in-class performance. Derrick's GPA had risen to a 79.4, which under new grading policies was an "average" score or a "C"; however, when his LPT scores returned in May he had again failed all three sections. His reading and math scores were both a mere two points from a passing score (Needing 250 to pass, he scored 248 on both.).

While Derrick says that he truly did not understand the consequences of his failure, his parents say he was very hurt. His father was very troubled and

deeply concerned as to "whether he was going to pick up and do the necessary things to accomplish what he needed to accomplish." Both teachers were very disappointed, although not surprised. They both said that Derrick took the test with confidence, but had shown all year that when left on his own he had great difficulty in repeating the success he experienced in joint (teacher and student) efforts. Derrick now headed to Magna Vista High School as an "ungraded" student.

A foreboding beginning to Derrick's ninth grade (1992-93) year was his attempt to register in September. "When we registered him in the fall, we had trouble going into [actually finding] his homeroom class [All "ungraded" students have homeroom together.]. That's when I knew he had to do something to get back into the grade he belonged in," his father stated.

When asked about the "ungraded" status, Derrick responded, "It made me feel different. Everybody else was in a grade and I was an 'NG' [no grade]. I would look at the absentee list and see 'NG' by my name. That made me want to pass." After probing a bit further, he added, "I wanted to be in a regular class. Our homeroom had only eight people in it. Everyone else had 20 in their homeroom, 'NG' was rough."

When pressed for other drawbacks to the "ungraded" status, Derrick continued, "I didn't really take it that seriously until the coaches started telling me what I couldn't do because I had failed. Any sport I went out for I was told I couldn't play because I had failed that test. I couldn't even manage or anything."

Questions about peer reaction to the "ungraded" status produced a very emotional response. "They would ask me what was wrong. I got tired of people

asking why I had 'NG' by my name. They asked a lot of questions about it. My friends who were athletes would try out for a sport and not see me out. They would ask me why I wasn't trying out. That bothered me," he said.

His parents could sense how he felt. "I don't think he wanted to be there ['ungraded' status], and he knew what he had to do to get out of it," his father said. His mother also added, "The sports really bothered him but otherwise he seemed to go with the flow." Even his high school teachers sensed that he was very "self-conscious" about the "ungraded" status.

Due to overcrowding in the Magna Vista alternative education program, Derrick spent the ninth grade in the regular program with some remedial help in language arts. The lack of one-on-one instruction, which Derrick had become accustomed to proved to be a difficult adjustment. "It was two steps forward and one step back throughout the year because of poor study habits," said his ninth grade language arts teacher. Derrick's grades suffered tremendously as a result of his program change. He failed four of his six first semester classes and repeated that performance second semester. His overall GPA was a dismal 64.25. He again failed all three sections of the LPT.

At this point it would have been very easy to give up. However, as his ninth grade year was drawing to a close, Derrick got an unexpected visit. The head football coach stopped him in the hall one day. "He wanted me to play football here at Magna Vista. He told me he wanted me to study and do my work because he wanted to see me on the football field," Derrick related. "That really inspired me," he added.

Over the summer and during the first six weeks of the 1993-94 school term Derrick and his family made some significant changes in their outlook

toward academics and the LPT. His parents spoke of better coping with academic setbacks and of applying less pressure to pass the LPT. "I learned to accept him and not apply as much pressure as I did in the early years. We gave him time to make up his mind that it was time to do the work," said his father.

However, it was the changes that Derrick implemented that turned his academic career around. "Mostly I think I was kinda young back in middle school. I didn't really want to study on my own. After Coach talked to me about the LPT I got my act together. I started studying. I did my best every day until I passed the test," he recalled. His mother agreed, "I think my son's whole problem was preparing before hand. He's like the one minute man. If he had a test tomorrow, he'd study tonight. He'd been like that from day one."

Derrick went on to explain how his daily habits changed. "I was doing extra work, practice work, and math work to prepare for the test," he said. "I was writing paragraphs, reading, a little bit of everything. If it was on the test, they [teachers] gave it to me and I tried to do it." Derrick also mentioned using better study environments, like his room at home, instead of the living room (where the TV is found), and the library at school, instead of the study hall room (where his friends were playing and laughing).

When asked about his work habits during 1993-94 (tenth grade), his remedial English teacher said, "Much improved. We were much more optimistic in October than we had been in February."

The improved daily work habits, better study environment, and increased preparation time all proved successful. Perhaps the move out of alternative education was helpful as well, as more independent action was

necessary due to the lack of the one-on-one "crutch".

In October, Derrick passed the reading and writing sections of the LPT. He successfully completed the math test in February 1994. At that time he was classified as a "regular" tenth grade student. His GPA for the 1993-94 school year improved almost ten points to 73.9, and of his 16 total semester courses, he only failed one (second semester biology).

Derrick made the varsity football team in September 1994, and played wide receiver and defensive back for the entire year. Due to a change in scheduling at Magna Vista for the 1994-95 term from traditional to block scheduling, Derrick took seven courses for credit during the first semester. From his performance, it seems that the lack of motivation provided by the "ungraded" status has negatively affected Derrick's academic progress. He failed four of his seven courses, and with only 12 credits toward graduation faces another struggle to graduate with the "regular" diploma he sought while labeled "NG."

#### Behavioral Record

Derrick's behavioral record was an extremely bright and consistent aspect of an otherwise motley scholastic career. In an interview with the assistant principal at Magna Vista High School, Derrick was called an "excellent" citizen who had been involved in absolutely no discipline problems. The assistant principal continued, "Derrick carries himself very well. He is a likeable young man. All of his teachers like him. The students all like him as well. Since becoming eligible for football, he is even more conscientious and well mannered. This excellent deportment can be directly traced to his parents." After years of working with them, both the researcher

and the Magna Vista assistant principal agree that both parents have played a dramatic role in molding Derrick's character. "I used to work with his mother," the assistant principal said. "I see her quite often now, and I always compliment him to them when we meet," he added.

As with Alex, Derrick was spoken of highly, in terms of his demeanor, by all teachers and his parents when interviewed. This may well be a key to Derrick's future success and can be a good lesson for other students to learn. Teachers and administrators will end up bending over backwards to help Derrick reach his goals due to his positive attitude and excellent rapport. This can make a great deal of difference for a marginal student and may give Derrick just the edge he needs to succeed in graduating on time.

### Summary

Derrick was a quiet, well-mannered young man who entered sixth grade severely deficient in the skills necessary to be successful at that level. After several months of disappointment and discouragement for both student and parents, Derrick was placed in the alternative education classroom at Drewry Mason Middle School. Derrick found success and improved self-confidence while in alternative education.

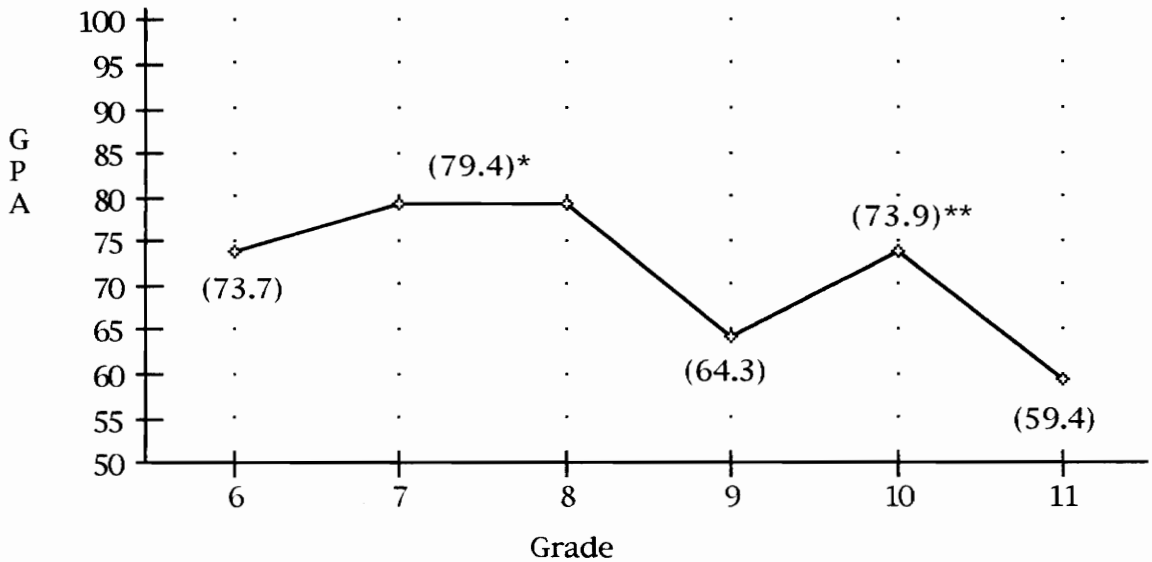
As he entered Magna Vista High School Derrick struggled with both the lack of one-on-one instruction he was accustomed to in the alternative education classroom and the uncertainties of his "ungraded" status. However, slowly and with help from teachers, parents, coaches, and peers Derrick was able to pass the LPT by the end of his sophomore year. The many stigmas and barriers he faced motivated and inspired him to continue to improve academically. Especially motivating were the embarrassment of the "NG" label

and his ineligibility for sports participation.

Since passing the LPT, and no longer having these strong motivators for continued improvement, Derrick has let his work habits and GPA slide a bit. He has the tools to build his dream and reach his goals. It will be up to him to use these "weapons" to battle back to the level he aspired to when in the "ungraded" status.

Figures 6 and 7 portray a roller coaster scholastic career.

Figure 6  
Change in Grade Point Average  
(GPA) by Grade for Derrick

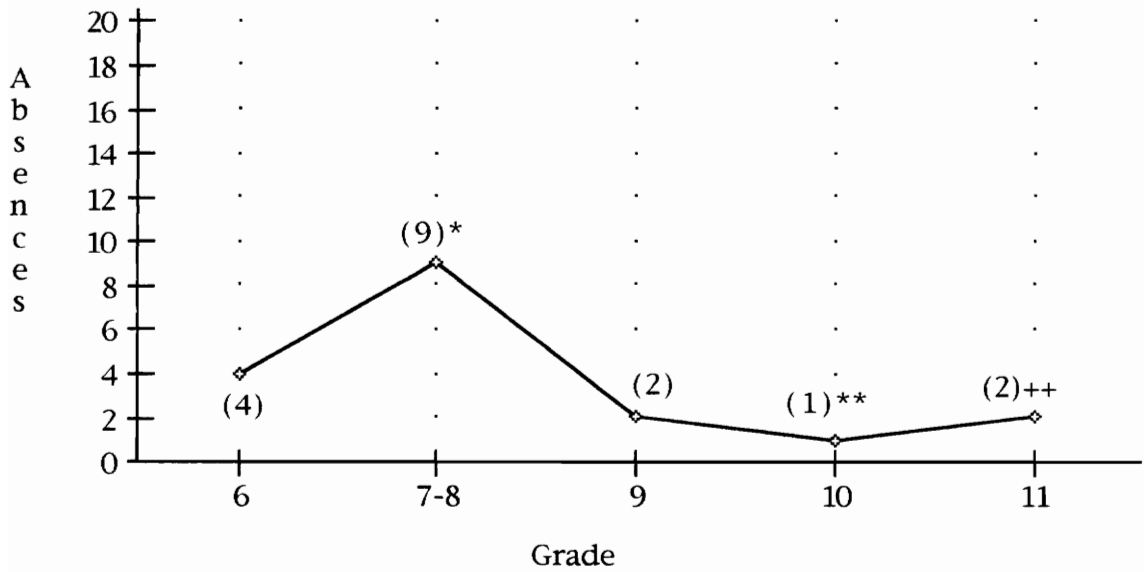


\*Derrick completed seventh and eighth grade objectives in one year while in alternative education at Drewry Mason Middle School.

\*\*Completed Literacy Passport Test requirements during this term.



Figure 7  
Number of Absences by Grade  
for Derrick



\* Derrick was absent 9 days while completing seventh and eighth grade objectives in alternative education at Drewry Mason Middle School during the 1991-92 school year.

\*\* Completed Literacy Passport Test requirements during this term.

++ This only covers the first semester (Sept.-Jan.).

## Case Study Report for Frederick

This case study report chronologically traces Frederick's scholastic endeavors from the time he entered eighth grade at Drewry Mason Middle School (fall 1991) through the end of his eleventh grade block at Magna Vista High School (spring 1995). Due to his transfer from out-of-state, Frederick's experiences with the LPT began during eighth grade. For this reason the report begins with an examination of his efforts during this term (1991-92). The report was compiled using information obtained through interviews with the student, his parents, and teachers from both the middle and high school levels (see Appendix I) as well as using documents on grade point average and attendance from grades eight through eleven. A final source of information came from an interview with the assistant principal at Magna Vista High School. This interview focused on the student's deportment since entering Magna Vista.

While the report touches on various areas of academic achievement, its focus is on the attempts of Frederick to pass the three sections of Virginia's Literacy Passport Test.

The final section of the report contains some summary conclusions as to the reasons (factors) for Frederick finally passing the LPT as a sophomore after failing several administrations earlier in his academic career. Graphic representations of both change in grade point average and attendance help to provide a visual illustration of Frederick's overall scholastic journey.

### Scholastic Trials and Endeavors

Frederick's first experience with the Literacy Passport Test (LPT) was as an eighth grader at Drewry Mason Middle School. While registering in the fall

of 1991, the guidance counselor at Drewry Mason explained that Frederick was required to take the Literacy Passport Test. The test composition, as well as certain consequences for failure, were explained at that time. Even with the explanation Frederick was not clear on the effect LPT failure could have on his future.

When asked about his understanding of the consequences of failure, Frederick responded, "I'm not sure. They told me I had to take it when I entered Henry County Schools. Other than that I don't know." Likewise, his mother did not know about the consequences. "No, I didn't," she replied. "I got a letter and it said he was not considered a ninth grader until he passed that Literacy Test. I told him then, you gotta buckle down."

Frederick's middle school physical education teacher, who also coached him on the eighth grade football team, echoed these feelings. "He worked fairly well," the coach replied. "But, I don't think he knew what to expect from that test. He didn't really think much about the test. I don't think he realized the consequences of that test."

By his own admission, Frederick did not take the test seriously in the spring of his eighth grade year (1992). When questioned about his effort on that first administration, he responded, "I didn't feel anything. I didn't care about it."

Several factors contributed to Frederick's apathetic and therefore sub-par performance on the LPT in eighth grade. Frederick's transfer to Drewry Mason had not been an easy transition. "First of all, he didn't want to come here anyway," his mother relates. "We moved here from F. He really wanted to stay down there. It was much better, though, for him to be here. Even the

counselor down there at his old school said it was better for him to get out of that environment."

His mother continued, "There were problems between his father and I. We weren't together and that bothered him. I think he would have passed it the first time if his father had been here. That had a lot to do with it."

Even with his personal distractions Frederick ended his eighth grade year with a 77.8 grade point average. On the LPT he scored 276 (reading) and 267 (math) respectively. These scores were quite good, however, his writing score of 247 was slightly below passing (250).

Due to this failure Frederick entered Magna Vista as an "ungraded" student. When asked about the failure, Frederick responded, "When I took it, and found out I failed it, and I couldn't play sports at Magna Vista, I was really down." His mother and his coach agreed. "He was so disappointed. He was really looking forward to playing football," Mom said. His coach added, "He really felt bad [when he failed]. I think he wished he had put more into it."

Although Frederick kept his feelings hidden from teachers and peers at school, the "ungraded" status and its consequences and stigmas hurt him. His ninth grade developmental reading teacher stated, "He displayed little or no sign of being affected by the 'ungraded' status." Yet, Frederick explains, "It was like I wasn't in ninth grade at all. I didn't feel like I was in a regular grade." He further detailed his discomposure stating, "When I would be absent, I would look at the absentee sheet and see all those kids with grades by their names. That NG by my name made me feel strange. I didn't feel right."

Frederick's mother also recounted his pain. "He felt very bad. You're coming to school and doing your work and then you don't get credit for it

because you haven't passed that test. That hurts. It really does," she said. Mom then went on to elaborate her own feelings, saying, "I was disappointed. I knew he could do it. Especially when I found out he wasn't considered a ninth grader. He couldn't play football and I was just very disappointed." She added, "It hurt me, at first, because I knew he could do it. He was just slackin' off, or he just wasn't interested in it. Then I said, 'well you can't play football,' and that hurt him. I always wanted him to play and he wanted to play too. His other friends were playing, but he couldn't play. That was tough."

The 1992-93 school year was a difficult one for Frederick. Even with remedial help in reading and language arts, his grades dropped to a 73.7 average. Frederick took the writing section of the LPT for the second time in the spring of 1992. His score on that administration was one point higher than on the previous test. The score of 248 left him two points below passing. It seemed Frederick faced another year branded as "ungraded."

However, during the spring of 1993, Frederick and his mother made a commitment to one another to beat the LPT. Frederick stated, "I set a goal. I was going to pass the writing part of the test so I could play sports, and get in the right grade."

His mother outlined their commitment stating, "It's hard trying to be the mother and the father. You're working every day. I worked 60 to 70 hours each week, but we couldn't give up. I had to play the father role. I had to take time out for him." She continued, "We would sit for hours sometimes. I worked on Saturdays from seven a.m. until three p.m., but when I got home I took time out to help him." "He started reading a lot. Plus we would work on writing paragraphs. He would write them and I would check over them. If they

weren't right he would write them again. He started going to the library. He was going three times a week. He would get books, but mostly he worked on writing," she remembered.

