High School Student Perspectives on the Interaction Between Family Involvement and Peer Relationships on Their Own School Engagement Practices

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(ABSTRACT)

A review of research concludes that a high proportion of high school students are disengaged from their learning and that the adolescent peer culture demeans academic success. Parents are just as disengaged from school as their children. The overall guiding question for this study was: How do high school students vary their engagement with school when influenced by the interaction of family involvement practices and peer relationships? Subordinate questions were: (a) Do high school family involvement programs influence individual student engagement? (b) What is the ability of high school instructional and noninstructional programs to positively influence student engagement practices? and, (c) What effects do parental influences have over the relationship between individual students and their peers. The research methodology used in this study was a case study analysis of 20 high school students at a large, comprehensive high school. An analysis of in-depth interviews and a review of available documents were the preliminary methods of investigation. Results indicate that the varied engagement practices of high school students are not directly affected by overlapping influences of peers, family, and school, but that these overlapping influences are a catalyst for five forces for engagement that emerge from these intricate relationships.

For Peggie and Matthew

With Love

Acknowledgements

From the very beginning of the dissertation process I have given great thought to the acknowledgements that I wanted to appear in this document. As I write this, it seems somewhat surreal that this long process is coming to a close. Now is a good time for reflection on those people who have supported my efforts with this project.

I cannot remember all of the students with whom I have come in contact over these past 22 years. To each and every one of them, I say thank you. In some way, every single student has been a piece of a very intricate puzzle that helped to focus this study. Along with these students, I thank their parents. As a teacher and administrator, I have met hundreds and hundreds of wonderful families who have supported their children in a vast array of school activities. There are also numerous colleagues and friends who over the years have provided me with the inspiration and encouragement to be the very best I can be.

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I would like to thank the 20 students who agreed to participate in this project. I do not know who you are but your stories are compelling and have certainly helped me to understand the importance of your family and your friends. Your words will help define how we as educators can continue to improve schools so that each of you can be successful. You are terrific.

My years as principal of Stonewall Jackson High School have been the most rewarding years of my career. To the faculty, staff, students, and families, I say thanks for everything you do to make our school great and my job a joy. I would especially like to thank Mrs. Lucy Beauchamp, Chairman at Large of the Board of Education, Dr. Edward L. Kelly, Superintendent, and Mr. Jack Lynch, Former Senior Associate Superintendent, for their friendship, encouragement, help, guidance, and support. I would also like to thank the administrative team at Stonewall Jackson for their tremendous efforts during the course of this dissertation. I appreciate you.

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Lastly and most importantly, I want to thank my family. My mother and father worked hard and sacrificed to make sure that my options in life were plentiful. Thank you to my grandmother, Julia Poremski, whose work ethic I can never match, but whose lifelong encouragement helped me to achieve my very best. To my mother-in-law, Binny Wood, who passed away two years ago, I want to say thank you for your love, humor, encouragement, and sharing your beautiful daughter. I miss you.

I want to thank my son Matthew. I am so very proud of you and cannot express how much I appreciate your sacrifices, not only having your father as your principal, but giving me the space and encouragement to pursue this degree. I love you with all of my heart. I promise that I will always be there for you and we will get your 40 hours of practice driving done!

Throughout all of my education, jobs, promotions, moves, wild ideas, setbacks, triumphs, tribulations, sure-fire schemes, and my constant hunger for new and different things, my wife Peggie has been at my side as my loving partner, soul mate and my very best friend. You have my unending love, devotion, appreciation, and admiration for your support and encouragement. Your accomplishments and wisdom are a source of strength and encouragement. I know what a tremendous sacrifice you have made for me. I love you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

On the exact day that the board of education was to vote on my appointment as a high school principal, the superintendent of schools and a board of education member invited me to lunch. This meeting was an opportunity for the board member to have a personal and direct conversation with me about my impending appointment prior to his casting a favorable vote that evening. Almost immediately, our conversation turned to the vast number of problems affecting the school that I wished to lead.

I learned of the nine principals to hold this job in the previous 25 years, ranging from tenures of five years to two days. I learned of staff moral problems, community perception problems, student discipline problems, as well as data that clearly showed a school in crisis. As I pondered my decision to accept this task, the board of education member asked me a decisive question: What was it that I thought I was going to do that had not already been tried by the previous nine? Close to being rendered speechless, I awkwardly searched for an appropriate response. My answer centered on the need to assess the degree to which students and community were disengaged from the school and, working in tandem with all stakeholders, re-engage and perhaps, even reinvent a school.

Steinberg (1996) poses very alarming findings as a result of 10 years worth of studies by himself and several prominent social scientists. He concludes that an extremely high proportion of American high school students do not take school or their studies seriously. Further, Steinberg finds that the adolescent peer culture in contemporary America demeans academic success and schools are fighting a losing battle against this peer influence. Lastly, he states clearly that American parents are just as disengaged from school as their children are.

Understanding the complexities of students engaged in their own learning, knowing that the peer culture dictates a great deal of success and failure, and understanding that families have a vital role in the educational lives of their children are the foundational components upon which we have crafted school improvement goals since that lunchtime conversation over six years ago. It is these ideas that form the basis for this study.

Statement of the Problem

Motivation to learn is a student's desire or willingness to engage and persist in academic activities in school. Students fall along a continuum of purposeful learning, just as they do along a line of yearning for learning, ranging from weak to strong motivation to do assigned school work (Brophy, 1986).