Frederick's uncle began to spend some time with him and talk to him about his future. Also, his old middle school coach was now coaching for Magna Vista. This coach talked daily to Frederick about his potential on the football field.

The combination of a renewed commitment by his mother, improved daily study habits, goal setting, and positive male role models gave Frederick the push he needed to reach his academic objective (passing the LPT). During his sophomore year, while maintaining his average near 73 (still room for improvement), he passed the fall 1993 administration of the writing section of the LPT with a 265.

Frederick started at defensive tackle for the Magna Vista football team during the 1994 season. However, without the motivation of the "ungraded" status and its consequences, his grade point average dipped to a 65.4. This may be, in part, due to the new block schedule which tends to accelerate and condense the teaching and learning process. Hopefully, Frederick will adjust to his new schedule in time to accrue the additional nine credits he needs to graduate with a "regular" diploma.

#### Behavioral Record

Frederick was a "somewhat quiet" student who came to the office only rarely during his ninth grade year. His problems ranged from being unprepared for class to talking in class without permission. The assistant principal at Magna Vista, in an interview concerning Frederick, states, "He is

a likable young man who's rather quiet. He speaks to me often." The assistant principal went on to say that he feels football has helped his demeanor. "He's not a discipline problem at all," he stated, " I've seen a lot of maturity in him also."

### Summary

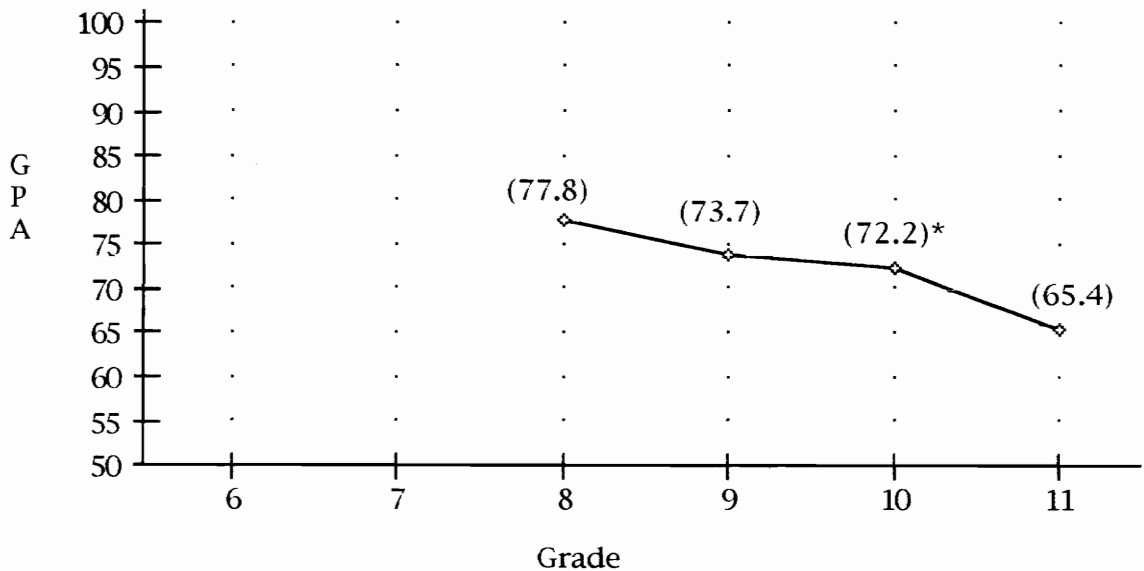
Frederick is an extremely physically talented young man (6'2", 260 lbs., 4.9 40 yd dash) who dreams of playing football on Saturday and Sunday. He first experienced the LPT in eighth grade with no remediation and very little preparation due to his "transfer" status. Due to failing the writing portion of the LPT he was sent to Magna Vista labeled as "ungraded".

Although he tried to hide it, the "ungraded" status deeply hurt Frederick. He was also negatively affected by the absence of his father from his life during eighth and ninth grade. Frederick floundered through the 1992-93 school year (ninth grade) until after he realized he had failed the writing test for the second time. At that point, he set a goal for himself to pass that portion of the LPT at its next administration. His mother, likewise, made a commitment to spend more time helping Frederick at home. Trips to the library, as well as many hours of writing practice helped him to improve his writing skills. Attention from both his uncle and a coach at Magna Vista provided some of the positive male influence Frederick had lacked for several years. These factors all combined to help Frederick pass the LPT. All participants in the study seem to agree that the single greatest factor which motivated Frederick was his desire to play football, although both Frederick and his mother speak at length about the pain and self doubt caused by the "ungraded" status or "NG" (no-grade ) label.

Since passing the LPT Frederick has let his grades slip a bit. With 12 credits "in the bank," and 21 necessary for a "regular" diploma, the 12 credits still available become very important if graduating on time is now Frederick's goal.

Figures 8 and 9 represent the scholastic career (grades and attendance) from eighth to eleventh grade. As stated earlier, Frederick has left room for improvement. He must make that improvement immediately if he is to graduate on time with his peers.

Figure 8  
Change in Grade Point Average  
(GPA) by Grade for Frederick

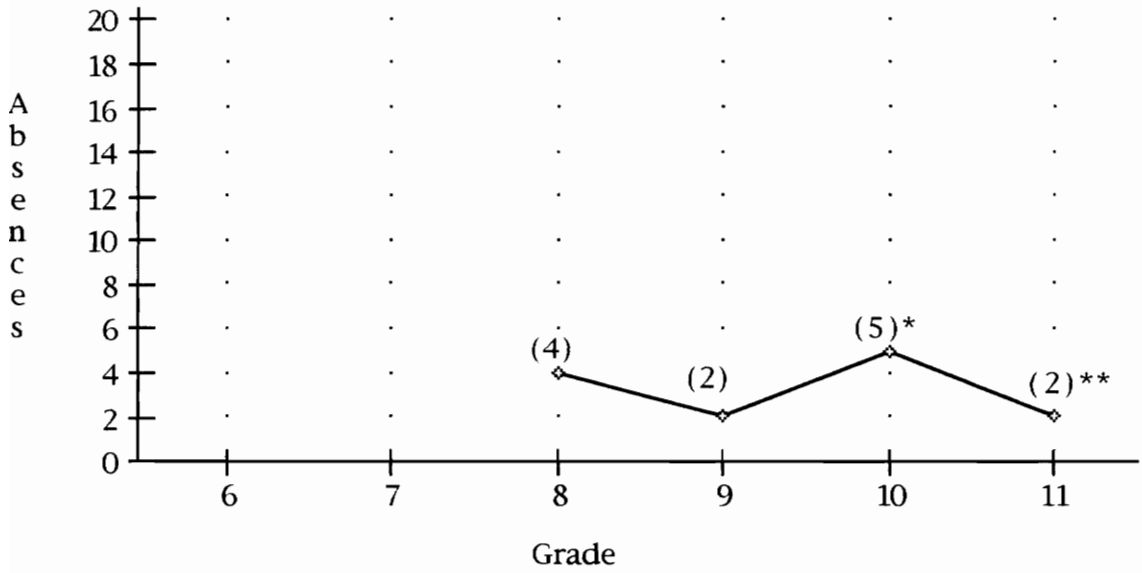


Note. Frederick transferred to Virginia in eighth grade.

\* Completed Literacy Passport Test requirements during this term.



Figure 9  
Number of Absences by Grade  
for Frederick



\* Completed Literacy Passport Test requirements during this term.

\*\* This only covers the first semester (Sept.-Jan.).

## Case Study Report for Gregory

This case study report chronologically traces Gregory's scholastic endeavors from the time he entered sixth grade at Drewry Mason Middle School (fall 1989) through the end of his eleventh grade year at Magna Vista High School (spring 1995). The report was compiled using information obtained through interviews with the student, his parents, and teachers from both the middle and high school levels (see Appendix I) as well as using documents on grade point average and attendance from grades six through eleven. A final source of information came from an interview with the assistant principal at Magna Vista High School. This interview focused on the student's department since entering Magna Vista.

While the report touches on various areas of academic achievement, its focus is on the attempts of Gregory to pass the three sections of Virginia's Literacy Passport Test .

The final section of the report contains some summary conclusions as to the reasons (factors) for Gregory finally passing the LPT as a sophomore after failing several administrations earlier in his academic career. Graphic representations of both change in grade point average and attendance help to provide a visual illustration of Gregory's overall scholastic journey

### Scholastic Trials and Endeavors

Gregory's first experiences with the Literacy Passport Test (LPT) were during his sixth grade year at Drewry Mason Middle School. Prior to entering Drewry Mason, Gregory had been tested and found eligible for special education services while in elementary school. At his parents request, Gregory was placed back in the regular classroom upon entering sixth grade.

This would seem to be a difficult transition (both coming to a new school, and re-entering the mainstream), yet Gregory did fairly well academically (72.6 overall average). His attendance, which has been a concern throughout school, was slightly below average for middle schoolers (10 absences for the year). However, his performance on the LPT was very poor. He failed all three sections of the test, failing reading and writing with very low scores. Due to this performance, he was placed in a self-contained seventh grade remedial classroom.

It was at the beginning of his seventh grade year (1990-91) that Gregory began working with Drewry Mason's remedial reading teacher. She recalls Gregory as being very sensitive and defensive about both his school work and his personal traits. "When I first met him he showed quite a bit of hostility and portrayed an attitude that he did not care. "

His mother remembers this as a time of withdrawal. "It [failing the LPT] made him feel really bad," she said. "It brought him down below the other kids. He didn't want to associate with them," she added.

While Gregory didn't talk much about these early experiences with the LPT, he did say that seventh grade was when he first understood the consequences of the test. While he improved somewhat academically (76 average) due to the small group instruction afforded by his remedial placement, he still struggled in the testing environment. "He had limitations on what he could retain," his remedial reading teacher stated.

Although he failed two tests (reading and writing) during the seventh grade administration, he passed math. His scores on the reading test and particularly the writing test (an increase of 25 points) were much higher

than when he first took them. Due to his continued weakness in certain vital academic areas it was decided, with parental consent, to place Gregory in the alternative education program for his eighth grade year.

The alternative class proved beneficial in two ways. The small group setting continued to help Gregory academically while also bolstering his self-confidence. Gregory became less withdrawn. "It was at this point [while in alternative education] that Gregory began to develop a need to be part of a group and not to be different," the reading teacher reported.

When asked about his work habits during eighth grade the reading teacher stated, "He worked very hard to keep up with his peers and did not want to be singled out as being different." His alternative education teacher added, "He always tried to do his work, but needed constant prodding." The alternative setting and the reading specialist provided that prodding. This, along with the pressure to "keep up" with his peers made for another relatively successful year. Gregory's grades improved greatly (85 average) and his attendance was the best it had been in many years (nine absences, down from twelve in seventh grade).

He continued to improve on the LPT. He passed the writing test, but admitted to being very nervous during the reading test. When asked why he was nervous, he explained, "There were a lot of people around me and the words were hard! I was saying to myself, 'I'm gonna be last to finish!'" When asked how he felt about his performance in eighth grade, he remembers disappointment. "I had all those words in my head and I couldn't block them out. I remembered them all at once. Everything got jumbled up in my head," he said.

His teachers sensed his anxiety, but were confident he would pass. "He always had the ability, but not the initiative," stated his alternative education teacher. The reading teacher echoed this sentiment adding, "I knew if he was in the right frame of mind he would pass [the reading section]. But he was so nervous."

His mother sensed the pressure also. "He was very nervous. He didn't want to be in any special classes. He wouldn't even associate with the kids around here [at home] because he had failed and they didn't," she said.

Even though he had taken great strides academically, the embarrassment of failing the reading test for the third time left Gregory discouraged. He headed to Magna Vista labeled "NG" (no-grade) and subject to the "ungraded" status.

As Gregory entered Magna Vista in the "ungraded" status, he was confronted with many of the stigmas he had so wanted to avoid. The "NG" label, the "special" homeroom, the "remedial" academic track. All these things made him feel "different" and "left out." "That 'NG' meant that I wasn't part of the school," he said.

Not only was Gregory discouraged, but he seemingly gave up during his ninth grade year (1992-93). His mother remembered, "He felt really bad. He wouldn't say why, but I could just tell. He wouldn't bring home any books. If he did he would just throw them in his room and that was it. It was like he really didn't care."

His ninth grade remedial English teacher remembers a similar attitude. She related, "He really didn't seem very concerned about being 'ungraded.' He was the most unmotivated of the four students in this study." She also spoke of

"erratic" work habits, and mentioned a problem which Gregory had wrestled with throughout his scholastic career. "He would be doing fairly well," she reflected, "and then he would miss several days just when we were making progress."

Gregory missed a total of eleven days during the 92-93 school year. His grade point average (GPA) dropped to a 66. Although his score improved slightly he still failed the reading section of the LPT.

He seemed faced with another embarrassing year in the "ungraded" status. However, several factors helped to change his fate. One factor was that for the first time, the LPT would be given in the fall (October). Another factor was a change in his attitude. This change seemed to be brought about by a third factor. His mother changed her attitude toward Gregory's apathy. "I felt bad and I started making him feel bad too. I told him I was going to get him some things [presents], and then I told him he wasn't getting anything. In order for him to get anything, he had to pass the test," she remembered. This factor of an extrinsic reward being withheld until after completion of the LPT, which is highly motivating to an athlete in the "ungraded" status, had been lacking with Gregory. With this factor in place, Gregory changed his work and study habits.

While he did not state why, he did detail these changes. "I had plans after school. I just put them out of my mind. There was no one else around. I motivated myself and had confidence in myself," he stated. He went on to tell of changing his priorities from "play" time to study time, of using a better study environment, and generally having a more serious attitude about school.

His mother agreed, "He started bringing his books home and doing his

work like he should." When asked why he changed she responded, "When I wouldn't get him the things he wanted, he changed." In fact, when asked for the greatest single motivating factor in Gregory passing the LPT, Mom answered, "To get those things he wanted."

Gregory responded similarly to the same query. He said, "Well my parents really [motivated me]. My Mom sat me down and said you can't get your diploma in high school, and you can't get a good job unless you pass this test. So I remembered all that she said and kept it in my head until I finished the test."

In October, 1993, during the fall of his tenth grade year, Gregory passed the reading section of the LPT. All respondents seemed relieved and happy for Gregory. He, however, was rather surprised. "They lost my first copy of the test and I had to take it over," he said. "I really didn't think I did well on the re-take."

Teachers spoke of being hopeful that his improved study habits and attitude would continue. For the remainder of the 1993-94 school year they did. Gregory ended the year with a 74 average and only missed seven days for the year (best attendance record in five years).

The 1994-95 school year has seen Gregory fall back into old habits. His first block GPA was a 65.3. From September through January he had been absent 14 days. This is the highest absentee total in six years and represents only half of a school year. With only 10.5 credits Gregory faces another uphill climb toward graduation. Hopefully some other extrinsic or intrinsic motivators will help him return to the form he demonstrated in 1993-94. In order to graduate on time with his peers (peer pressure seemed to be a

constant motivator) he must make swift and decisive scholastic changes.

### Behavioral Record

Gregory had substantial problems with his deportment during his first two years at Magna Vista according to the assistant principal there. "He stayed up here in the office, and I suspended him from time to time," the assistant principal related. "This year, however, he is much different," he added, "I guess you can see some maturity in him."

The assistant principal agreed that Gregory's poor behavior in the past had probably affected his grades. The assistant principal also remembered hearing from Gregory himself and from one of Gregory's teachers that he felt that he was stupid. Gregory said that he felt that way because he had been told that by his parents. "We talked quite a bit about that last year, but he hasn't mentioned it at all this year," the assistant principal recounted. He continued stating, "He's made great strides, discipline-wise. He has come a long way. "

The assistant principal was at a loss to explain why his grades and attendance would be so poor with his demeanor improving so dramatically. It can only be hoped, that, as with several others in this study, Gregory's improved poise at school will improve his rapport with his teachers to the point that they will give him the extra help and support he will need to graduate on time.

### Summary

Gregory is a student who entered regular sixth grade classes after spending several elementary years in special education. He was fighting an uphill battle from that point on to keep up with his peers. Due to his sensitive nature, Gregory tended to be a "loner" until he entered the alternative

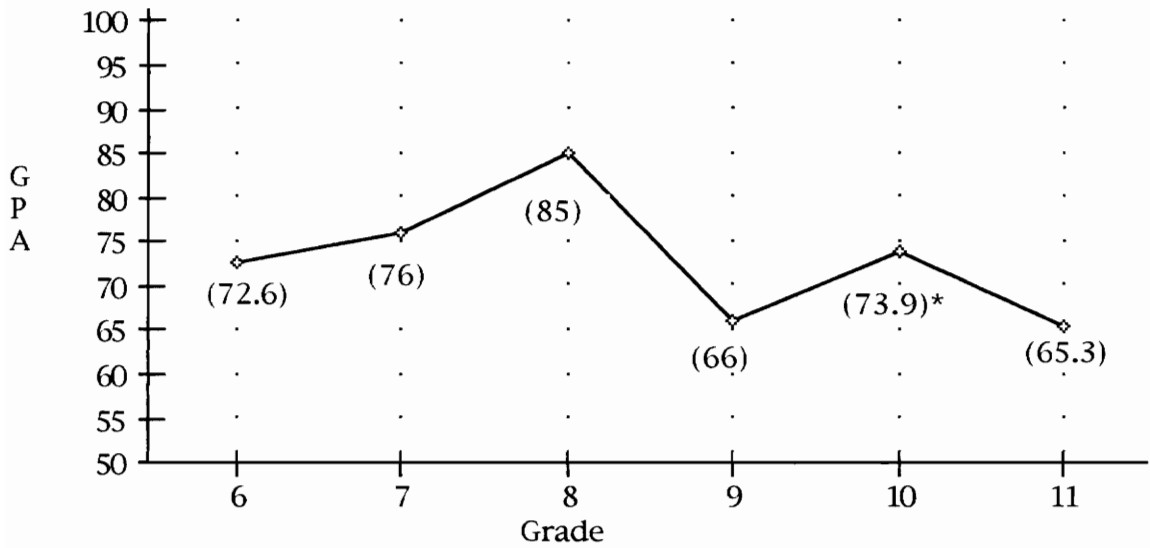


education program at Drewry Mason Middle Schools. From that point on, peer acceptance became an important factor in Gregory's motivation and priorities. It wasn't until his mother took away certain extrinsic rewards, however, that Gregory got serious about his school work. In fact, during his ninth grade year (1992-93) he had all but given up on school in general and specifically the LPT reading test. With a new incentive for passing the LPT, Gregory developed better study habits and was able to pass the test.

Since passing the test Gregory has slipped academically, although his deportment has improved considerably. It is now up to Gregory to do the things necessary to graduate on time. With only 10.5 credits, he faces a difficult task; a task which can only be accomplished with the renewed help of his parents and teachers.

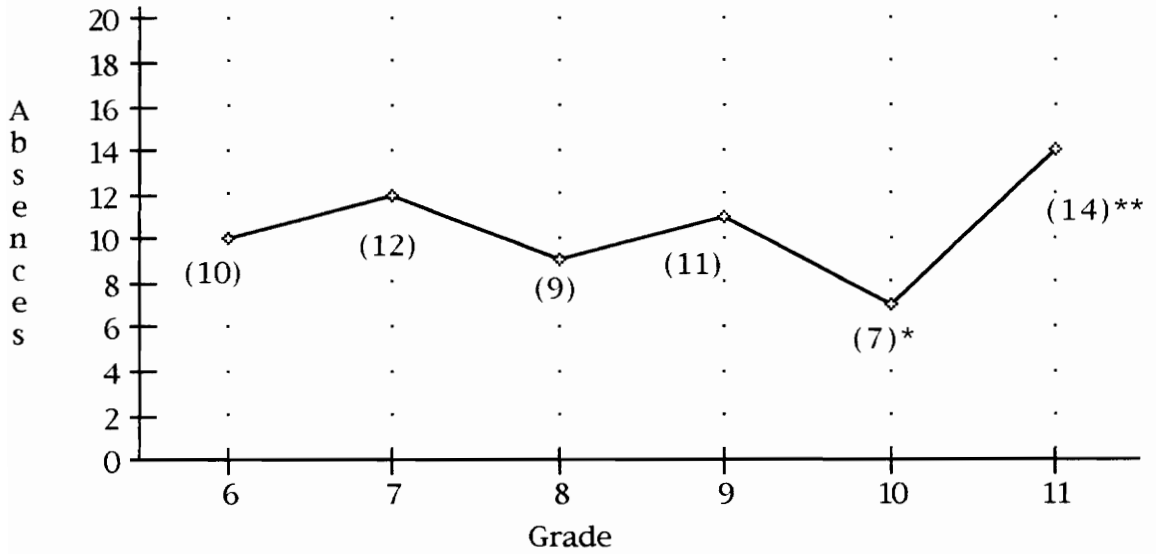
Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the scholastic efforts (grades and attendance) of Gregory graphically. These graphs depict a spasmodic academic journey characterized by periods of self confidence (grades eight and ten) and self-doubt (grades six and nine).

Figure 10  
Change in Grade Point Average  
(GPA) by Grade for Gregory



\* Completed Literacy Passport Test requirements during this term.

Figure 11  
Number of Absences by Grade  
for Gregory



\*Completed Literacy Passport Test requirements during this term.

\*\*This only covers the first semester (Sept. - Jan.).

## CHAPTER 4

### CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

The four individual case-study reports were analyzed and synthesized into a single report to highlight variables or factors across all four cases. This report also contains contrary factors or evidence unique to a specific case and not found in any others.

Several of the data analysis instruments were used to accomplish this task. Using stacked matrices allowed for comprehensive looks at information reported from any of the four groups of respondents (students, parents, middle school teachers, and high school teachers). By arranging the four stacked matrices together, coded information from all respondents could be viewed at one time.

In a similar manner the four partitioned matrices, when viewed together, allowed for an overview of variables combined by student rather than respondent group. While the information was basically the same using either format, the novel orientations of each made the use of both an effective method of finding patterns and similarities, as well as contradictions, across cases.

Another helpful tool in putting together the cross-case analysis was the use of the individual case summaries. Many salient positive and negative aspects of the individual cases had been illuminated in these summaries.

A final implement used in constructing the cross-case analysis was a special matrix which, unlike the stacked or partitioned matrices, was aligned with the variables in the positive path model in Figure 2. Both the stacked and

partitioned matrices had been aligned with the variables in the interview instruments. This special matrix allowed for direct comparison between variables in the model and the data from the interview sessions. This also allowed for an easier translation of the data into the model than by using the stacked or partitioned matrices.

#### Examining the Four Cases

Each of the four boys in this study traveled a slightly different path to reach their goal of passing the Literacy Passport Test. Alex, Derrick, and Gregory came to Drewry Mason Middle School as sixth graders sorely lacking the skills needed to be successful either in the classroom or on a rigorous standardized test like the LPT. Frederick came to Drewry Mason as a transfer student from another state in the fall of 1991. He brought with him the baggage of his parents separation, as well as having been uprooted from his home and separated from his friends. While his academic background was a bit stronger than the other three, he was likewise unprepared for the rigors of such a test.

While Alex and Gregory each spent their seventh grade year in a self-contained remedial class, Derrick was placed directly into the alternative education program at Drewry Mason shortly after he entered sixth grade. This placement occurred only after a very emotional and controversial meeting to determine Derrick's eligibility for a special education placement. When that placement was denied, the only reasonable option was the alternative classroom.

All three boys made great strides with their self-esteem and self-concept during the 1990-91 school year, although their academic progress

(including that on the LPT) was slow. Of the three boys, none truly understood the consequences of failure at this point. In fact all three were quite fuzzy on details of their experiences at this time. Only Derrick's parents were aware of the consequences of failing the LPT at this early date.

The school's reading specialist gave the most detailed account of that school year. She spoke of improving attitude and esteem, but extremely weak skills on the part of all three young men.

During the 1991-92 school year, Alex and Gregory were united with Derrick in the alternative classroom. Alex and Derrick had yet to pass any of the three sections of the LPT while Gregory had passed his math test during February 1991. Due to his familiarity with the class structure and his hard work, Derrick was soon working on an even par with Alex and Gregory. Derrick was able to complete objectives for both seventh and eighth grade during this one term. This success was a definite boon to his self-concept and his attitude toward school; however, when his test scores returned in May 1992, he had again failed all three sections of the LPT.

Alex and Gregory continued to make slow but steady academic progress, while their self-esteem, like Derrick's, was bolstered by the attention afforded by the alternative classroom. Alex passed his first LPT section in February 1992 when he passed the math test. Gregory passed his second test, writing, putting him two-thirds of the way to completing his LPT requirement.

It was also at the beginning of this term that Frederick enrolled at Drewry Mason. While his grades were only slightly below average, and he passed two sections of the LPT with relatively high scores, he failed the writing section. All four boys now headed to Magna Vista High School as

"ungraded" students.

While all four students had different memories about their early experiences with the Literacy Passport Test, they all agreed that their strongest early recollection stems from that time when they truly began to understand the extent of the consequences associated with failing this test. For Frederick and Gregory this enlightenment took place at the end of eighth grade. Frederick and his mother both very much wanted him to play football at Magna Vista. He knew full well what failing the writing test meant. His disappointment and embarrassment were tremendous.

Gregory, on the other hand, was not an athlete at all. He had battled his way out of an elementary special education placement which his mother felt "branded" him as dumb or retarded. Similarly, he knew quite well the label that would now be attached to him. The stigma of the "NG" label was far worse, in his mind, than any other conceivable punishment. This status would both isolate him from his friends and brand him an underachiever in the eyes of his peers.

Whether Alex and Derrick really did not understand their predicament, or simply did not want to understand, one thing is certain: When they attempted to participate in sports during the fall of 1992, and were met at every turn by the barrier failing the LPT presented, they learned quickly about the consequences and stigmas associated with the "ungraded" status. Alex even spoke of his fears of being sent back to middle school, while Derrick talked about being an "outcast" placed on display in a special homeroom.

All four boys spoke passionately about their discomfort with, and dislike for, the "NG" label. Alex detailed his feelings about the label. "When I would

come back to school [after an absence] the absentee list would say 'NG' instead of ninth grade. Everyone else had a grade. It made me feel like I wasn't even over here." When asked how his classmates reacted to the label, Alex responded, "I tried to hide it from them. I wanted them to think I was with them. I was keepin' it to myself, but it was getting to me on the inside."

While Magna Vista teachers spoke of the self-consciousness and poor self-esteem displayed by the boys, their parents were dealing with hurt, confusion, fear, and withdrawal. As Frederick's mother put it, "You're coming to school and doing your work, but you don't get credit for it because of that test. That hurts. It really does."

With all of the negative feelings first generated by the "ungraded" status, one would expect negative attitudes and outcomes to follow. However, with each of these four students the opposite was true. Again, each path to success was different, yet almost from the outset the combination of peer pressure, internal pressure, and extrinsic motivators (rewards) combined to produce changes in these students' views, not only on the LPT itself, but on school in general.

#### Student Responses to Being Ungraded

When asked about what changes he made after becoming "ungraded", Frederick answered, "I set a goal. I was going to pass the test so I could get back in my right grade and play football."

Gregory's response was, "I had plans for after school. I just put them out of my head. There was no one else around. I motivated myself and had confidence in myself."

Alex told of an older friend's advice, "One of my friends told me that I



needed to get out of there [the ungraded status]. He said I needed to pass that test because it would hurt me down the road. He was an older kid. He went through it and understood." Alex added, "It wasn't just a case of working harder on the test. It was working harder everywhere, every day."

Derrick's response touched on maturity and better work habits. He said, "Mostly I think I was kinda young back in seventh grade. I didn't want to study or nothing. When everyone started talking about the LPT, I got my act together. I started studying harder. I did my best, not just on the test, but every day until I passed."

#### Parent and Teacher Responses to Students' Ungraded Status

Many of the boys' teachers and parents corroborated their statements. Alex's parents talked about the changes he made, and the more serious attitude he took toward school. They praised the remedial efforts of the alternative education teacher and the motivation given by the basketball coach, but mostly they said their son did it on his own. "From what I could see," said Alex's mom, "it was just him. He got more interested in his work. He made the changes." Both of Alex's teachers who were interviewed spoke of his improved attitude, seriousness, and more outgoing personality as he continued to improve academically.

Derrick's father spoke of being more accepting and learning to cope with his son's academic difficulties. He and Derrick's mother both said that they saw him using a better study environment at home, and saw him improve his preparation time on not only the LPT, but classroom tests as well. While Derrick's high school teacher was quite positive in discussing his improved daily work habits, his middle school teachers were not quite so enthusiastic.

One teacher who had ties at both Drewry Mason and Magna Vista said that he saw little change at all in study habits. Both middle school teachers were very surprised over Derrick's success, and one even went so far as to say that he felt Derrick must have been coached through the test.

While Frederick's mother listed a better study environment, increased preparation time, improved daily work habits, and a more serious attitude as changes she noted in him, his teachers listed "few" if any changes. On his behalf, from the interviews with both Frederick and his mother, he seemed to do quite a bit of work out of school.

Not only did Gregory's teachers say he made very few changes in attitude or work habits, they tended to be indifferent about his success. Gregory's apathetic demeanor and overall laziness may well have lent itself to these responses. Even as Gregory's mother spoke about his academic changes, she also stated that the reason he changed was because she was withholding certain rewards or presents until he brought his grades up and passed the LPT.

#### Academic Achievement Before, During, and After the Ungraded Status

Even with the pressures of the "ungraded" status, the stigma of the "NG" label, and the potential for extrinsic rewards (sports or presents), it took three of the four boys multiple administrations in high school to pass. Most, however, continued to improve academically even as they struggled to pass the LPT.

Alex, who was the exemplary case of the study, improved his grades every year (adjusting for the change between middle and high school). His attendance had improved dramatically over the five years since seventh grade, and his behavior had been outstanding throughout.

Derrick's grades improved substantially in eighth (79.4) and tenth (73.9) grades. (He completed the requirements of LPT in tenth). His attendance had been excellent since entering high school and his behavior had always been exemplary. However, Derrick's grades had dropped markedly since he passed the LPT and put the "ungraded" status behind him.

Gregory, likewise, had a high grade point average of 85 in eighth grade and peaked in high school in tenth grade (73.9) during the term when he passed the LPT. Similarly, his grades plummeted the following year, and his absenteeism which had always been a concern (high of 12 absences in seventh grade, low of 7 absences in tenth grade) skyrocketed to 14 absences through the first semester of the 1994-95 school year. One bright spot for Gregory was his behavior which was reported as much improved over previous years,

Frederick had the most confusing case of all. His original LPT math and reading scores were very high. He worked very hard on the LPT writing test (particularly with his mother). Yet, each year of the study his grades dropped. His attendance was not a problem, and his behavior was quite good. However, with a 65.4 grade point average he had not only placed himself in jeopardy of being ineligible for sports again, but in danger of not accruing enough credits for graduation.

Gregory and Derrick were equally at risk. It seemed that without the motivating pressure of the "ungraded" status, three of the four students slipped back into old habits.

#### Motivational Factors

The specific research question posed to each of the respondents asked

them to name the greatest motivating factors for each student passing the LPT. The responses were quite interesting. Table 3 contains a tally of the first responses given to the question of the most important motivating factor for passing the Literacy Passport Test. Table 4 contains tallies of second responses about motivating factors for those respondents who gave more than one response, while Table 5 contains a combination of first and second responses.

Table 3  
First Response to the Question of the Most Motivating Factor for Passing the Literacy Passport Test

Student	Participation in Sports <sup>a</sup>	Removing Ungraded Status	Peer Pressure	Parental Pressure	Internal Pressure
* Alex	4(R,A,P,T <sub>2</sub> )	1(S)			
* Derrick	3(R,P,T <sub>2</sub> )	1(S)			
* Frederick	2(S,T <sub>1</sub> )			1(P)	1(T <sub>2</sub> )
Gregory			2(R,A)	2(S,P)	1(T <sub>2</sub> )
Total	9	2	2	3	2

Note. One teacher responded that motivation was not a factor.

\* Athlete.

<sup>a</sup> Codes for participants: R-reading teacher, A-alternative education teacher, T<sub>1</sub>-middle school coach, T<sub>2</sub>-high school teacher, P-parent, S-student.

Table 4

Second Response to the Question of the Most Motivating Factor for Passing the Literacy Passport Test

Student	Participation in Sports <sup>a</sup>	Removing Ungraded Status <sup>b</sup>	Peer Pressure	Parental Pressure	Internal Pressure
* Alex	1(S)	1(T <sub>2</sub> )			1(P)
* Derrick	1(S)	1(T <sub>2</sub> )			
* Frederick	1(P)	1(S)			
Gregory					1(S)
Total	3	3			2

Note. Not all respondents had a second response.

\* Athlete.

<sup>a</sup> Codes for participants: S-student, P-parent.

<sup>b</sup> Codes for participants: T<sub>2</sub>-high school teacher.

Table 5

Combination of First and Second Responses to the Question of the Most Motivating Factor for Passing the Literacy Passport Test

Student	Participation in Sports <sup>a</sup>	Removing Ungraded Status	Peer Pressure	Parental Pressure	Internal Pressure
* Alex	5(R,A,P,T <sub>2</sub> ,S)	2(T <sub>2</sub> ,S)			1(P)
* Derrick	4(R,P,T <sub>2</sub> ,S)	2(T <sub>2</sub> ,S)			
* Frederick	3 (S,T,P)	1(S)		1(P)	1(T <sub>2</sub> )
Gregory			2(R,A)	2(S,P)	2(S,T <sub>2</sub> )
Total	12	5	2	3	4

\* Athlete.

<sup>a</sup> Codes for participants: R-reading teacher, A-alternative education teacher, T<sub>1</sub>-middle school coach, T<sub>2</sub>-high school teacher, P-parent, S-student.

Both Alex and Derrick, who were avid athletes, responded adamantly that the most important factors were removing the "NG" label, getting back into the correct grade, and progressing toward graduation. Playing sports ranked second for both boys. It should be noted that when his grades came out in January 1995, Derrick decided to forego his senior football season to pursue his ultimate goal, a high school diploma.