School-family partnerships are now viewed as one of the components of school organization that may help to promote student learning and success in school (Epstein, 1996). Having synthesized 66 studies and reports on family involvement, Henderson and Berla (1995) reported that studies have documented the following benefits for students: higher grades and test scores, better attendance and homework completion, fewer placements in special education, more positive attitudes and behavior, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in post secondary education. Families, teachers, and schools can benefit from school and family partnerships. These important relationships lead to improving parental knowledge of their child's

development, their ability to parent, their ability to assist their children with school and learning, and the quality of relationships between all stakeholders (Epstein, 1991, 1992).

As important as family engagement is to the successful organization and operation of a high school, of equal importance is the idea that students more readily commit themselves to an institution that accords them a measure of influence over its operation and one that promotes an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership among parents, students, and school staff (NASSP, 1996). However, according to Cothran and Ennis (2000) we know little still about what students think about schooling and engagement. In order for meaningful reform to take shape it becomes essential that we listen to the student perspective that may increase the likelihood of their own educational engagement.

As a result, three distinct themes emerge: (1) school and family connections enhance the academic achievement of students, (2) even though we know that involving students as stakeholders in their school experiences will benefit their achievement, a significant barrier to the academic achievement of students continues to be a disengagement from their own learning experiences and, (3) peer relationships and peer groups play a significant role in shaping the engagement of adolescent students in high school.

To better understand the processes associated with the engagement of students in high school it was necessary to consider the noninstructional influences of family involvement practices and peer relationships as an interconnected entity and to determine the multidimensional properties of this synergistic phenomenon and its influence on individual high school students and their engagement in school. It stands to reason that if we want to positively affect the lives of our adolescent students in high schools with these ideas, then it became vital that we solicited their perceptions and thoughts.

Research Questions

The overall guiding question for this study was: How do high school students vary their engagement with school when influenced by the interaction of family involvement practices and peer relationships? Subordinate questions that relate to the question were: (a) Do high school family involvement programs influence individual student engagement? (b) What is the ability of high school instructional and noninstructional programs to positively influence student engagement practices? and, (c) What effect do parental influences have over the relationship between individual students and their peers.

Significance of the Study

The qualitative study emerged as significant in two ways. First, understanding the synergistic quality of family involvement practices and peer relationships on the engagement of individual students contributes to the limited arena which deals with these combined ideas and second, understanding these critical relationships from the perspective of high school students themselves garners new insights into assisting with the ultimate success of all students. This study served to define those guiding principles that embrace and define the contextual relationship of the engagement of students and the influences of their families and their peers.

The Principal as Researcher

The researcher is the principal of the setting in which the study took place. As this study unfolds, benefits and limitations to the notion of a principal studying their own school emerge. Simply put, it is important for educational practitioners to understand their practice. Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (1994) regard this approach to research as practitioner research, meaning research done by practitioners using their own site as the focus of their study. The process can be reflective but does require that some sort of evidence be presented to support the findings and conclusions of the study.

This study contains information and findings that represent insider or local knowledge that is only possessed by those who work within the system being studied. Certainly there are advantages for this type of practitioner research however, there does exist an element of difficulty for the practitioner researcher to view and describe the setting and emerging research from a somewhat dispassionate viewpoint.

The Importance of the Study Setting

There are unique relationships at work that can foster or deter student engagement in school. In order to garner the lived experiences of students regarding this intertwining of concepts, finding a school that understands the processes at work and that has systematically put programs into place to support the ideas of peers and families was necessary to collect data in order to discover what effects, if any, they have had on individual students. Literature about these ideals is not foreign to the researcher. It is at this nexus where literature and the personal experiences and knowledge of the researcher as principal of the school dictated the setting for this study.

Stonewall Jackson High School is located in Manassas, Virginia, approximately 35 miles southwest of Washington D.C. Stonewall Jackson is one of eight high schools within the Prince William County School Division. The school division serves approximately 55,000 students in 73 schools. Stonewall Jackson has a student population of 2,400 students in grades 9 through 12 on a seventy-acre campus. The school is diverse both socio-economically and culturally. Stonewall Jackson draws its students from a full continuum of economic backgrounds: from subsidized and low-income housing, apartments and government subsidized housing projects, through lower-middle and middle class suburban neighborhoods, to single family estates worth more than one million dollars or more. A large percentage of the family population commutes eastward toward or into downtown Washington DC in government, government-related, and military workplaces. Lower income families tend to work in service related jobs within and around the Prince William County area. From local bus drivers to corporate CEO's, there is a rich and interesting mix of economically diverse family structures. Free and/or reduced lunch statistics reveal that 21% of the student population has identified themselves as eligible for this program.

During the period from 1995 to the present, several reform and improvement initiatives have been developed and implemented to improve the achievement of students as well as improving the perception of the school with students, parents, and community. While reforms in curriculum, instruction, the instructional day, and programs all have made contributions to the improvement process, the programs established to promote family involvement and a student-

centered culture within the school have been the focus of the present administration and the most recognized of the reform efforts.

With all of this attention focused on family involvement and peer influences and recognition, Stonewall Jackson has achieved significant successes and improvements since 1995. Baseline data presented in internal school division reports show a dramatic increase in Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores. In the past five years, SAT scores have risen 72 points. The International Baccalaureate program now encompasses 48% of the student body in one or more rigorous courses, with the number of full diploma program participants growing from three in 1995 to over 40 in 2001. The International Baccalaureate Organisation worldwide is comprised of over 1000 schools in 80 countries. Stonewall Jackson has grown to the 20th largest program in the world. As a result of the large numbers of students sitting for advanced exams, Newsweek Magazine proclaimed Stonewall Jackson one of the "Top 100" most challenging High Schools in the United States (March 13, 2000). The school's crowning accolade is its feature in Time Magazine (May 21, 2001) as High School of the Year. The school was selected to receive this recognition for both its commitment to the involvement of parents and the challenging academic programs that are available to all students.

The selection of Stonewall Jackson as the setting for this study is critical to discovery of the effects of family involvement and peer relationships on the engagement practices of high school students with regard to instructional and noninstructional experiences. It cannot be denied that the personal experiences of the researcher played a significant role in this research. The commitment to the engagement of families in the educational lives of children coupled with creating a school environment that involves students as stakeholders provided the researcher with a rich background from which to build the foundational components of this study.

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this study:

Throughout this study, the terms *parent involvement* and *family involvement* are interchanged. Both of these terms are meant to describe the relationships that are necessary between families and their children and families and schools in support of the educational and academic lives of children, as opposed to other definitions of involvement that connote volunteerism or a family role in the operation or governance of a school.

Peer relationships are those bonds between individual students and groups of students that exist within and outside of the high school. Included are personal or close relationships or close friendships as well as the importance to adolescents in being identified with a particular group or subgroup and having the ability to move through different peer networks within a school and its surrounding community.

Student engagement is defined as a student's willingness to become invested in their own curricular and co-curricular school experiences and the degree to which students identify with their school and feel as though they belong as a part of the school.

Instructional and noninstructional influences are the two arenas of influence upon students. Instructional refers to classes and regular curricular programs; noninstructional programs include co-curricular programs and other after-school activities as well as those activities that may not be related to school.

Conceptual Framework

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) qualitative research can be undertaken in "dozens of ways" (p.5). Wolcott (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). The study most closely aligns itself with a case study that sought to explore, in detail, the lived experiences of students with regard to the effects of the interaction of family involvement and peer relationships on the engagement of individual high school students. Conducting field interviews with high school students to garner their perspectives was the preeminent form of research for this study. Through a constant comparison method of continuous data collection and analysis, a theory was tested that describes how high school student engagement is influenced by the interaction of both peer relationships and family involvement practices. To best understand the contextual framework of this theory, a brief overview of its philosophical foundation is in order.

Much of the sociological study of students and schools has been limited to what Bronfenbrenner (1979) would call a microsystem analysis. This type of analysis provides study of a self-contained system. Steinberg, Brown, Cider, Kaczmarek, and Lazzaro (1988) suggested that by its very nature studying behaviors of students through noninstructional influences such as peers and families, places these behaviors in much broader contexts. Steinberg et al. (1988) indicated that this type of study, that being one that included the noninstructional influences, moved the discussion from a microsystem to a mesosystem, or one which includes noninstructional influences within the context of the study of students and their behaviors. Steinberg, et al. (1988) concludes that noninstructional influences need to be studied conjointly with those traditional classroom and school influences over student behaviors.

As will be discussed in more detail in chapter two, it was not until the work of Joyce Epstein that these competing spheres of influence began to emerge as overlapping. Epstein's (1992) overlapping spheres of influence model uses and extends Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, Leichter's (1974) educational insights of families as educators, Litwak and Meyer's (1974) sociological perspectives on connections of professional and nonprofessional institutions and individuals, Seeley's (1981) emphasis on shared responsibility, and a long tradition of sociological and psychological research on school and family environments and their effects.

Figure 1 represents the theory that merges these two sociological ideals: microsystem analysis and overlapping spheres of influence, which form the basis of the theoretical model submitted in this study. The model redefines the overlapping relationships of the Epstein model to include peers and individual students and places the mediating factors of schools, neighborhoods, and other outside influences as an exterior sphere of in a microsystem analysis. A thorough review of literature in chapter two presents the conceptual framework necessary to begin the process of identifying the constructs within each domain of research, those being family involvement, peer relationships, and student engagement and understanding how the interaction of peer relationships and family involvement influences the engagement practices of high school students.

Chapter three contains a thorough description of the qualitative case study methodology used in this study. Chapter four contains a detailed summary of the results of this study and chapter five holds a discussion of the study and revised conceptual model, conclusions based on the study, limitations to the study, and an epilogue of concepts and ideas germane to the topic.