Frederick, probably the best athlete of all, listed playing football as his

number one motivating factor, while getting back to his proper grade level was second. Gregory, who is not an athlete, listed parental pressure as his top motivator . Internal pressure ranked second for Gregory.

Both Alex's and Derrick's parents enthusiastically named sports as the greatest motivating factor, although Alex's father continued to sing the praises of alternative education. Frederick's mom surprisingly picked football second to parental pressure as the top motivator while Gregory's mother, not surprisingly, said that withheld presents were the top motivator.

Six of the eight teachers, when asked about Alex, Derrick, and Frederick whole heartedly named sports as the number one motivator. Frederick's high school teacher chose internal pressure as the factor which motivated him. One of Derrick's middle school teachers said that motivation had nothing to do with his passing (He still believed he was coached.). Of Gregory's three teachers who were asked about a motivating factor, two picked peer pressure and embarrassment, while the third said internal motivation was the key factor.

Of the 19 total respondents, nine named sports or "extra-curricular activities" as the top motivator in passing the LPT. Two respondents each picked the "ungraded" status, peer pressure, and internal pressure as top motivators. Three respondents picked parental pressure as the top motivator.

#### Summary

Using the individual case study reports along with partitioned and stacked matrices, a concise yet illuminating narrative was produced which cited specific factors that helped Alex, Derrick, Frederick, and Gregory complete the requirements of the Literacy Passport Test. As with the case

study reports, the cross-case analysis contains the students' journeys through the LPT experience and the "ungraded" status. Through the analysis the researcher told the story of how each student was affected by the test and the consequences of failure. The analysis concluded with responses from students, teachers, and parents to the specific research question concerning those factors which motivated the four young men to pass the LPT. These responses were presented in both narrative and chart form. Specific conclusions drawn from this analysis are outlined and summarized in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary this study contains reports on the academic endeavors of four black, male, high school juniors. These students were chosen due to their failure to complete Virginia's Literacy Passport requirements prior to entering ninth grade, which placed them in an "ungraded" status as they began high school. Furthermore, these students were selected because they had passed the Literacy Passport Test on a subsequent administration. The four case-studies traced the students' journeys from their earliest experiences with the LPT through the first semester of the 1994-95 school year. The cases contain interview data from the students, their parents, and teachers who had helped remediate the students while they attempted to pass the LPT. Students' grades, attendance, and demeanor over the same period are included. The four individual cases were analyzed for common themes or factors which could help to answer the specific research question: What factors motivate black, male students to pass the LPT after failing several administrations and being labeled "ungraded"?

#### Findings

Two sets of findings resulted from the analysis of the data. The first set dealt with factors that had motivated the students to pass the LPT. The second set showed the change in grade point average and attendance for each student over the duration of the study.

The findings concerning motivational factors were presented as first responses, second responses, and total responses to the research question.

When examining the first responses for the three boys who were athletes (Alex, Derrick, and Frederick) nine of the thirteen respondents named the desire to participate in sports as the top motivating factor for passing the LPT. Two respondents mentioned the desire to remove the "ungraded" stigma, while one respondent each chose parental pressure and internal (self-generated) pressure as the top motivational factor.

For Gregory, who liked sports but did not participate interscholastically, participants' first responses indicated his peers and his parents were top motivational factors for passing the LPT. Two respondents each listed peer pressure and parental pressure as greatest motivators. One respondent chose internal pressure as Gregory's top motivator.

Looking at second responses Alex, Derrick, and Frederick (the athletes) each had a respondent name participation in sports and removing the ungraded status as a second important motivational factor. Both Alex and Gregory had a respondent choose intrinsic pressure as a secondary motivator.

The total responses showed that for the three students with aspirations to participate in interscholastic sports the "no pass, no play" consequence of failing the LPT was the most important factor in motivating them to complete their LPT requirements. Twelve of the 20 total respondents for these three students named regaining the right to participate in sports as top motivator. Five of the remaining eight respondents named removing the "ungraded" status as most important factor. The other respondents named internal pressure (twice) and parental pressure (once) as top motivators. For Gregory (not interested in interscholastic sports) the respondents were divided equally among peer pressure (two responses), parental pressure (two responses), and

internal pressures (two responses).

The second set of findings included final grade point averages and attendance information for all four students during each of the years studied. Alex, Derrick, and Gregory all had increases (some rather dramatic) in grade point average during the term when they passed the LPT. While Frederick's grades dropped during the term when he passed the LPT, they dropped only slightly (from an average of 73.7 to 72.2). The improvements in study habits and effort that helped him pass the LPT were also helping him maintain a passing GPA. Attendance for all four of the students either improved or was maintained at an acceptable level during the term in which they passed the LPT.

A disturbing finding, when analyzing GPA for the four students, was that grades for three of the four boys dropped to below failing in the term after they passed the LPT. Only Alex's GPA increased in the term after passing the LPT.

### Conclusions

The four students in this study were all motivated to complete the LPT requirements by the consequences associated with failing the LPT. Six basic conclusions were drawn from the data. These were:

1. Failing the LPT produced the following significant consequences: (a) no participation in extra-curricular activities (sports), (b) placement in a remedial curriculum (tracking), (c) assignment of non-graded status (label and non-accumulation of credits), and (d) placement in a special homeroom.
2. The consequences associated with failing the LPT increased: (a) peer pressure on the failing students, (b) parental pressure on the failing students,

(c) coaching pressure on students who were potential athletes, and (d) internal pressure on the failing students.

3. This increase in pressure on the students caused increased motivation and effort both to pass the LPT and to perform better in the classroom.

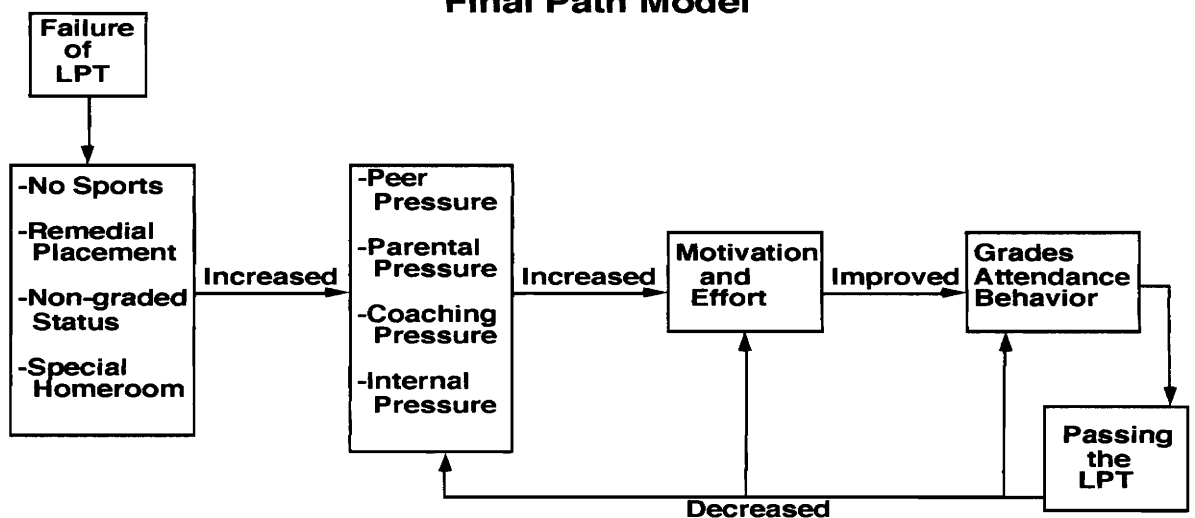
4. The increased motivation and effort produced: (a) higher grades, (b) better attendance, and (c) improved or continued good behavior.

5. The improvement in scholastic performance led to passing the LPT.

6. Finally, after passing the LPT there was a decrease in the pressure applied by peers, parents, coaches, and self. This decrease, in turn, led to a decrease in motivation and effort which caused grades and attendance to suffer.

These conclusions and the findings which generate them allowed the researcher to produce a final path model for the study. Figure 12 contains this final model.

**Figure 12**  
**Final Path Model**



## Explanations for the Boys' Behavior

This section is devoted to examining the nature of motivation as it related to the situation and boys under study, particularly the drop in motivation and achievement noted for three of the four students after the completion of the LPT requirements. As stated in the conclusions, and illustrated in Figure 12, the consequences associated with failing the LPT, as well as the extrinsic and intrinsic pressures they generated, increased motivation for all four students in the study. This, in turn, improved academic achievement and finally led to passing the LPT. Once all LPT requirements were met and the consequences of failure were gone, the pressures, both intrinsic and extrinsic, disappeared. Without the pressures and frustration as driving forces, motivation and effort waned and academic performance suffered.

A review of relevant literature on motivation and effort (Alderfer, 1972; Connell, 1994; Howerton, 1993; Hunter, 1967; Maslow, 1943; Young 1961; Vroom, 1982) shed light on several possible reasons for both the initial increases and later decreases described in the conclusions and illustrated in the model. P.T. Young (1961) described frustration and its relationship to motivation and performance. Young stated,

With a primary drive, such as hunger or thirst, deprivation creates a need. Stimuli arising from the need state are a source of persistent motivation. Frustration, however, produces an additional drive, one that is irrelevant to the basic need state. The irrelevant drive from frustration combines with a primary drive to produce a combined effective drive. That is to say,

frustration produces an increment in motivation. The increment can be recognized in terms of improved performance.

(p. 539)

This helps to explain why students, frustrated with failure and the consequences of the "ungraded" status, would become more motivated and have improved academic performance. In this study the students' GPA increased during the period when frustration was high (they were ungraded) and fell when the frustration dissolved (they passed the LPT).

Hunter (1967) echoed this sentiment. She stated, "Tension or concern is a facilitation factor providing it exists to a moderate degree" (p. 37). She went on to state, "A certain amount of tension or concern is essential to motivation" (p. 37). Therefore, when the tension created by the LPT was gone so was the motivation.

Two studies were found which addressed parental influence on both motivation and achievement. Connell (1994), using a model of human motivation as it applied to school success and failure, indicated that parental engagement predicted school performance. Howerton (1993) examined the relationship between parent and child verbal interaction and academic achievement for at-risk adolescent black males. In both of these studies a positive relationship was reported between interaction with parents and achievement. In this study, during the period when the students were "ungraded," parental interaction was quite high. It is quite likely that after their sons passed the LPT both pressure and interaction decreased on the part of the parents.

In his book on existence, relatedness, and growth Alderfer (1972) set

forth a proposition which predicted variation in the strength of growth desires. The proposition states that the more growth needs are satisfied, the more they will be desired. This proposition captures the idea that growth is intrinsically satisfying. That means that when a student experiences academic success, that student's desire to grow and repeat the success should increase. The findings of this study, however, contradict Alderfer's proposition and seem to confirm Maslow's (1943) assertion that a satisfied need is not motivational. Most of the pressures and consequences generated by failing the LPT were extrinsic in nature. Extrinsic motivation is dependent on and changes with the specific environmental situation (Hunter, 1967). In this case the specific environment producing motivation was the consequences of failure. When these consequences disappeared, the entire structure supporting the increased academic performance for the students collapsed. Had the activity itself (academic achievement) been rewarding, it would have produced a situation where motivation was intrinsic (Hunter, 1967). This, in turn, would have compounded the motivation and Alderfer's proposition would have held true.

Finally, another way to view motivation is using expectancy theory. Vroom (1982) outlined a model including expectancy, instrumentality, and valence as important components. The concept of expectancy as applied to this study is an action-outcome association. Students believed that through accomplishment of a task (homework, studying, passing tests) they would achieve an outcome, in this case passing the LPT (outcome 1). Instrumentality, on the other hand, is an outcome-outcome association. As applied to this study, passing the LPT (outcome 1) was instrumental to achievement of personal

goals (outcome 2). These personal goals included playing sports, getting out of the "ungraded" status, and removing the NG label. Valence was simply the attraction to these personal goals and the attraction controlled motivation and effort. Therefore, using Vroom's model the students in this study had high expectancy and instrumentality as well as high valence. This led to the desired outcomes (passing the LPT and eliminating the consequences of failure). However, when the outcomes were achieved there were no other personal goals with which to be attracted. Therefore valence decreased and in turn, motivation and effort dropped along with achievement.

### Recommendations

#### Practice

The "ungraded" status and the "no pass, no play" consequences it engenders seem to be producing the anticipated effect, at least in the four students in this study. Students caught in the "web" resulting from failing the LPT can and did make a commitment to improve their academic standing and specifically did those things necessary to pass the test. The consequences of failing the LPT should be maintained and perhaps expanded to include lower grades. Middle level educators (grades six through eight) may want to reconsider certain policies and philosophies for the at-risk middle school student. The tendency to protect middle schoolers from pressures and stigmas associated with underachievement, as well as policies involving total participation in sports programs, may actually be doing more harm than good. Students through the middle school years get the impression that no matter how poorly they do academically they have the "right" to participate in whatever activities they choose and that they will always be heterogeneously



grouped with their peers for instruction. The cold grip of reality takes hold during the first week of ninth grade. The "real world" rarely supports an underachiever. Students should be made to face consequences, such as non-participation in extra curricular activities, when circumstances warrant it.

However, as seen in this study, the consequences associated with failing the LPT may not be enough to truly help the at-risk learner all the way to graduation. Once the LPT requirements have been met, students seem to lose the driving force to maintain or improve their academic status. Some other consequences, such as maintenance of a driver's license, might be aligned with academic achievement to maintain students' motivation to perform well.

The Virginia High School League's rule requiring students to pass five courses each semester to maintain eligibility for interscholastic competition helps in this capacity, but something needs to be established which will help a wider range of students. One possible avenue would involve improving career counseling programs to educate students on the value of higher education. If students can be shown the dollar amount associated with a college degree versus a high school degree or no degree at all, then as expectancy theory shows, outcome 1 becomes graduation (from high school or college) with high instrumentality to outcome 2 (personal goals such as a high salary).

Both middle level and secondary educators must increase efforts to communicate and collaborate with parents on efforts to motivate young people both extrinsically and intrinsically. Both this study and the literature on motivation of adolescents (Connell, 1994; Howerton, 1993) point to parental interaction as a positive indicator in increased performance at school. School sponsored workshops on positive parental engagement beginning in

elementary school would help in this respect, but it may be necessary to require parental participation. Sanctions against parents who fail to support school efforts, as is being tried to curb delinquent behavior, may be necessary to get them involved.

### Further Research

Recommendations for further research include using a research team to visit all middle and high schools within a specific school system. This would increase the number of students studied and the total number of respondents. Another recommendation would be to use a cross-section of students who had both passed the LPT after being "ungraded" and who were still attempting to pass. It could be quite enlightening to compare and contrast responses from these two groups. It would be interesting to see if responses were as positive from students still faced with the pressures of the "ungraded" status.

Another recommendation is to study several school systems having varying degrees of success with the LPT to determine if differences in their curriculum, instruction, and LPT remediation programs have an impact on passing the Literacy Passport Test.

This study controlled other variables such as race, gender, and grade level. Allowing for randomization of these variables might provide significant data. It is quite possible that girls are affected quite differently from boys when faced with the frustration of being "ungraded". Likewise, the study could be replicated using a sample entirely comprised of non-athletes. By eliminating the no-pass, no-play consequence from the study a researcher may generate a whole new set of conclusions. Another suggestion would be to compare and contrast data from two separate samples, one consisting of all

athletes, the other consisting of all non-athletes. The comparisons could be extended to isolate race (compare black responses to white responses) as well as gender (compare girls' responses to boys' responses). These data could help pinpoint motivators for a much more diverse group than was studied here.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, would be further study of the phenomenon of grades dropping in the term following completion of LPT requirements. As shown in the behavior section of this chapter, an entire dissertation could be written on motivation of adolescents. It would be quite interesting to see, statewide, how students fared in the term following successful completion of the LPT. If the number of students whose grades dropped in a particular sample were significant (as it was in this study), research into the reasons for such a drop would be invaluable.

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## Appendixes

- A. Interview Instruments
- B. Contact Summary Form
- C. Document Summary Form
- D. Codes
- E. Sample Matrix: Student--Single Case-Level Display by Student and Responses
- F. Sample Matrix: Student A--Partitioned Case-Level Display by Student, Respondent, and Responses
- G. Sample Stacked Matrix: Parents--Stacked Case-Level Display by Student and Responses
- H. Matrix for Variables Associated With Path Model #2
- I. Interview Transcriptions
- J. Glossary

## Appendix A

### Interview Instruments

#### Questions for Students: Students who were "ungraded" but have since passed the Literacy Passport Test (LPT)

1. Can you tell me about your experience in taking the LPT?
  - \* When did you first see the test?
  - \* When did you first understand the consequences of failing the test?
2. Did you receive any help in trying to pass the LPT?
  - \* What type of help?
  - \* By whom?
  - \* Did your parents ever help with or discuss the test?
3. How did you feel when taking the test during the spring of your 8th grade year?
4. How did you feel when you found out you had failed the LPT again?
5. What did the "ungraded" status mean to you?
6. How did being "ungraded" make you feel?
  - \* How did classmates react?
  - \* How did teachers and coaches react?
  - \* How did your parents react?
7. What changes did you make to become successful on the LPT (why did you pass)?
  - \* Were there other factors that helped?
  - \* Did your parents make changes to help?
8. How did you feel when you found out you passed the LPT?
9. What was the single greatest factor in your passing the LPT? (what motivated you)?