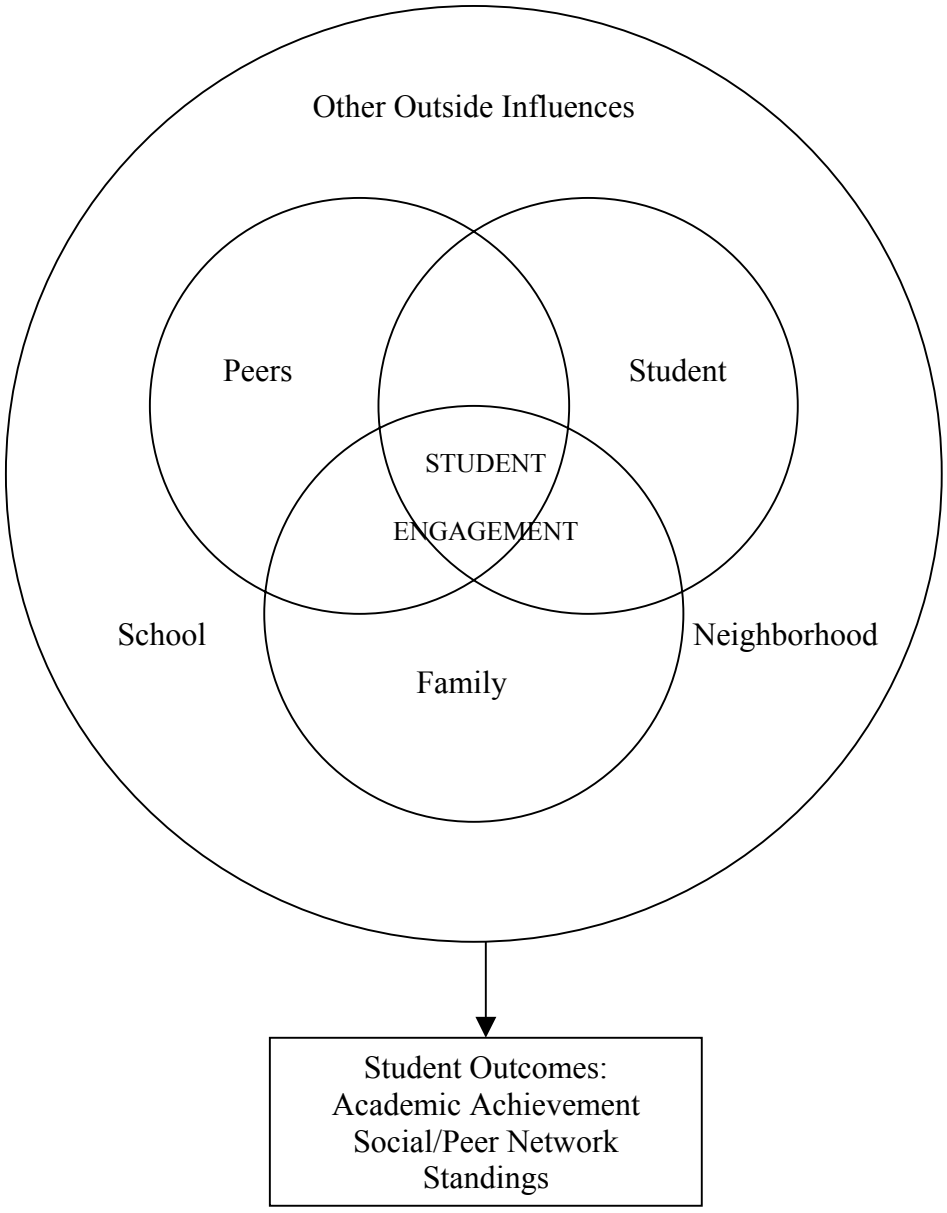

Figure 1. Model for Theoretical Framework demonstrates the best opportunity for the engagement of students with school when influenced positively by both peer groups and family, suggesting that achievement can be attained only when students are engaged with their learning

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much research is devoted to influences upon children that occur within the boundaries of a school. Educators are aware, however, that while research on classroom curriculum and school organization is critical, much of what influences students emanates from outside of the realms of the school to include families and student social networks (Steinberg, 1996). It is possible to look within a high school and its competing outside forces to suggest new descriptions of influences upon students, those that result in the overlapping or competing spheres of instructional and noninstructional realms within a larger sphere of more global influences on school engagement.

The effects of one element upon the other most often characterize the literature regarding families, peers, and students, (i.e. the effects of family involvement on academic achievement). In some cases, peer relationships and parenting have been linked together to examine the cause and effect relationships within those two domains. Student engagement literature with respect to peer and family intervention is sparse. Those studies specifically addressing student engagement are included, but tend to be related to school activities and teacher-student relationships.

The review has four sections. The decision to organize the review in this manner allows for alignment of each section with the proposed research questions and sub questions as well as the overlapping qualities of the spheres found in the conceptual model in chapter 1. These four sections are (1) The influence of high school family involvement programs on individual students. (2) High school instructional and noninstructional program influences on student engagement, and (3) Parent influences on individual student relationships with peers and the effects on individual student engagement. The final section of this review is (4) A compilation of the ideas presented in the research as an initial step in determining the trends and conclusions of the various theories and ideas as they relate to the overall question of the intersection of family involvement, peer relationships, and the effects on the engagement of individual students.

The Influence of High School Family Involvement Programs on Individual Students

A Case for Family Involvement in Education

Understanding the Need for Family Involvement

The evolutionary nature of the relationship between public schools and their students suggests a need for continued activity in the area of school-family partnerships. In 1999, the percentage of homes operating below the poverty level was 11.9% for families from all races, 7.7% for Whites, 23.6% for Blacks, and 26.5% for Hispanics (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999). Because of this poverty there exists a kind of social stress many low income families experience causing them to have difficulty promoting the social and psychological development their children need to function successfully in school (Comer, 1980). The country is also rapidly becoming more culturally diverse with a decline in the white non-Hispanic population from 75.6% to 71.9% during the period 1990 to 1999, an increase in the Black population from 12.3% to 12.8%, and increase in the Hispanic population from 9.0 % to 11.5% during the same period (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999).

For more than 30 years, research regarding family involvement in education has shown that children have advantages when their parents support and encourage school activities (Coleman et al., 1966; Dave, 1963; Epstein & McPartland, 1979; Marjoribanks, 1979). School and family partnerships point to the family's role as the first and best educator of children and to the importance of family involvement in the educational lives of their children (Steinberg, 1996). These important partnerships link the involvement of families with schools as an indicator of student success (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Epstein, 1987, 1992; Steinberg, 1996).

Theoretical Traditions

Prior to 1979, much of the study of student experiences in high school was restricted to the classroom or the school as a self-contained system (Steinberg et al. 1988). Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to this type of study as microsystems or microsystem analysis. Unfortunately, family influences were largely ignored. This microsystem analysis underscores Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective on the study of students and their achievement. What emerged from this period were numerous studies that contrasted students from family groups that differed with respect to socioeconomic status, maternal employment, and family structure and were largely devoid of mediating processes. (Steinberg et al., 1988) Most researchers in this arena at the time worked within what Bronfenbrenner called the "social address" model of influence, in which the focus is on comparisons of students "living in contrasting environments as defined by…social background" (in Steinberg et al. p.3).

Epstein's Model of Overlapping Spheres of Influence

Joyce Epstein, director of the Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning, and often cited as one of our nation's leading researchers in the field of school, family, and community partnerships, developed a model of overlapping spheres of influence for school-family-community partnerships. Figure two graphically represents the model which suggests that there are embedded social and organizational influences between individuals and larger groups and organizations and is based on the assumption that children's learning and success are the main reason for the school-family partnership (Epstein, 1983, 1991,1992, 1996, 2001).

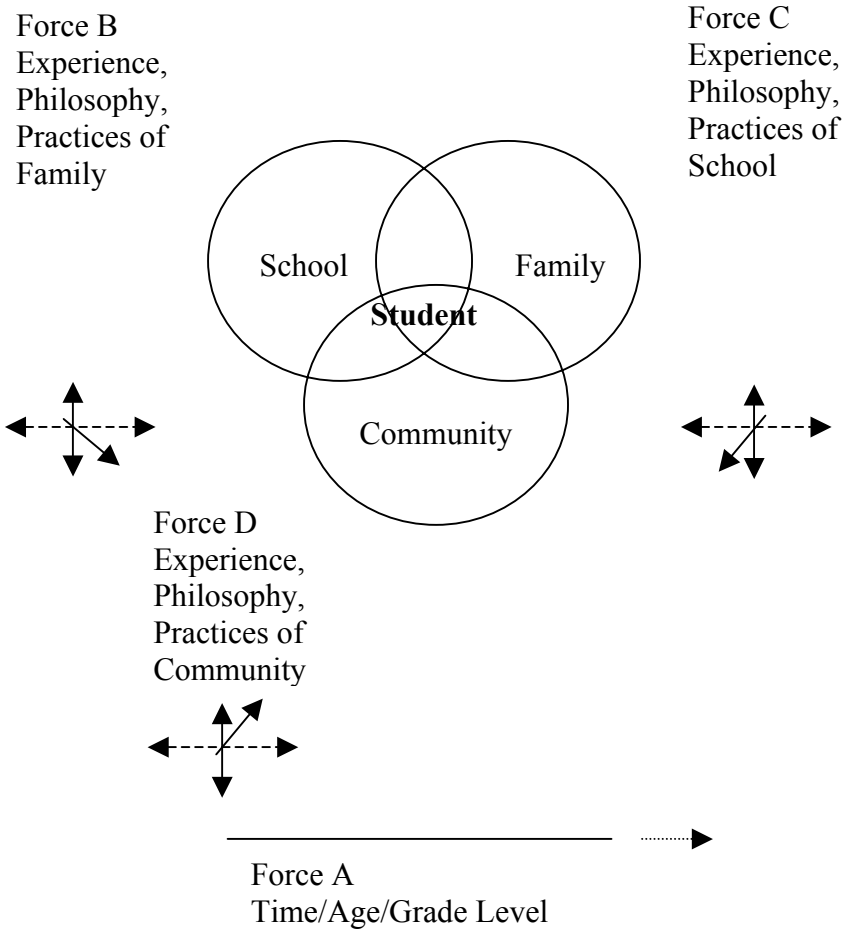

Figure 2. Epstein's model of the overlapping spheres of influence.

Influencing the work of Epstein was Gordon (1979) who studied Head Start and Follow-Through programs and found that while positive effects of the programs on parents and young children were obvious, the relationship between involvement and influence was incomplete and specific connections between parents and teachers were not measured.

Epstein (1990, 1995, 1996) emphasized the importance of this integration of school and family. Epstein suggested that relationships of partnership between families and schools enhanced student achievement and encouraged families' participation in their children's education. The three "spheres of influence" in the child's life: the school, family, and community, should, according to Epstein, overlap, putting the child at the center of the relationship. Epstein suggested that when the spheres of school, families, and community overlapped and engaged in true relationships of partnership, "learning communities or caring communities" (1995, p. 702) were born.

The research that lead to Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence model began with studies of elementary school parent involvement practices (Epstein, 1996). Early studies proved collaboration between families and schools broke old sociological theories of separation and relied on surveys and students who reported about their families. Often, the research is cast in

terms of separate or competing influences of schools or families, thusly Epstein believed that theoretical perspectives on schools and families were based on the separate, sequenced, embedded, or overlapping influence of each which makes up the model for school, family, community partnerships (Epstein, 1992).

The results of this theory and various efforts to define involvement suggest that within the area of overlap of the family and school spheres of influence, five important types of involvement help families and schools fulfill their shared responsibilities for children's learning and development and a sixth type of involvement adds the community as a sphere of influence.

Epstein (1992) identified the six types of school-family-community involvement that include the basic obligations of families and schools as well as parental involvement at school and involvement in learning activities at home. The typology includes: (1) home to school communication, (2) school to home communication, (3) parents as volunteers, (4) parent involvement in school governance and decision-making, (5) positive home learning environment and, (6) greater collaboration and connection with the community. Epstein indicated that the sixth type of involvement was not part of the original research that helped identify the first five and admitted that this area opens a complex and unexplored arena and defines community as the child's home neighborhood and the wider local community of business, civic, cultural, religious and other organizations and agencies that influence children's learning.

Epstein believed that separate contributions assume that schools and families are most efficient and effective when they each pursue independent goals and standards. An example of this is the practice of teachers contacting parents only when there is a severe problem or when it is too late for parents to intervene to solve a problem. Parents and teachers contributions to child development and education assume that early years determine later successes and parents have responsibility for first critical stages. Later, young adults assume the major responsibility for their own education. When schools and families work together in a collaborative partnership, students begin to receive the message that school is important and thus legitimizing their own work.