\* Potential probes



Questions for Teachers:  
Students who were "ungraded"  
but have since passed the Literacy Passport Test (LPT)

1. Can you tell me about your experiences with (student) in taking the LPT?
2. Was there support from home in working with \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Did \_\_\_\_\_'s attitude or work habits change during his 8th grade year?
4. When \_\_\_\_\_ was taking the LPT in the spring of his 8th grade year, how did you feel?  
\* How do you think he felt?
5. How did you feel when he failed again?  
\* How did he feel?
6. How did you feel when you heard he had passed?
7. What do you think motivated \_\_\_\_\_ to pass?

Magna Vista High School only:

8. What type of attitude and work habits did \_\_\_\_\_ display while in your class?
9. Do you think the "ungraded" status affected \_\_\_\_\_ ?
10. How did you feel when \_\_\_\_\_ was taking the LPT during his \_\_\_ grade year?  
\* How did he feel?
11. How did you feel when \_\_\_\_\_ passed the LPT?  
\* How did he feel?
12. What do you think was the single greatest factor in motivating \_\_\_\_\_ to pass the LPT?

\* Potential probes

Questions for Parents:  
Students who were "ungraded"  
but have since passed the Literacy Passport Test (LPT)

1. What is your understanding of the LPT?
2. Can you tell me about your child's experiences with the LPT?
  - \* When was the first time you recall your child taking the test?
  - \* When did you know of the consequences of failure?
3. Did your child receive help in passing the LPT?
  - \* What type of help?
  - \* By whom?
  - \* Was the help adequate?
  - \* What else could have been done?
  - \* Did you help?
  - \* If so, how did you help?
4. Was there any anxiety on your part as your child prepared to take the LPT during the spring of his 8th grade school year?
  - \* How did he feel?
5. How did you feel when he failed the LPT again?
  - \* How did he feel?
6. What did the "ungraded" status mean to you at the time?
  - \* How did knowing your child would be "ungraded" make you feel?
  - \* How did it make him feel?
7. What changes did your child make to become successful on the LPT?
  - \* Were there other factors that helped?
  - \* Did you make changes?
8. How did you feel when your child passed the LPT?
  - \* How did he feel?
9. What was the single greatest factor in your child's passing the LPT (what motivated him)?

\* Potential probes



## Appendix C

### Document Summary Form

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Document: \_\_\_\_\_

Date acquired: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name or description of document:

Event or contact, if any, with which document is associated:

Significance or importance of document:

Brief summary of contents:

## Appendix D

### Codes

#### General Codes

S - Student	Peer - Peers
P - Parent	Cons - Consequences
T <sub>1</sub> - Middle School Teacher	Neg - Negative
T <sub>2</sub> - High School Teacher	Pos - Positive
6-11g - 6th through 11th grade	St - Strong
AltEd - Alternative Education	Wk - Weak
RdgRem - Reading Remediation	Pred - Predictor test
LARem - Language Arts Remediation	SpEd - Special Education
DMMS - Drewry Mason Middle School	Atmpt - Attempt
MV - Magna Vista High School	
JROTC - Junior Officer Training Corps	
Tchr - Teacher (general)	
Cch - Coach	

#### Codes for Changes in Approach to Academics (LPT)

PT - Preparation Time	Chting - Cheating
CPri - Changed Priorities	Cching - Coaching
bSE - Better Study Environment	WH - Work Harder
Rem - Remediation (special placement)	GISet - Goal Setting
OG - More Outgoing (personality)	SH - Study Harder
MSA - More Serious Attitude	LP - Less Pressure
Accpt - Acceptance of Limitations	Cping - Coping with Setbacks
DWH - Daily Work Habits	

#### Codes for Motivating Factors

Sp - Sports in General	Cp - Pressure from Coaches
FB - Football	Rew - Extrinsic Rewards
BB - Basketball	GL - Proper Grade Level
UG - "Ungraded" Status	Pp - Peer Pressure
Gr - Graduation (normal diploma)	Tp - Teacher Pressure
Rem - Remediation (special placement)	MR - Male Role Model
Hp - Pressure from Home (parents)	

#### Codes for Feelings

Ba - Bad	Rel - Relieved
Al - Alone	WTS - Wanted to Scream
AS - Ashamed	WTC - Wanted to Cry
Det - Determined	Fr - Frustrated
Emb - Embarrassed	Pr - Pressured
Con - Confused	Op - Out of Place

Codes for Feelings (cont.)

Confi - Confident	EXP - Expected
DNU - Did Not Understand	Anx - Anxious
DNC - Did Not Care	Opt - Optimistic
LO - Left Out	Wndfl - Wonderful
Dif - Different (than other students)	Cel - Celebration
Dis - Disappointment	Hpfl - Hopeful
Sa - Sad	Sca - Scared
Ha - Happy	Disc - Discouraged
Unc - Uncertain	Hplss - Helpless
Sup - Surprised	SC - Self-Conscious
Terr - Terrific	
Grt - Great	
STHE - Should have Tried Harder Earlier	
Acc - Accomplishment	
Sat - Satisfaction	
UnE - Uneasy (not quite right)	
WithD - Withdrawn	
Ner - Nervous	
Trbl - Troubled	
Hrt - Hurt	
Rej - Rejoiced	
GBack - Going Back (to middle school)	

**Appendix E  
Sample Matrix:**

**Student  
Single Case-Level Display by Student and Responses**

Student	Experience with LPT	Type of Help	Feelings 8th Grade	Feelings Failure	Feelings Ungraded	Changes	Feelings Passed	Motivation Factors
A								

**Appendix F**  
**Sample Partitioned Matrix:**

**Student A**  
**Partitioned Case-Level Display by Student, Respondent, and Responses**

Responded	Experience with LPT	Type of Help	Feelings 8th Grade	Feelings Failure	Feelings Ungraded	Changes	Feelings Passed	Motivation Factors
Self								
Parent								
T <sub>1</sub>								
T <sub>2</sub>								

Note: T<sub>1</sub> = Middle School Teacher; T<sub>2</sub> = High School Teacher.



**Appendix G**  
**Sample Stacked Matrix:**

**Parents**  
**Stacked Case-Level Display by Student and Responses**

Student	Experience with LPT	Type of Help	Feelings 8th Grade	Feelings Failure	Feelings Ungraded	Changes	Feelings Passed	Motivation Factors
A								
D								
F								
G								

**Appendix H**  
**Matrix For Path Model #2**

Variables Associated With Path Model #2

Student	Feelings Failed LPT	Intervention Type	Stigmas	Part. in Ext. Curr.	Pos. Change in Attitude to School	Increased Motivation and Effort	Pos. Effect on Progress to Grad.
A							
D							
F							
G							

## Appendix I

### Interview Transcriptions

Interview with Alex  
On Wed., Nov. 30, 1994

- RPW Can you tell me about your experiences in taking the LPT?
- ALEX I can tell you that in ninth grade I couldn't play basketball because of it. It made me feel left out because of it (failing the test).
- RPW When was the first time you remember seeing the LPT?
- ALEX Sixth grade.
- RPW Did you understand what the LPT was all about when you first took it?
- ALEX Not entirely. When I got a little older, you know, in high school I found out about the consequences.
- RPW When did you first understand the consequences of failing?
- ALEX I didn't really care until I got into ninth grade because they told me I couldn't play basketball.
- RPW So that's when it really hit home.
- ALEX Yeah.
- RPW In the ninth grade when they said you couldn't play basketball?
- ALEX Yes.
- RPW Did you receive any help in trying to pass the LPT?
- ALEX Sometimes. Yes. People would ask me why I wasn't playing basketball and I had to tell them I hadn't passed that test. They would tell me to work hard and pass it next time to get it behind me.
- RPW Who were the people that were trying to help you?
- ALEX Well, Coach Y for one. Let's see, Coach J. Also Coach F over at Drewry Mason, he helped me.
- RPW What type of help did they give you?
- ALEX Coach F took me in his office and talked to me a whole lot. He told me he really wanted me to play basketball so he would help with verbs and writing sentences because that was one part I had failed. He taught me how to do that stuff.

RPW Did your parents ever help with the test or discuss the test with you?

ALEX Well, you know, I didn't want them to know it was that bad. I tried to keep them out of it. I kept it to myself. I shouldn't have. I guess I should have told them sooner.

RPW So you kept it from them not to worry them?

ALEX Yeah. I was going to take care of it myself.

RPW Did they wonder why you weren't playing basketball?

ALEX Yes. All the time.

RPW What did you tell them?

ALEX I would tell them I couldn't play because I messed up on a test I had last year. They just looked at me real hard. It really got me down because I was working, trying. They told me to keep working and try to do better, and make better grades than I had been.

RPW How did you feel when you were taking the test during the spring of your eighth grade year?

ALEX It really didn't matter until the next year when I couldn't play. I thought it was just another test. I didn't care really.

RPW Had teachers told you or explained to you that you couldn't participate in sports?

ALEX Well yeah, but I didn't think they were talking about Magna Vista High School basketball.

RPW So even though people talked to you about it you really didn't understand until you got over here (Magna Vista)?

ALEX Yeah. Then it hit me real hard. I knew I had to get through it (the LPT).

RPW How did you feel when you were told you had failed again?

ALEX In the eighth grade?

RPW Yes. When we let you know just before leaving eighth grade.

ALEX I felt bad because I had failed three times. I had only passed one part, the math. I felt bad the next year at Magna Vista. My ninth grade year when I came it had no grade (NG). When I would come back to school (after an absence) it would have "no grade" instead of ninth grade.

RPW Instead of a nine you had an NG.

ALEX Yeah.

RPW What did that "ungraded" status, that NG, mean to you?

ALEX I thought I wasn't really over here. I didn't have a grade. I thought about a whole lot of things. I thought they might send me back to Drewry Mason. I knew I had to get it out of the way. I had to study for it every day.

RPW How did your classmates react to you being "undgraded"?

ALEX I tried not to tell them. I wanted them to think I was with them. I was keepin' it to myself, but it was getting to me on the inside.

RPW Did any of your friends find out?

ALEX Yeah. The ones I was in class with. They would see that NG. They asked me what it meant. I had to tell them I didn't pass the test. Then they asked if that was why I wasn't playing basketball. I told 'em, "yeah". They would just look at me funny.

RPW How did your teachers and coaches react?

ALEX They were upset with me.

RPW You really think so?

ALEX Yes.

RPW Any particular teacher or coach that you could tell was upset?

ALEX Coach J. He was the J-V coach that year and he wanted me to play. I got to practice with them, but I couldn't play. He wanted me to play in games, but I couldn't

RPW Were there any particular reactions from teachers when you went to class?

ALEX Mrs. G helped me out a whole lot. I had to take her reading class because that was one part I had failed. She helped me out a whole lot. She got really happy when I passed. When I told her I passed she was really happy.

RPW How did your parents react when they found out you were in this "ungraded" status and you couldn't play sports?

ALEX Are you talking about before I passed?

RPW Yes. When you finally had to let them know you were in this "ungraded" status.

ALEX They were upset, really. You know my brother was a really good basketball player and they wanted me to play just like him, but I couldn't play that year. They were real upset with me. They didn't get to see me play in any games even though I was over here practicing.

RPW What changes did you make to become more successful on the LPT? In other words, why do you think you passed the test?

ALEX Basketball, really. That was all that was on my mind. That and that ungraded stuff.

RPW Trying to get the NG from behind your name?

ALEX Yes.

RPW Basketball was a major factor too?

ALEX Yes.

RPW Were there other factors than basketball that helped?

ALEX A whole lot of people really. One of my friends told me that I needed to get out there. He said I need to pass that test because it would hurt me down the road. He was a kid older than I was. He went through it and understood.

RPW So some of your peers, your friends helped to motivate you?

ALEX Yes.

RPW Did your parents make any changes, once they knew what was going on, that helped you?

ALEX They made me study harder at home. Usually I would come home and watch TV. After they knew, they made me do my homework first.

RPW So it wasn't just a case of working harder on the test?

ALEX It was everywhere.

RPW Here's the question you've been waiting for, the one you get to be happy about. How did you feel when you found out you passed the LPT?

ALEX Man. Unbelievable, first I wanted to see what grade I was in. That was the number one thing. I talked to Mrs. W, one of my guidance counselors, and she said I was in the ninth going to tenth. That's when I started realizing. I started getting really happy. I knew I could play. Then Coach Y started telling me I could

play. He wanted me to play all summer to get ready. I needed to get better because I couldn't play my ninth grade year. I was really happy because I didn't have to worry about it none.

RPW How did your parents feel?

ALEX Same way. Happy and relieved it was over.

RPW What do you think was the single greatest factor in your passing the LPT? What motivated you to pass?

ALEX The thing that made me want to pass it?

RPW The single greatest motivating factor.

ALEX It would be to be with my classmates. Not just basketball, but to be in the eleventh grade with my classmates and not NG.

RPW Getting out of that ungraded status. I know basketball is important to you, but getting rid of the NG was most important?

ALEX Yes.

Interview with Derrick  
On Wed., Nov. 30, 1994

- RPW Can you tell me about your experiences in taking the Literacy Passport Test?
- DERRICK It was a pretty good experience. I learned a lot from the test.
- RPW When was the first time you ever saw the LPT?
- DERRICK In the seventh grade. I'd been studying for it and trying to pass it.
- RPW When did you first understand the consequences of failing the test?
- DERRICK About ninth grade. I wanted to play football, but they told me I couldn't play because of that.
- RPW That was one of the most important consequences?
- DERRICK Yeah.
- RPW Did you also know about graduation from high school?
- DERRICK Yeah. They told me that after the first time I failed it and that made me want to pass it.
- RPW Did you receive any help in trying to pass the LPT?
- DERRICK Yes. From teachers and from myself. I tried to help myself.
- RPW Did you?
- DERRICK Yeah.
- RPW What type of help?
- DERRICK Just studying harder. Reading things and writing.
- RPW Who in particular gave you help? Who was the most helpful?
- DERRICK Probably Mr. F and Coach B.
- RPW OK. What did Mr. F teach You?
- DERRICK He taught me math. He really taught me all of it. He kept talking to me about passing it.
- RPW He was your alternative education teacher?
- DERRICK Yes. At Drewry Mason Middle School.



RPW How did Coach B help?

DERRICK He wanted me to play football here at Magna Vista. So he would come around and tell me he wanted me to study and do my work because he wanted to see me on the football field.

RPW That was important to you also?

DERRICK Yes. It inspired me.

RPW Did your parents ever help with or discuss the test?

DERRICK Yes. They talked to me. They told me it would be good to pass it. To get it out of the way.

RPW Did they know the consequences?

DERRICK I don't think they knew, but they wanted me to pass it at the same time.

RPW They just knew it was important for you to pass the test?

DERRICK Yes.

RPW How did you feel when you were taking the test during the spring of your eighth grade year?

DERRICK I knew about the test, but I didn't take it very seriously. But I wish I would have.

RPW How did you feel when you found out you had failed the LPT again?

DERRICK I didn't really take that seriously either until everyone started telling me what I couldn't do because I had failed.

RPW That was when you got to Magna Vista?

DERRICK Yes. At Magna Vista.

RPW Who was telling you those things?

DERRICK Coaches. Any sport I went out for I was told I couldn't play because I had failed that test. I couldn't even manage or nothing.

RPW You couldn't participate in any way, shape or form?

DERRICK No. Nothing. No sports.

RPW What did the "ungraded" status mean to you?

DERRICK It made me feel different, you know. Everybody else was in a grade

and I was an NG. I would look at the absentee list and see NG by my name. That made me want to pass it too.

RPW You didn't like being different from the other kids?

DERRICK Nah. I wanted to be in a regular class.

RPW When you say regular class, were there some special classes you had to take due to being ungraded.

DERRICK Our homeroom had only eight people in it. Everyone else had 20 in their homeroom.

RPW So all the ungraded students were in a homeroom together?

DERRICK Yes.

RPW How did being "ungraded" make you feel? You've touched on it some, but tell me again some of the feelings you had.

DERRICK It just made me feel different. Everyone else was ninth grade or tenth grade. I'm just...NG.

RPW That NG's rough, huh?

DERRICK Yes sir!

RPW Are you happy now that you get that eleven by your name?

DERRICK Yeah! (big smile). I'm really happy now.

RPW How did your classmates react when you were in that ungraded status?

DERRICK They asked me what was wrong. I got tired of people asking why I had NG by my name. They asked a lot of questions about it.

RPW Any of your athletic friends talk to you about it?

DERRICK It was mostly them. They would try out for a sport and not see me out. They would ask why I wasn't trying out.

RPW That bothered you a lot?

DERRICK Yes, at first. But after a while they got used to it and stopped asking. I forgot about it until it was time for the test again.

RPW How did teachers and coaches react?

DERRICK They just told me to go ahead and pass it. They told me if I needed any help with anything just come and ask and they would see what they could do.

RPW You didn't notice any negative reaction by teachers because of your ungraded status?

DERRICK No. They acted like they knew I needed special help or whatever.

RPW They were pretty understanding, as a whole?