Epstein espoused schools that are comprehensive in nature and subscribe to the typology within her model help parents create home environments for learning, involve them in the decision making structure of the school, communicate more effectively with the schools, help parents to become productive volunteers and take responsibility for supporting and motivating their children. With a focus on the sixth and newest type of family involvement, that being connection and collaboration with the greater community, it stands to reason that broader investigations into "child's home neighborhood" and other organizations that influence students learning should include a discussion of peers as a component of the community sphere. A reworking of Epstein's model can include the importance influences of peers as opposed or in addition to other definitions of community.

Family Partnerships in High Schools: Applications of the Epstein Model

Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros (1998) used the model of overlapping spheres and the resulting typology of family involvement to investigate parental perspectives of high school family partnerships. The study centered on six Maryland high schools that in 1991 began to work with researchers to better understand school-family-community partnerships. The schools were participating in a state funded project targeted to reduce the drop out rate by providing certain

"at-risk" students with extra guidance and counseling services. The program design included a family involvement component designed to encourage greater family participation in students' schooling experience. Two schools were rural, two suburban, and two urban. School sizes ranged from about 500 students to over 1200 students, of whom 20% to 100% were from racial minority groups, and 15% to over 60% were from low-income families. Each school administered the survey to ninth grade students, teachers, and parents. It was the 423 parental responses that were analyzed for this study.

The dependent measures used in the study were parent attitudes about high school; parent involvement at home; and parent involvement at school. The independent variables were measured by the six scales of the developed typology that include: parenting, communicating, volunteerism; learning at home; decision making; and school support for parental involvement. The survey, designed by the authors, had an internal reliability coefficient of .86. Background variables such as race, ethnicity, and family structure were also accounted for.

The initial result of the study indicated that approximately 60% of the parents surveyed reported that their children were attaining average to slightly above average grades in school. A full one-fifth of the respondents indicated that their children were failing or near failing. The study does not cover particularly new territory in as much as the findings are similar to other studies of the benefits of parent involvement. Results indicate a strong correlation between high schools that reach out to parents and parental support for that school and a strong correlation between the educational level of the parent and the degree to which parents are involved in home learning activities.

The only significant predictor of family attitude toward school is the prior academic achievement of the student. Regarding family involvement in school, the study concluded that schools might be able to offset the influence of educational background or student success on parental involvement at school by "developing strong partnership programs that encourage all families' participation in school events and decisions" (p. 13). This may or may not be significant and rests solely on the interpretation of "all families" and how that can be accomplished in large complex high schools.

The study supported the traditional thinking on parental involvement and demonstrated results that supported the efforts of school partnerships on the involvement of parents with students in the home. This result indicated that regardless of their formal education, parents would interact with their teens around homework. The summary findings of this study suggested that high schools that develop parental partnership programs, which include the six different types of involvement noted in the Epstein research, are likely to improve parental attitudes toward the school, and enable more families to become involved in their teens' education at school and home. Understanding the six types of family involvement and the overlapping spheres model, the results are not surprising. This study surmised benefits with regard to the involvement of parents in high school. But, as was discussed, there are interesting limitations that raise questions about the degree to which all parents of adolescents can be involved, including parents with lower educational backgrounds.

Microsystem Analysis of Parental Expectations

Parental attitudes can have significant effects on the academic achievement of high school students (Patrikakou, 1997). In order to better understand these important relationships a model was developed which placed parental attitudes within a microsystem analysis (see Figure

3). This theoretical model was used with National Educational Longitudinal Study, 1988 (NELS: 88) data. It was hypothesized that the student's perception of parental involvement, parental communication, and parental expectations will lead to higher student expectations of achievement. Snodgrass (1991) noted a decline in parental involvement as children progress to adolescence. As Snodgrass (1991) notes, "while parents frequently recognize the need for their children to be successful in school, they do not realize the critical role they play in their children's academic achievement" (p. 83).

The model created by Patrikakou (1997) is influenced by Bronfenbrenner (1986) with regard to the ecological interest in understanding families as a context of human development and Eccles (1983) with regard to a model of student achievement behaviors, those being choice, persistence, and achievement/performance. Patrikakou (1997) stated that the ability to conceptualize interactions within the microsystem model allows for an examination of the interactions between adolescents and their parents and examines how these relationships relate to academic achievement.

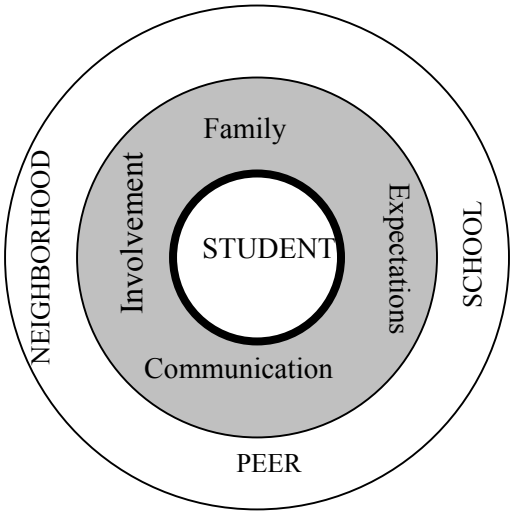

Figure 3. Patrikakou (1997). Microsystem analysis of family involvement effects on adolescents.

There is specific discussion of psychological and sociological influences within the Patrikakou (1997) model. These influences are touted as part of the ecological structure of influences within the microsystem. Clearly delineated in the model is the relationship of peers to student achievement, however, this relationship is portrayed as secondary to that of family perceptions and attitudes. Patrikakou (1997) stated "The filtering circle around the adolescent represents the individual's perception of various events which in accordance with previous theoretical work . . . is instrumental in influencing outcomes related to academic achievement" (p. 9).

The model clearly delineates two filtering circles that surround the student. The interior circle represents the involvement, expectations, and communications of families. The exterior circle represents the influences of neighborhoods, school, and peers. This organization suggests that one influence is predicated on another, that is to say, the influences of peers, school, and neighborhoods is first filtered through the components of the family circle. Further, the emphasis of the study is on the academic achievement of students, yet the central sphere inside the

microsystem represents the student themselves, not the achievement of the student. This poses both positive and negative attributes. While focusing on the student is noble, it removes the students from having influence over their own achievement. Patrikakou (1997) defended the study by indicating that the present model focuses on that microsystem that encompasses parent influences and affects. She claims that this model clearly indicates the importance of parental influence in the academic life of a child.

The results of the study suggest that the model is flawed. The strongest direct effect on student expectations is the prior achievement of the student. Because this was a strong predictor, Patrikakou (1997) chose to focus the interest of the results on the "remaining variables" (p. 17). The only significant direct effect found within the variables of student perceptions of parental influences was that of expectations of white students ($\beta = .044$; $b = .581$). All other groups reported an indirect effect on achievement.

Because of this weak relationship, Patrikakou (1997) defines indirect effects as "paths of significance through which a certain variable causes sufficient change to a subsequent one, which in turn affects the outcome" (p. 17). It is in this realm of indirect relationships that parental expectations emerged as having strong effects. It is clear however that the academic expectations of students far outweighed the influences of parental expectations when determining what students expect of themselves.

While there is no argument that Patrikakou (1997) provides evidence of the importance of parental participation, the model and study fail to fully explain the direct effects on students' own perceptions of their academic abilities. While it is clear that prior expectations of the student have a direct correlation to present achievement, there is little more known about how prior achievement was attained. This could be explained by the microsystem and the seemingly cause and effect relationship between the sphere of family and the sphere housing peers, school, and neighborhoods. Certainly the ecological system is an appropriate model form for study, however, reconfiguring the model to determine the effects of those elements outside of the family seem important to the conclusion.

It is understood from Patrikakou (1997) that if high parental expectation is communicated clearly, it is more likely that the student perception of those expectations will be accurate. Further there is no argument that indirect effects of parental expectations are extremely important and that parental expectations can serve as a motivating, low-cost force for helping adolescent students achieve success. To understand the full impact of Patrikakou's (1997) microsystem the study should be broadened to determine what if any effects could be determined from either the direct relationship of peers, school, and neighborhoods to parents, or the indirect relationships of peers, school, and neighborhoods with individual students themselves. Perhaps the answer lies within a model development that incorporates both the overlapping spheres of influence and the microsystem analysis.

Modified Overlapping Spheres Centered on Parent Involvement and Style

Taking Epstein's (1987) overlapping spheres model, Deslandes, Royer, Turcotte, & Bertrand (1997) targeted the influences of parenting style and parental involvement on the achievement of secondary school students. In this modified overlapping spheres model, (see Figure 4) schools and families are represented by two spheres that can be moved together or apart depending upon the level of school and parent collaboration. The model adds three major forces which determines the degree to which the spheres are intersected. Those forces are listed

as Force A, the age and grade level of students, and the social conditions of the period during which the child is in school; forces B and C are representative of the practices of families and schools.

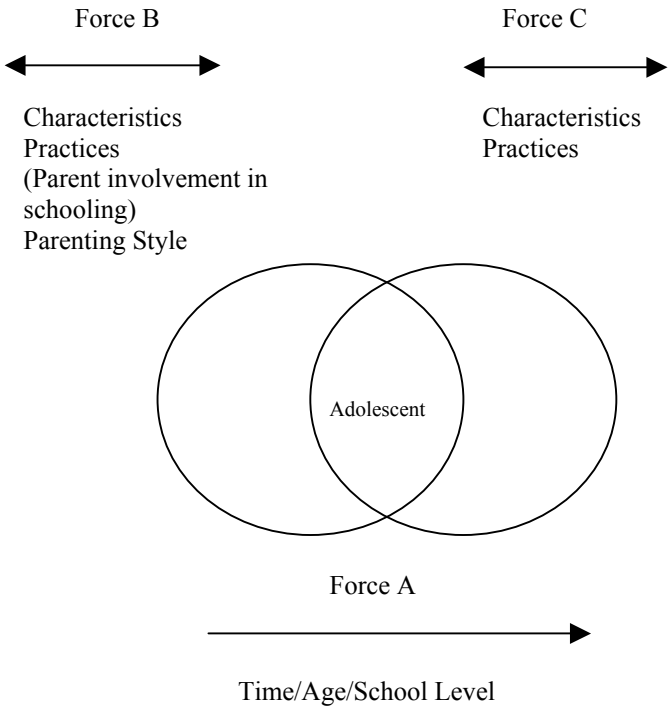

Figure 4. Deslandes & Royer (1994). Modified model of overlapping spheres of influence. Based on Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence on children's learning (1987, 1992).

Deslandes, et al. (1997) chose to specifically investigate the two family variables of parenting style and parental involvement. The methodology used to gather data was a survey to a sample of 525 Canadian secondary III students (equivalent to grade 9 in the United States), 282 girls (53.7%) and 243 boys (46.3%), aged between 14.0 years-old and 16.0 years old. School achievement was measured by year-end grade point averages. The instrument used to determine parenting styles was first developed by Steinberg (1992). Because this study emanated from Canada, the instrument was translated into French. The subscales corresponded to those previously identified by Steinberg et al. (1989, 1992): warmth-acceptance, behavioral control, and psychological autonomy granting. The instrument used to measure parental involvement was the instrument designed by Epstein, Connors, and Salinas (1993). This instrument was also translated into French. Measurements of these two factors were gauged by youth perception.