DERRICK Yeah.

RPW How did your parents react?

DERRICK When?

RPW Once you were in the "ungraded" status.

DERRICK My dad came over looking for my grade sheets. They told him mine weren't with everybody else's. He was wondering why they had to go through all that. He told me he wanted me to pass it. He was tired of seeing me falling down.

RPW Do you think it bothered your father that you couldn't participate in sports?

DERRICK I guess so. He would tell me to keep my grades up and make sure I pass. I don't think sports participation bothered him that much. He just wanted me to pass.

RPW He wanted you to pass more for the academic reasons?

DERRICK More for me to be able to get out of school. To graduate.

RPW What changes did you make in order to become successful on the LPT? In other words, why did you pass?

DERRICK Mostly I think I was kinda young back in seventh grade. I didn't want to study or nothing. When everyone started talking about the LPT I got my act together. I started studying. I did my best.

RPW Did your best on the test, or did your best every day?

DERRICK Everyday until I passed it.

RPW Were there any other factors that helped you?

DERRICK Like we said, teachers giving me extra work. Practice work, math work to practice for the test. Writing paragraphs. A little bit of everything. If it was on the test, they gave it to me, and I tried to do it.

RPW Did your parents make any changes that helped you?

DERRICK They bought me math books to help with that part. That was the toughest part for me to pass. They just worked with me.

RPW Did they work with you at home?

DERRICK They talked to me mostly.

RPW They gave you the resources?

DERRICK Yeah. Then it's up to me to take it.

RPW How did you feel when you found out you had passed the LPT?

DERRICK (big sigh and smile) I was very happy. All I could think about was next football season. I could be out there. I don't have to worry about missin' a day and having NG on the absentee list. Made me feel better about myself. I felt I had done something I could look up to.

RPW How did the kids react? How did your friends feel?

DERRICK They were happy! They were telling me they were glad, because we hadn't played together since eighth grade and now we finally were getting the chance to be back together.

RPW What do you think was the single greatest factor in your passing the LPT? In other words, what motivated you?

DERRICK Myself really. Myself and the teachers.

RPW What was the single greatest thing? Think about it. What was the number one thing that motivated you to pass it?

DERRICK Graduating from high school. Normally. Like everybody else.

RPW Getting that diploma like everybody else?

DERRICK Yeah. (smiling).

Interview with Frederick  
On Tue., Dec. 6, 1994

- RPW Tell me about your experiences in taking the LPT. When you hear the term Literacy Passport, what do you think of?
- FREDERICK You mean from the beginning?
- RPW Yes.
- FREDERICK At first, I really didn't think much of it. Then when I took it, and found out I failed it, and I couldn't play sports when I came to ninth grade I was really down. It made me want to study more. It made me work harder.
- RPW So when you took it the first few times and failed it didn't bother you very much?
- FREDERICK Oh yeah, it did.
- RPW Even when you were in sixth and seventh grade?
- FREDERICK I moved here in eighth grade.
- RPW So you first took the test in eighth grade?
- FREDERICK Yes.
- RPW Did the guidance counselors talk to you about the test after you failed it?
- FREDERICK Mr. R told me about it. He told me I couldn't play sports.
- RPW That really bothered you?
- FREDERICK Very much.
- RPW When was the first time you saw the test?
- FREDERICK Eighth grade.
- RPW When did you first understand the consequences of failing it?
- FREDERICK First time I failed it.
- RPW When Mr. R talked to you?
- FREDERICK Yes.
- RPW He's the guidance counselor here at Magna Vista?
- FREDERICK OK. The first person to talk to me was Mr. O at Drewry

Mason.

RPW He spoke to you at the end of your eighth grade year?

FREDERICK Yes.

RPW What did Mr. O talk to you about?

FREDERICK He talked to me about my scores. My scores and what I needed to pass. He said I didn't pass.

RPW Do you know what parts you failed the first time?

FREDERICK The writing. That's the one I kept failing.

RPW Did you receive any help in trying to pass the LPT?

FREDERICK Yes, through my English classes.

RPW Do you know any particular teachers who helped?

FREDERICK In ninth grade it was Ms. G and in tenth grade it was Ms. M.

RPW What type of help did they give you?

FREDERICK Writing stuff. Punctuation and stuff. Focusing on my topic.

RPW Did your parents ever help or discuss the test with you?

FREDERICK My mom did.

RPW What kinds of things did she do?

FREDERICK She told me to write paragraphs down and practice staying with the topic.

RPW How did you feel when you were taking that test during the spring of your eighth grade year?

FREDERICK I didn't feel anything. I didn't care about it.

RPW You didn't understand the consequences?

FREDERICK No.

RPW Had anyone spoken to you, before you took the test, about the consequences?

FREDERICK I'm not sure. They told me I had to take it when I entered Henry County Schools. Other than that I don't know.

RPW How did you feel when you found out you had failed it?

FREDERICK I felt low.

RPW What did the ungraded status mean to you?

FREDERICK It was like I wasn't in ninth grade at all.

RPW How did that make you feel?

FREDERICK I didn't feel like I was in a regular grade.

RPW Were there any specific things that made you feel that way?

FREDERICK When we would be absent I would look at the absentee sheet and see all those kids with grades by their names. That "NG" by my name made me feel strange. I didn't feel right.

RPW How did your classmates react?

FREDERICK Oh, they didn't.

RPW You didn't receive much reaction from your classmates?

FREDERICK No.

RPW How did your teachers and coaches react?

FREDERICK You mean the football coach?

RPW Sure.

FREDERICK Coach S told me he wanted me to pass it so I could play football.

RPW Any of your teachers have any particular reactions?

FREDERICK No.

RPW You did say you got help from Ms. G and Ms. M. Everyone else treated you like a regular student?

FREDERICK Yes.

RPW How did your parents react to the ungraded situation?

FREDERICK I explained it to her and she just told me I have to pass.

RPW What changes did you make to become successful on the LPT? In other words, why do you think you passed it?

FREDERICK Because I had a goal.

RPW           What was your goal?

FREDERICK   To pass the writing part of the test so I could play sports.

RPW           Were there any other factors that helped?

FREDERICK   As far as what?

RPW           Helping you pass. You said you had a goal. Were there other things besides sports that made you want to pass?

FREDERICK   Oh yeah. Getting in my right grade.

RPW           So the most important things for you were sports and getting in the right grade.

FREDERICK   Yes.

RPW           Did your parents make any changes that helped?

FREDERICK   Not really.

RPW           You told me about her helping with paragraphs.

FREDERICK   Yeah.

RPW           Any other things she did to help you?

FREDERICK   Not really.

RPW           How did you feel when you passed?

FREDERICK   I felt great. I was very happy.

RPW           Did you notice any changes in your classmates after you passed?

FREDERICK   Not really.

RPW           How about your mom?

FREDERICK   She was happy for me.

RPW           What do you think was the single greatest factor in your passing the LPT? What motivated you?

FREDERICK   Football.

RPW           What was next?

FREDERICK   Getting into the right grade.



Interview with Gregory  
On Wed., Dec. 7, 1994

- RPW Can you tell me about your experiences in taking the LPT?
- GREGORY I think about my school work. Putting my mind to it and doing what I can do.
- RPW What were your early experiences with the LPT?
- GREGORY Basically the same. I studied the material that was given to me and I tried to motivate myself to do it.
- RPW When was the first time you ever saw that test?
- GREGORY Sixth grade.
- RPW When did you first understand the consequences for failing the test?
- GREGORY Seventh or eighth grade.
- RPW So, while you were still in middle school, people had explained to you about not being able to participate in sports and not being able to graduate.
- GREGORY Yes sir.
- RPW Do you remember who it was that told you those things?
- GREGORY Not really.
- RPW Did you receive any help in trying to pass the LPT?
- GREGORY Teachers and Mr. R. He helped me with some of the material.
- RPW Were there any teachers at Drewry Mason that helped you?
- GREGORY Yes. Mrs. F.
- RPW Once you got here, (Magna Vista) who helped here? You said Mr. R. Anyone else?
- GREGORY Mr. R and maybe my mom. That's about it.
- RPW What type of help did they give you?
- GREGORY The reading part and the words. Like understanding the meaning of words.
- RPW Was that the main part you needed to pass, the reading?

GREGORY Yes.

RPW By whom? You said Mr. R, did you have any special teachers here?

GREGORY Not really.

RPW Who was your reading teacher here?

GREGORY I don't really remember.

RPW Did your parents ever help with the test or discuss the test with you?

GREGORY Yes sir.

RPW That's your Mom.

GREGORY Yes.

RPW What kind of help did she give?

GREGORY Some of the words that Mr. R gave me that would be on the test, she would call them out to me and I would give the definitions for the word. That helped me out a lot.

RPW So you did get a lot of help from your mom?

GREGORY Yes sir.

RPW That's good. How did you feel when you took the test during the spring of your eighth grade year?

GREGORY Nervous.

RPW Why were you nervous?

GREGORY There were a lot of people around me and the words were hard. I was saying, "I'm gonna be last to finish."

RPW Do you have problems taking tests like that anyway?

GREGORY Yes, some of them.

RPW How did you feel when you found out you had failed the LPT again? At the end of eighth grade, in May or June, when we explained it to you?

GREGORY Disappointed.

RPW Any other feelings you can think of?

GREGORY I don't know.

RPW Why do you think you were disappointed?

GREGORY Because I had all those words in my head and I couldn't block 'em out. I remembered them all at once.

RPW So everything got jumbled up in your head and you couldn't put down what you really thought?

GREGORY Yes.

RPW What did the ungraded status mean to you? When you came to Magna Vista and they said you were "ungraded," what did that mean to you?

GREGORY It meant that I wasn't a part of the school. I was an ungraded ninth grader.

RPW How did being ungraded make you feel?

GREGORY Not too bad. I didn't think about it too much.

RPW How did your classmates react?

GREGORY Once I made friends they didn't say much about it.

RPW So they didn't bother you or say much about being ungraded?

GREGORY No.

RPW How about teaches or coaches?

GREGORY No.

RPW They didn't treat you any differently knowing you were ungraded?

GREGORY No, they just treated me like I was in ninth grade.

RPW How did your parents react to your being ungraded?

GREGORY She said I needed to work harder, get my school work so I could get my diploma and get out, no matter what.

RPW Did she realize that until you passed the test you could not get your diploma?

GREGORY Yes sir.

RPW Did she ever talk to you about that?

GREGORY No.

RPW She was still helping you study for the test?

GREGORY Yes.

RPW What changes did you make to become successful on the LPT, in other words why do you think you passed?

GREGORY (pausing, reflecting).

RPW You took the test in sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade and passed it in the tenth grade. What changes did you make?

GREGORY I had plans after school. I just put them out of my mind. There was no one else there. I motivated myself and had confidence in myself.

RPW So you told yourself you could do it?

GREGORY Yeah.

RPW And you spent time after school working on it?

GREGORY Yeah.

RPW Did anybody else help you?

GREGORY No. I got in a quiet spot and studied the material.

RPW Who had given you the material to study?

GREGORY Different teachers. Mr. R gave me some. My parents gave me some, and my English teacher.

RPW Were there any other factors that helped? You said you studied hard, had confidence in yourself, and got into a quiet place to study. Were there any other factors that helped?

GREGORY Teachers.

RPW Did your parents make any changes?

GREGORY No sir.

RPW They just continued trying to help as they had all along?

GREGORY Yes.

RPW So the biggest changes were you making a decision to work harder. To devote time to the LPT instead of...

GREGORY ...Playing (smiling).

RPW How did you feel when you found out you had passed the LPT?

GREGORY Surprised!

RPW Why were you surprised?

GREGORY The first time I took the test last year, they lost my copy. So I had to come here (guidance office) and take it again. I didn't think I passed. So I was surprised when I found out I passed.

RPW Were there any other feelings than surprise?

GREGORY Happy.

RPW How do you think your mom felt when you told her you passed?

GREGORY Great. She loved it.

RPW Was she proud of you?

GREGORY Yes sir.

RPW What do you think was the single greatest factor in motivating you to pass the LPT?

GREGORY Well, my parents really. My mom sat me down and said you can't get your diploma in high school and you can't get a good job unless you pass this test. So I remembered all that she said and kept it in my head until I finished the test.

Interview with Alex's Parents  
on Tue. , Jan. 9, 1995

RPW What is your understanding of the LPT? When you hear that term, what thoughts come to mind?

MOTHER I knew he was taking some kind of test but I didn't really understand what it was all about.

RPW Can you tell me anything about your son's experiences with the test?

MOTHER At first it was kind of off and on. Some good things and some bad.

RPW When is the first time you remember him taking the test?

MOTHER I talked to his teacher (alternative education) and his principal at Drewry Mason Middle School. That was the first year. They explained, or thought they were explaining, it to me but I still didn't know what it was all about.

RPW When was the first time you did understand the consequences for the LPT, such as not participating in sports?

MOTHER Now he's always been into sports. I think my son realized he couldn't play sports if he didn't bring his grades up.

RPW You talked with him about that?

MOTHER Yes. He knew I had talked to Coach Y (at Magna Vista). He knew that and I really don't know what happened but he got to a place where everything became more interesting to him. The higher he went in school, the more he was interested. He would finish one class and look forward to the next. But, he's into sports. He likes playing sports.

FATHER I believe when he went to Drewry Mason he began to do better.

MOTHER No, it was Coach Y at Magna Vista that helped him a whole lot.

FATHER Yeah, but that class at Drewry Mason was where he turned around.

RPW Did he receive any help in his attempts to pass the LPT?

MOTHER The only person I know is Coach Y, because one year I decided not to let him play sports. Coach got on my case. He called me. We let him sit out. Coach said, "We've got to help your son." He knew my oldest son. He played for Coach Y.

RPW Yes, I've got pictures of your son on the walls at Drewry Mason where they won three consecutive state basketball championships.

MOTHER He (Coach) really wanted to help my son.

RPW Do you think there was anything else that could have been done to help your son?

MOTHER I think it's him doing it himself.

RPW It needed to be him?

MOTHER Yes, he did it. As far as I'm concerned, from what I could see, his grades started improving, it was him.

RPW Did you help him at all? You've told me you put some pressure on him. How?

MOTHER It was mostly Coach.

FATHER We constantly reminded him. Told him to bring his books home.

MOTHER Yes, now that's right.

FATHER We made him study. We told him to keep his grades up.

MOTHER One time I know he was having trouble because of not wearing his glasses. That was a problem in the beginning.

RPW We had trouble getting him to wear his glasses at Drewry Mason, or getting his glasses.

MOTHER Yeah, we let him pick out his own frames and everything.

FATHER Didn't he take some special classes down at Drewry Mason?

RPW Yes. They were alternative education classes.

FATHER And at Magna Vista too.

RPW Right. By failing the LPT he became classified as an "ungraded" student. That meant taking some special remedial classes. Did you understand what the "ungraded" status meant?

MOTHER I did.

RPW What did the "ungraded" status mean to you?

FATHER We knew things weren't right.

MOTHER I didn't fully understand. I love music and tried getting him an instrument, but he didn't like that.

RPW He likes basketball?

MOTHER Yes. Sports.

RPW So what changes do you think your son made to become successful on the LPT?

MOTHER I'm not sure. He didn't bring more work home. His grades just began to improve. He took more interest.

RPW Do you think the pressure of that one year without basketball helped him?

MOTHER I think that had a lot to do with it. With Coach behind him as well.

RPW How did you feel when he began doing better?

MOTHER Oh man! You don't have to ask that! I mean perfect.

FATHER That last year he was down at Drewry Mason. That's where I saw the most improvement. Those classes seemed to help him more than anything. Then when he went to (Magna Vista) those habits took over right there. He had some study classes so he could work at school.

RPW At Drewry Mason he was in a remedial reading course as well as the alternative education program.

MOTHER Thank you for doing it. Whatever, because it sure made a turn around for him.

RPW What do you think was the single greatest factor in motivating your son to pass the LPT?

MOTHER Playing basketball. It seemed like he took more responsibility. He got a job (the year he couldn't play) and that meant a whole lot.

RPW You spoke on the phone about some of the kids he was associating with now as compared to in the past.

MOTHER Yes. He got a little girl now. That's helped too. Other athletes, people from work.

RPW Dad, what do you think motivated him the most?

FATHER The last year down at Drewry Mason, those courses. Those



special courses helped him to get more organized. They helped teach him how to study.

Interview with the Derrick's Parents  
on Tue., Jan. 9, 1995

- RWP What is your understanding of the Literacy Passport Test?
- MOTHER That's the state reading test that every student has to pass to qualify to be in a grade.
- RPW Can you tell me about your child's experiences with the LPT?
- MOTHER He failed two parts at Drewry Mason. Then he passed one. He still needed math when he got to high school.
- RPW That was the last one he needed to pass?
- MOTHER Yes.
- RPW At what point (grade) did he pass that?
- MOTHER Tenth grade.
- RPW When was the first time you recall your son taking the test?
- MOTHER In elementary school.
- RPW When did you first understand the consequences of him failing the LPT?
- MOTHER Mostly after he got to Drewry Mason
- RPW At the middle school?
- MOTHER Yes.
- RPW (Question to Dad) When did you first know of the consequences?
- FATHER Same time. When he failed it at Drewry Mason
- RPW Did your child receive help on the LPT?
- MOTHER Mr. F. (Drewry Mason alternative education teacher).
- RPW When he came to ninth grade was anyone helping him there?
- MOTHER No. Mr. F is the only one I know of that helped.
- RPW What type of help did Mr. F give him?
- FATHER Mostly encouragement to study every day and do what he needed to to get prepared for the test.
- RPW Do you feel like the help was adequate?

BOTH Yes. I think Mrs. F (reading specialist) helped him also.

RPW What else could have been done?

FATHER I don't think you could have done any more at your level, but at the lower grades there could have been more done at the elementary level.

MOTHER We tried to get more help. They wouldn't accept him (into special education).

RPW Did you try to help him?

BOTH Sure. We tried.

RPW What things were you doing at the elementary level?

FATHER Once we realized that our son had this problem we went to his principal and talked to him. He encouraged us to provide the things that he needed to be successful at home. He said not to push him or take away the activities he enjoyed. He encouraged us to be there for our son and provide a quiet place for him to study and the materials needed to study.

RPW What other things would you like to have seen done?

MOTHER When we had him tested they said he was in a grey area. Wasn't low enough for special education or learning disabilities.

RPW When he came to Drewry Mason we were experiencing the same problems. He was tested again with the same results. At that point I was able to provide alternative education which they don't have in elementary school.

BOTH That helped him quite a lot.

RPW At that point in middle school, what things were you doing to help him?

MOTHER Trying to help him with his homework. Whenever he brought books home. That was the thing was getting the work home. It still is (laughing).

RPW Was there any anxiety on your part as your son prepared for the LPT in the spring of his eighth grade year.

MOTHER I just wished him luck as he was going out the door.

RPW (To dad) You knew the consequences that he couldn't play sports?

FATHER Yes.

RPW Did that bother you?

FATHER Yes.

RPW How did you think he felt?

MOTHER He felt ashamed

FATHER He felt he was under the gun.

RPW How did you feel when he failed the LPT again?

FATHER I was troubled during this entire period. Wondering if he was going to pick up and do the necessary things to accomplish what he needed to accomplish. It was bothering us.

RPW How did he feel when he knew he was going into that ungraded status. Did he talk to you about it?

FATHER He didn't talk too much about it, but deep down he was hurtin'.

MOTHER He wanted to play that sports. That was the main thing.

RPW What did the "ungraded" status mean to you at that time?

FATHER Not totally at first. As the year went on I began to understand all the consequences.

RPW When you understood totally, how did you feel?

FATHER When we registered him in the fall we had trouble going into his homeroom class. That's when I knew he had to do something to get back into the grade he belonged in.

RPW How do you think that ungraded status made him feel?

FATHER I don't think he wanted to be there and he knew what he had to do to get out of there.

MOTHER It really didn't seem like it bothered him. The sports bothered him, but otherwise he just sort of went with the flow.

RPW What changes did you son make to become successful on the LPT?

MOTHER There for a while he was studying more. When it was time to have the test.

FATHER I think my son's whole problem was preparing before hand. He's like the one minute man, test tomorrow, I'll study tonight. He's been like that from day one. Sometimes he acts like he's going to snap out of it, other times he falls back to the same old way.

RPW Were there any changes that you made?

FATHER I learned to accept him and not apply as much pressure as I did in the early years when I didn't understand his problem. I learned to cope with him mainly after some things that you (principal at Drewry Mason) told me. We gave him time to make up his mind that it was time to do the work.

RPW How did you feel when your child passed the LPT?

MOTHER Very happy.

FATHER Oh Yes! We rejoiced.

RPW Are you proud of him?

BOTH Yes. We would be proud of him anyway, but especially so.

RPW How do you think he felt?

MOTHER I know he was happy.

RPW What was, in your mind, the single greatest motivating factor in your son's passing the LPT?

MOTHER Sports.

FATHER I would have to agree. Sports.

Interview with Frederick's Mother  
on Thurs., Jan. 11, 1995

- RPW What is your understanding of the Literacy Passport Test (LPT)?
- MOTHER It's to find out what the students have been learning in school. What they have accomplished.
- RPW Can you tell me about your child's experiences with the LPT?
- MOTHER Yes. Well he failed it. Once, twice. He was disappointed, so I had to talk to him and I told him he needed to read more and study harder. So we got together on paragraphs and we read a lot of books and went to the library. That helped him a lot. He wrote paragraphs. We went over them and checked them out. If it wasn't right we had to do them over again.
- RPW Writing was the one he got stuck on?
- MOTHER Yes.
- RPW When was the first time you recall your son taking the test?
- MOTHER At Drewry Mason.
- RPW He came to us in the eighth grade?
- MOTHER Yes.
- RPW So eighth grade was the first time he took it. (Transfer from Florida). When did you first know about the consequences of him failing it?
- MOTHER He came home that night after he had taken it and said he didn't think he did very well. He was disappointed. I said, " You gotta buckle down hard. You can do it." See, sometimes when he can't do something or can't get something right, he wants to give up. But I tell him, " You can't give up. There is no such thing as you can't, cause you can do anything you set your mind to." He said he'd try it again.
- RPW So at that point you understood the consequences, the things he would not be able to do in the ninth grade?
- MOTHER No I didn't.
- RPW Was it when he came over here (Magna Vista) in ninth grade?
- MOTHER That's when I found out. I think I got a letter and it said he's not considered a ninth grader until he passes that Literacy test. I told him, " You gotta buckle down." I said, "You have to do it and you can do it."

RPW Did your child receive any help in passing the LPT?

MOTHER I think so. One of the teachers here. Someone here (Magna Vista). And the help I got together with him at home and done.

RPW Do you know what type of help was he getting?

MOTHER No, I don't. All I know is it was someone at Magna Vista.

RPW Do you think the help was adequate?

MOTHER I think so. I knew the things he was getting and he passed. I sure was glad because it kind of hurt me at first because he didn't pass. I knew he could do it, but he was just slacking off or he just wasn't interested in it. Then I said, "Well you can't play football," and that's something I always wanted him to do. Plus he wanted to. It kinda hurt him. His other friends were playing but he couldn't play. Then my brother had a long talk with him.

RPW Could anything else have possibly been done to help him?

MOTHER No. I think...well his father and I aren't together and its been four years since he's seen his father and that had been bothering him too. I think he would have passed it the first time if his father had been here. That had a lot to do with it.

RPW Having that positive male role model?

MOTHER Yes sir.

RPW I think Mr. S (Drewry Mason football coach) was trying to help him in that capacity.

MOTHER He did. Mr. S and I had a long talk when my son was at Drewry Mason. He tried to help him out a lot.

RPW The next question is did you help; and you've told me the things you did. Was there any anxiety on your part as your son was preparing to take it?

MOTHER Yes, somewhat. It's hard trying to be the mother and the father. You're working every day. I worked 60 to 70 hours each week, but we couldn't give up. I had to play that father role. Take time out for him.

RPW How do you think he felt when taking it in eighth grade?

MOTHER First of all he didn't want to come here anyway. We moved here from F. He really wanted to stay down there. It was much better, though, for him to be here because of the problems between me and his father. Even the counselor down there at his school said it was best for him to get out of that environment.

RPW So there were other anxieties other than the test. Do you think that added to it?

MOTHER Yes.

RPW How did you feel when you found out he had failed it and would have to go to the ninth grade "ungraded?"

MOTHER I was disappointed. Like I said, I knew he could do it. Especially when I found out he wasn't considered a ninth grader, He couldn't play football and I was just disappointed. I said, "You got to get down to it. You've got to stop some of the things you're doing because you got to study." I told him, "You've got to pass this test." After I talked to him and my brother talked to him he said, "I'm going to do better. I'm going to study harder and pass that test." I said, "I believe you will and I'm going to pray for you too." I believe in praying.

RPW How did he feel when he found out he'd failed it?

MOTHER He was disappointed. He was looking forward to playing football..

RPW What did the "ungraded" status mean to you? Did you understand what it entailed?

MOTHER No.

RPW You said they sent you a letter that said he wasn't considered a 9th grader but you didn't understand the other things that went along with that?

MOTHER Not completely.

RPW How did knowing your child would be "ungraded" make you feel?

MOTHER Highly disappointed.

RPW How do you think he felt?

MOTHER Very bad. You're coming to school and doing your work and then you don't get credit for it because you haven't passed that test. That hurts. It really does.

RPW What changes did your son make to become successful on the LPT?

MOTHER He would read a lot. Plus he was doing those paragraphs. He did a lot of writing. He was going to the library three times a week. He would get books. He did a lot of writing. If he would write a paragraph and it didn't sound right to me then he had to do it over. That helped him out a lot.

RPW Were there any other factors that helped?



MOTHER My brother, plus talking to Mr. S a lot. Mr. S told him if he wanted to play football he had to pass that test. If you got friends and you know their getting credit for it and your doing the same work and not getting credit. You know you have to get on the ball. I wouldn't want my friends to leave me behind. Neither did he.

RPW Did you make any changes?

MOTHER I took time out with him. We would sit for hours sometimes. I worked on Saturday from seven until three, but when I got home, I took time to help him.

RPW How did you feel when your son passed the LPT?

MOTHER I could have shouted. I could have cried. I was so happy for him. I hugged him and told him I was proud of him.

RPW How did he feel?

MOTHER He felt good. When he came home he said, "Momma I didn't pass it again." He was looking really sad. I said, "Son, I know you're not telling me the truth." He said, "Yeah, I passed it." He was really happy.

RPW What do you think was the single greatest motivating factor in helping your son pass the LPT?

MOTHER Making him write those paragraphs. He wrote letters. Me checking behind him. I think that's what it was.

RPW Were there any other things that motivated him?

MOTHER His older sister. She told him he wasn't taking time out to do the things he needed to be doing. She told him she knew he could do it. He was acting like he didn't care because he had failed it the first time. Sometimes with my son you have to stay on him. I'm still doing that now.

Interview with Gregory's Mother  
on Wed., Jan. 10, 1995

- RPW What is your understanding of the Literacy Passport Test (LPT)?
- MOTHER I didn't know much about it.
- RPW Do you remember your son going through a period where he was in an "ungraded" status.
- MOTHER Yes.
- RPW What can you tell me about that experience?
- MOTHER It made him feel really bad. It brought him down below the other kids. He didn't want to associate with them. I just told him he had to pull his grades up to get out of it (the "ungraded" status). His teacher, I can't remember her name, she helped him pull them up. And he did it.
- RPW When was the first time you remember him taking the test?
- MOTHER I believe that was when he was in the seventh grade.
- RPW Back in middle school?
- MOTHER Yes.
- RPW When was the first time you knew about the consequences for him failing?
- MOTHER When I went to visit one of his teachers. She was thinking about holding him back. She said she wouldn't have to do that if she could put him in some special classes. When he went to those classes he was top of the class. He did more than the other kids could do.
- RPW Did your son receive help in passing the LPT?
- MOTHER I helped him a little, but he mostly did it on his own.
- RPW Do you know of any help he was getting at school?
- MOTHER The teacher worked with him a whole lot.
- RPW You mentioned they put him in a special class. Was that a special education class or a remedial class?
- MOTHER It was special education. He had to have seven witnesses (eligibility committee) to get out of it.
- RPW Do you think the help that he got was adequate?

MOTHER Yes.

RPW Can you think of anything the school might have done for him?

MOTHER Not that I know of.

RPW Did you help?

MOTHER Yes. I helped him all I could. Sometimes some things he was doing I didn't even understand.

RPW What kind of things did you do to help him?

MOTHER I sat with him and worked with him about his books. I asked questions from the book or papers his teachers would send home. Spelling words and things like that. Definitions of words and how to spell them.

RPW Was there any anxiety on your part when your son was preparing to take the LPT during the spring of his 8th grade year? That was his last attempt before becoming "ungraded"?

MOTHER I didn't really understand, but he did. He did.

RPW How did he feel? Could you tell there was some anxiety on his part?

MOTHER Yes, because he didn't want to be in any special classes. He wouldn't even associate with the kids around here because he failed and they didn't.

RPW How did you feel when he failed the LPT again and went to Magna Vista as "ungraded"?

MOTHER I felt bad about it. I made him feel bad about it too. I told him things I was going to get him and I didn't get them. In order for him to get them he had to get out of it ("ungraded" status).

RPW What did the "ungraded" status mean to you at that time?

MOTHER I knew what it meant. Let me tell you something. He was really into his grandfather. When his grandfather passed away he lost all interest. After that he really started dropping (his grades). I guess it really affected him as he got older and realized he wasn't around. There was no one there to take his place.

RPW How did the "ungraded" status make your son feel?

MOTHER Made him feel bad. Made him feel real bad.

RPW Do you know why?

MOTHER He wouldn't say. I could just tell. He wouldn't bring home any books. If he did he would throw them in his room and that was it. It was like he really didn't care.

RPW What changes did your son make to become successful on the LPT?

MOTHER He started bringing his books home and doing his work like he should. He studied more and everything else.

RPW Were there any other factors that helped?

MOTHER I don't know. Maybe to keep up with the other kids.

RPW Were there any changes that you made that helped your son?

MOTHER Yes. When I wouldn't get him what he wanted. That changed him.

RPW How did you feel when he passed the LPT?

MOTHER I felt good about it and he did too. All of us felt good about it (the family).

RPW Did he say anything to you?

MOTHER He came home holding the paper and met me at the door with it. He told me, "I passed my test. I passed my test." We were both really happy. I told him, "Now you've got to keep it up like that. You can always go back down."

RPW What do you think was the single greatest factor in motivating your son to pass the LPT?

MOTHER To get those things that he wanted.

RPW The things you wouldn't buy for him until he passed it?

MOTHER He couldn't get them until he passed.

Responses from T<sub>1</sub> (Reading Remediation) for Alex  
on Thurs., Dec. 15, 1994

RPW Can you tell me about your experiences with Alex in taking the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> Alex was in my remedial reading class in sixth grade. He failed the LPT and was placed in a self-contained seventh grade classroom. Alex was remediated again and after taking the LPT in February failed again. He was then placed in the alternative education program his eighth grade year. It was in his eighth grade year that I began to see a change in attitude in a positive way. Alex was extremely quiet in sixth and seventh grade. It was very difficult to get any feedback on what he was capable of doing academically. One way to get Alex into a discussion was to ask him about his brother, who at the time was playing college basketball. Alex said this was what he was going to do also. With his record (academically) to that point, I did not see that as a possibility.

RPW Was there support from home in working with Alex?

T<sub>1</sub> Yes, but Alex did not ask for help. The environment seemed to be supportive and stable.

RPW Did Alex's attitude or work habits change during his eighth grade year?

T<sub>1</sub> Yes. He became more out going and talkative in the small group situation of alternative education.

RPW When Alex was taking the LPT in the spring of his eighth grade year, how did you feel?

T<sub>1</sub> Unsure. I felt that there was a possibility that he could pass, but it was uncertain that he would put forth the effort needed.

RPW How do you think he felt?

T<sub>1</sub> I think he felt the same uncertainty.

RPW How did you feel when he failed again?

T<sub>1</sub> Hopeful that the next try, with basketball as an incentive, he would pass.

RPW How did he feel?

T<sub>1</sub> He did not express any feelings at all.

RPW How did you feel when you heard he had passed?

T<sub>1</sub> Good. I wished he had felt the need to pass sooner.

RPW What do you think motivated Alex to pass?

T<sub>1</sub> That his desire to play basketball had finally made the impression needed to make him take the test with more sincerity.

Responses from T<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Education) for Alex  
on Mon., Dec. 11, 1994

RPW Can you tell me about your experience with Alex in taking the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> He tried very hard in his work. He was a very quiet type of person. I was never sure of his attention span.

RPW Was there any support from home in working with Alex?

T<sub>1</sub> No.

RPW Did Alex's attitude or work habits change during his eighth grade year?

T<sub>1</sub> His work habits seemed to improve, as did his effort, as the year went on.

RPW When Alex was taking the LPT in the spring of his eighth grade year, how did you feel?

T<sub>1</sub> I felt that Alex would pass the test.

RPW How do you think he felt?

T<sub>1</sub> He was so quiet that I'm not sure how he felt.

RPW How did you feel when he failed again?

T<sub>1</sub> Very disappointed.

RPW How did he feel?

T<sub>1</sub> I could tell he was very disappointed also.

RPW How did you feel when you found out that he had finally passed?

T<sub>1</sub> I had expected him to pass.

RPW What do you think motivated Alex to pass?

T<sub>1</sub> Sports

Responses from T<sub>2</sub> for Alex  
on Thur., Jan. 5, 1995

RPW Was there support from home in working with Alex?

T<sub>2</sub> No.

RPW What type of work habits did Alex display while in your class?

T<sub>2</sub> I had Alex for remedial language arts. He had a positive attitude although he was very weak in writing skills.

RPW How did the "ungraded" status affect Alex?

T<sub>2</sub> His self-esteem was effected in a very negative way.

RPW How did you feel when Alex was taking the LPT during his ninth grade year?

T<sub>2</sub> Anxious, but very optimistic.

RPW How did you feel when Alex passed the LPT?

T<sub>2</sub> We both felt wonderful. We celebrated.

RPW What do you think was the single greatest factor in motivating Alex?

T<sub>2</sub> His desire to participate in sports.



Responses from T<sub>1</sub> (Reading Remediation) for Derrick  
on Wed., Dec. 14, 1994

RPW Can you tell me about your experiences with Derrick in taking the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> Derrick was brought to my attention in sixth grade. I was asked to test him at the parent's request. Derrick had an IQ that fell in the "slow learner" category. The only program the school could offer was alternative education. After being placed in the program I saw a totally different attitude develop toward school. Derrick was trying very hard and was able to see some success in this program due to the "small group" setting. I worked with him for three years (as reading/writing remediation teacher). During this time I saw tremendous change in self-esteem (positive) although little academic improvement. He was very limited in his reading and writing skills. Even with one-on-one instruction he struggled.

RPW Was there support from home in working with Derrick?

T<sub>1</sub> Yes. Very much so, but his parents were limited in what they could do.

RPW Did Derrick's attitude or work habits change during his eighth grade year?

T<sub>1</sub> Yes. Derrick was very excited about going to high school and wanted to do well.

RPW When Derrick was taking the LPT in the spring of his eighth grade year, how did you feel?

T<sub>1</sub> That he would not pass.

RPW How do you think he felt?

T<sub>1</sub> I think he tried and did as well as he could.

RPW How did you feel when you heard he had passed?

T<sub>1</sub> Very surprised. I felt that he would never pass the LPT.

RPW What do you think was the single greatest motivating factor in getting Derrick to pass the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> There was never a lack of motivation. It may have been JROTC. He was very proud to be a part of that group. He was also very talented in football. This could have helped, but I did not feel he was academically capable of passing this test.

Responses from T<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Education) for Derrick  
on Wed., Dec. 14, 1994

RPW Can you tell me about your experiences with Derrick in taking the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> Derrick had a very low IQ and struggled in his school work. He did not express very much in the way of feelings when not able to complete class work, or at failing most of his work. I'm not sure, but I don't think he was totally aware of what he was experiencing in his inability to complete assignments. Derrick gave me the feeling he was not concerned, or perhaps that he thought it (failure) was OK (due to past experiences).

RPW Was there support from home in working with Derrick?

T<sub>1</sub> Derrick's parents were concerned about his education and would be available when needed. I'm not sure if they knew how to help him.

RPW Did Derrick's attitude or work habits change during his 8th grade year?

T<sub>1</sub> Derrick maintained constant work habits throughout the school year. He would start an assignment and work on it constantly until time was up. Usually the work ended up incomplete or barely started, but not always. If I worked with him one-on-one he would do better, but he couldn't always repeat the exercise on his own later.

RPW When Derrick was taking the LPT in the spring of his eighth grade year, how did you feel?

T<sub>1</sub> I felt that his effort was hopeless. Derrick tried hard, but did not express any feelings when he did not pass. He took the test as though he was going to pass.

RPW How did you feel when he failed again?

T<sub>1</sub> Not surprised.

RPW How do you think he felt?

T<sub>1</sub> I don't think he realized the severity of failing the test.

RPW How did you feel when you heard Derrick had passed the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> I felt that he had been helped or coached during the test.

RPW What do you think motivated Derrick to pass the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> I don't feel that motivation had any part in his passing the test.

Responses From T<sub>2</sub> for Derrick  
on Fri., Jan. 6, 1995

RPW Was there support from home in working with Derrick?

T<sub>2</sub> Yes.

RPW Did Derrick's attitude or work habits change during his ninth grade year?

T<sub>2</sub> It was two steps forward and one step back throughout the year because of poor study habits.

RPW When Derrick was taking the LPT during the spring of his ninth grade year, how did you feel?

T<sub>2</sub> I was anxious.

RPW How did he feel?

T<sub>2</sub> He was very nervous.

RPW How did you feel when he failed again?

T<sub>2</sub> We were both very disappointed.

RPW What type of attitude and work habits did Derrick display while in your tenth grade class?

T<sub>2</sub> Good-most of the time.

RPW How did the "ungraded" status affect Derrick?

T<sub>2</sub> He felt somewhat self-conscious about this.

RPW How did you feel when he was taking the LPT in the spring of his tenth grade year?

T<sub>2</sub> Anxious again, but optimistic.

RPW How about him?

T<sub>2</sub> The same, more optimistic.

RPW How did you feel when he passed?

T<sub>2</sub> We both felt great. It was just terrific!

RPW What was the single greatest motivating factor in helping Derrick to pass the LPT?

T<sub>2</sub> He wanted to play football (or be manager of the team).

Responses from T<sub>1</sub> for Frederick  
on Tue., Dec. 12, 1994

RPW Can you tell me about your experiences with Frederick in taking the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> I had him for health and physical education. I also coached him in football during his eighth grade year. He was a great kid. We really didn't talk about the test until after he failed it. He worked very hard to bring up his LPT scores.

RPW Was there any support from home in working with Frederick?

T<sub>1</sub> Yes. His mother was helping with the writing skills.

RPW Did Frederick's attitude or work habits change during his eighth grade year?

T<sub>1</sub> Not much. He worked fairly well. I don't think he knew what to expect from that test though.

RPW When Frederick was taking the LPT during the spring of his eighth grade year, how did you feel?

T<sub>1</sub> Because of football, I hoped he would do well.

RPW How do you think he felt?

T<sub>1</sub> He really didn't think much about the test. Again, I don't think he realized the consequences of that test.

RPW How did you feel when you found out he had failed?

T<sub>1</sub> I felt really bad. I knew he couldn't play sports.

RPW How did he feel?

T<sub>1</sub> He felt bad too. I think he wished he had put more into it.

RPW How did you feel when you heard he had passed the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> By the time he passed, I was coaching football at Magna Vista High School. I was very happy. I knew he could help us and I knew sports would help him.

RPW What do you think motivated Frederick to pass the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> Sports (football).

Responses from T<sub>2</sub> for Frederick  
on Tue., Jan. 10, 1995

RPW Can you tell me about your experiences with Frederick in taking the LPT?

T<sub>2</sub> I taught Frederick in ninth and tenth grade. He was in my remedial language arts class.

RPW What type of attitude and work habits did Frederick display while in your classes?

T<sub>2</sub> Frederick's attitude was generally positive and more one of concern for his success. His work habits were usually good; however, from time to time he would allow himself to be distracted.

RPW How did the "ungraded" status effect Frederick?

T<sub>2</sub> He displayed little or no sign of being affected by the "ungraded" status.

RPW What do you think motivated Frederick to pass the LPT?

T<sub>2</sub> I think his motivation came from his personal desire to succeed.

Responses from T<sub>1</sub> (Reading Remediation) for Gregory  
on Thur., Dec. 16, 1994

RPW Can you tell me about your experiences with Gregory in taking the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> He was tested in elementary school and placed in an EMH (educable mentally handicapped) class. During his sixth grade year, at the parents request, he was placed in the regular classroom at DMMS. Gregory failed the LPT in sixth grade and was placed in a self-contained seventh grade classroom. It was at this time that I began to remediate Gregory. Gregory improved some with small group instruction, but seemed to have limitations on what he could retain. He also had problems if he was teased, especially about his size. Gregory failed the LPT in seventh grade and was placed in the alternative education class in eighth grade. It was at this point that Gregory seemed to develop a need to be a part of the group and not to be different. Before this he showed hostility and gave an attitude that he did not care.

RPW Was there any support from home in working with Gregory?

T<sub>1</sub> Having never talked to, or met, his parents I can not comment on parent support.

RPW Did Gregory's attitude or work habits change during his eighth grade year?

T<sub>1</sub> Yes. He worked very hard to keep up with his peers, and did not want to be singled out as being different.

RPW When Gregory was taking the LPT in the spring of his eighth grade year, how did you feel?

T<sub>1</sub> That if he was in the right frame of mind that day there was a possibility that he could pass.

RPW How do you think he felt?

T<sub>1</sub> Nervous.

RPW How did you feel when he failed again?

T<sub>1</sub> Not really surprised.

RPW How did he feel?

T<sub>1</sub> Discouraged and embarrassed.

RPW How did you feel when you heard he had passed the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> Hopeful that he would continue in a positive manner. I knew that without encouragement and extra attention he would not.

RPW What do you think motivated Gregory to pass the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> Peer pressure and the need to be like everyone else.



Responses from T<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Education) for Gregory  
on Thur., Dec. 15, 1994

RPW Can you tell me about your experiences with Gregory in taking the LPT?

T<sub>1</sub> Gregory had the ability to pass the LPT but not the initiative.

RPW Was there support from home in working with Gregory?

T<sub>1</sub> I was not aware of any support from home for him.

RPW Did Gregory's attitude or work habits change during his eighth grade year?

T<sub>1</sub> No. He always tried to do his work, but needed constant prodding.

RPW When Gregory was taking the test during the spring of his eighth grade year, how did you feel?

T<sub>1</sub> I felt that he should and would pass the test.

RPW How do you think he felt?

T<sub>1</sub> He probably thought he was going to pass.

RPW How did you feel when he failed again?

T<sub>1</sub> Not totally surprised. I felt that he could have passed, but wouldn't put forth any effort when he was reviewing the material.

RPW How did you feel when you heard he had passed?

T<sub>1</sub> Indifferent. He would have passed in time.

RPW What do you think motivated Gregory to pass?

T<sub>1</sub> His motivation was possibly the embarrassment of not passing it earlier.

Responses from T<sub>2</sub> for Gregory  
on Wed., Jan. 11, 1995

RPW Can you tell me about your experiences with Gregory?

T<sub>2</sub> He was in my remedial language arts class for two years.

RPW Was there any support from home in working with Gregory?

T<sub>2</sub> No.

RPW Did Gregory's attitude or work habits change during his ninth grade year?

T<sub>2</sub> He would be doing fairly well and then would miss several days just when we were making progress.

RPW What type of attitude or work habits did Gregory display while in your tenth grade class?

T<sub>2</sub> He was still erratic. He worked well at times, did very little at other times.

RPW How did the "ungraded" status effect Gregory?

T<sub>2</sub> He really didn't seem very concerned about it. He was the most unmotivated of the group (this study) you (the researcher) have asked about.

RPW How did you feel when Gregory was taking the test during the spring of his tenth grade year?

T<sub>2</sub> Anxious, but hopeful.

RPW How do you think he felt?

T<sub>2</sub> Irritated to be having to take it again.

RPW How did you feel when Gregory passed the LPT?

T<sub>2</sub> Relieved.

RPW How did he feel?

T<sub>2</sub> He was glad not to have to take it again.

RPW What did you think was the single greatest factor in motivating Gregory to pass?

T<sub>2</sub> I think he just got tired of taking it over so many times.

Interview with Assistant Principal  
at Magna Vista on Demeanor of Alex  
on Thur., Feb. 16, 1995

RPW How has Alex's behavior been during the time he has been at Magna Vista?

AP Alex is another quiet one, extremely quiet, even more so than Frederick from my seeing him around school and my few dealings with him. I haven't had any discipline problems out of Alex, other than a situation on the bus which I took care of. That was about him not coming out to the bus on time, and missing the bus. The bus driver got a little frustrated by that. I haven't had any problems from Alex. He plays basketball. I don't know his parents, never had to contact them.

Interview with Assistant Principal  
at Magna Vista on Demeanor of Derrick  
on Thur., Feb. 16, 1995

RPW How has Derrick's behavior been during the time he has been at Magna Vista?

AP Derrick's behavior has been, I hate to use the term, excellent. He has been extremely good. I have never had any discipline problems with Derrick at all, none! He is a likeable young man. Teachers like him, students like him, and he carries himself well, because he's on the football team (Once he got eligible to play.). No problems at all with Derrick.

RPW Do you know his parents?

AP I know his parents very well. I see them quite often. I used to work with his mother at S Elementary School. We talk, when I see them, about Derrick and how he's doing. I always compliment him to them. They don't live far from me. No problems at all with Derrick.

Interview with Assistant Principal  
at Magna Vista on Demeanor of Frederick  
on Thur., Feb. 16, 1995

RPW How has Frederick's behavior been during the time he has been at Magna Vista?

AP Frederick was sent up here a couple of times last year. Here again, that was maybe talking in class. Around here Frederick is somewhat quiet. In my dealings with Frederick he has always been very quiet. Frederick is a likable kid by me. He speaks to me all the time. Frederick got to play football this year. I think that's helped him a lot. He's not a discipline problem. I've seen some improvement in Frederick too. More maturity. He's one of those quiet ones. I guess that's just his nature.

RPW Have you ever met his mother?

AP No.

RPW She's a very nice lady.

AP I took Frederick home one day last year, but I didn't meet his mother.

RPW Was that discipline related?

AP No. We went to Washington, DC. When we returned no one was here to pick him up.

Interview with Assistant Principal  
at Magna Vista on Demeanor of Gregory  
on Thur., Feb. 16, 1995

RPW How has Gregory's behavior been during the time he has been at Magna Vista?

AP Gregory's first two years here there were discipline problems. He stayed up here in the office. I suspended him from time to time. This year, however, Gregory is much different. I guess you can see the maturity in him. This year he may have been up one time and whatever that was for was minor. I thought I had more on him than I do. It was like "talking in class." But Gregory has made great strides. Discipline-wise he has come a long way.

RPW Do you think that when he was having problems it affected his grades?

AP Yes. I also know that he told one of his teachers last year, and he told me also, that he was stupid and would never be anything. I asked him why he would say that and he said it was what his parents told him. We talked about that quite a bit, but he hasn't mentioned that this year. As I said he's made great improvement this year. He doesn't get into the trouble he used to. That used to range from "misbehavior in class" to "no materials." That's all changed this year.

## Appendix J

### Glossary

1. **MCT--Minimum Competency Tests.** These tests are used to assess and improve students' basic skills. MCT results can provide a basis for the diagnosis and remediation of academic skills.
2. **Barrier Test--**A test, usually an MCT, used as a prerequisite to promotion from one grade or level to another.
3. **Graduation Test--**A barrier test used as a prerequisite to receiving a standard diploma from a secondary or high school.
4. **Virginia's Literacy Passport Test (LPT)--**This test assesses students in the areas of reading, writing, and math. Students are given the test in sixth grade and must pass all three sections before being promoted to ninth grade. Students cannot receive a standard diploma without passing all three sections of this test.
5. **Failure of the LPT--**Students scoring below 250 on any section of the LPT receive a failing grade.
6. **Treatment--**Treatment for the purpose of this study is defined as remedial courses or tracks for students in grades seven and eight. High school students (grades nine through twelve) have a Literacy Development Plan which outlines their remediation until the tests are passed.
7. **Stigmas--**Stigmas associated with failing the LPT include remedial tracking in grades seven and eight, as well as the "ungraded" status in high school should a student not pass all three sections by ninth grade. There are also some social and peer related stigmas normally associated with remedial or special education students.

8. Consequences--Consequences of failing the LPT include missing exploratory courses in grades seven and eight due to remediation, receiving no credit for courses in grades nine through twelve, exclusion from Virginia High School League (VHSL) sanctioned extracurricular activities, and failure to receive a regular diploma at the end of the senior year.

9. Ungraded--Students labeled as "ungraded" do not receive high school credits for the courses they take. Their credits are "banked" and are applied toward graduation if the LPT requirements are met prior to graduation. Ungraded students likewise can not participate in any VHSL sanctioned activities. Ungraded students, very simply, are those students who have not passed all three sections of the LPT upon entering ninth grade.

10. Change in Motivation and Effort--Changes in motivation and effort, for the purposes of this study, will be measured by changes in attendance, behavior, classroom grades, and ultimately, score on the LPT.

11. Change in Attitude--This variable is much more subjective than the measures for motivation and effort above. By interviewing the students, their parents, and teachers, hopefully a representative and accurate portrayal of student attitudes before, during, and after their LPT experiences can be pieced together.

12. Pressure (i.e., peer pressure, parental pressure) -- Social posturing and questioning brought about by the NG label.



## Vita

### I. General Information

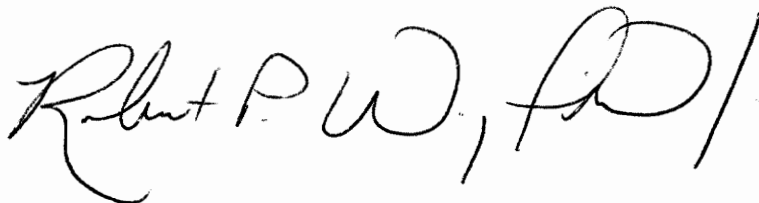
- A. Robert P. Wingfield, Jr.  
Route 4, Box 43C  
Ridgeway, VA 24148
- B. Married to Julie D. Wingfield
- C. Two Sons, Nicholas Clayton Wingfield and Austin Keegan Wingfield

### II. Educational Background

- A. Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies - Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, May 14, 1994 (Educational Administration).
- B. Master of Arts in Education - Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, August 11, 1990 (Educational Administration).
- C. Bachelor of Science - Virginia Commonwealth University, May 18, 1985 (Health and Physical Education).

### III. Professional Experiences

- A. Principal, Drewry Mason Middle School, Henry County, Virginia, (1990-present).
- B. Assistant Principal, Axton Middle School, Henry County, Virginia, (1989-1990).
- C. Physical Science Teacher, Bassett Middle School, Henry County Virginia, (1985-1989).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert P. W., Jr." followed by a stylized flourish.