Regression analysis was performed to examine relationships between year-end grade point averages and the three factors of parenting style. Reported results indicated that the factor of behavior control was the best predictor of schools grades ($\beta = .15$, $p<.001$), followed by psychological autonomy granting ($\beta = .13$, $p<.01$), and warmth and acceptance ($\beta = .10$, $p<.05$)

Five factors of parent involvement were tested: affective support; communication with the teachers; parents-adolescent interactions based on daily school matters; parents and school communication; and parents-adolescents communication. Of these five factors, only two of them

contributed significantly to the prediction of school grades. Affective support was the best predictor ($\beta = .33$, $p<.001$). The second factor labeled communication with teachers ($\beta = -.23$, $p<.001$) showed a negative relationship with school grades. Students who perceive their parents to be firm, warm, involved, and democratic perform better in school.

It is important to discuss briefly the negative correlation between communication with teachers and student grade point averages. On the surface, this is a troubling result and one that counteracts the notion that parental involvement improves student achievement. Deslandes et al. (1997) reported that Baker and Stevenson (1986) came to a similar conclusion. Lee (1994) indicated that students who reported more frequent contacts between school and home were also students whose grades were lower. As Epstein (1996) pointed out, this correlation does not suggest that more contact brings about lowered grades, but implies that families are more likely to contact the school when there is a problem within the academic program.

A small albeit significant limitation to the study, which has greater implications as the review of research turns to peers and perceived relationships from parent engagement, is the method of sampling. All of the students sampled were at the same grade level and from the same general socioeconomic category. All but one student were Caucasian. Therefore, the only generality that can be made is that this research supports only those secondary III (American grade nine) students who are from the white middle-class population. What the study does not indicate is a mean for grade point averages of the selected population. If in fact these students were high achieving students, then there is the possibility that the achievement levels of the students have mediated the outcomes of this research. Fletcher, Darling, Steinberg, & Dornbush (1995) found that authoritative parenting is related to the competence of students in school and that competent youngsters are attracted to each other. The converse was true as well; that is, less competent adolescents from non-authoritative homes are more likely to select comparably less competent peers--from comparably non-authoritative homes--and their peer group amplifies and maintains their disadvantage.

A case begins to emerge that suggests that when sampling students there are questions of reliability when selecting from high achieving populations and low achieving populations.

The Effects of Parent Involvement

Keith et al. (1997) used the National Educational Longitudinal Study Data from 1988 (NELS :88) and follow up data, to test whether or not parent involvement had the same effects for different groups of children, specifically, gender and ethnicity. Parent involvement was defined as parent expectations and aspirations and parent-child communication. The longitudinal nature of the research stems from reports of parent involvement when selected students were in eighth grade and a comparison to the same students' grade point averages in tenth grade. Authors used a cross-validation approach to test and modify the model on different data.

The coefficient of .25 on the model path from parent involvement to grades suggests that each standard deviation change in parent involvement will result in .25 of a standard deviation change in GPA. This result suggested that parent involvement could potentially have a powerful effect on students' subsequent high school grade point averages. The study concluded that the effects of parent involvement on grades between boys and girls are indistinguishable and that the influences of the variables in the model were the same across the five ethnic groups studied. Parent involvement was an important influence on GPA across all groups.

It is clear that parent involvement has continuing and substantive effects on high school learning as measured by grades. Important in this discussion is the degree to which motivation affects student achievement as measured by GPA. In defending the use of GPA as a measure of academic achievement, the study poses yet another question left unanswered, that being the relationship of parental involvement and the motivation to learn. It is quite possible that authoritative parents can influence their children to do better in school but not necessarily motivate them to learn more. Children could be improving their achievement to please their parents or to avoid negative home consequences rather than becoming more motivated to learn and or improve their academic standing.

The Relationship of Parent Involvement to Achievement

Hickman, Greenwood, and Miller (1995) set out to determine the relationship between the achievement of high school students and the total amount and types of parent involvement in which the primary care-giving parent was engaged. Student gender, SES, and grade level were also investigated. The population studied consisted of all parents who had students in grades 9-12 attending one of six public high schools during the 1990-1991 school year in Alachua County, Florida. A random sample of 60 parents was drawn from a pool of 6,704 students. 47 parents agreed to participate (78%). The Parent Participation Interview (PPI), developed by Hickman et al. (1995) was administered. Parent involvement was identified as: home-based; communicator; supporter; learner; advocate; decision maker; and volunteer. Table 1 shows the summary of regression analysis for the types of parent involvement and grade level, SES, and student gender.

Grade point average (GPA) and the total score of the PPI were found to be positively related indicating that it was generally determined that the higher the GPA, the higher the amount of parent involvement. The study noted a "curvilinear relationship" (Hickman et al. p. 128), in which the students with a higher GPA had a correspondingly higher parent involvement score. SES, gender, and grade level were not significantly related to the total PPI score. The only type of parent involvement found to be related to student achievement was home-based type parent involvement. It is unclear if this result is limited to high achieving students. Caution must be taken in the interpretation of these results. This relationship may not hold as parent economic status changes. SES, based on free and reduced lunch prices, was significantly related to two other types of school-based involvement, those being parent-as-learner and parent-as-supporter, however, there was no indication that home-based activities were related to lower SES families. Grade level played an important role in Hickman et al. (1995). The type of parent involvement identified as parent-as-supporter type was significantly related to the grade level of the student. Hickman et al. (1995) reported that: "This type of parent involvement was found to be higher during the first two years of high school . . . but is clearly lower in the 3rd and 4th years" (p. 129). This is significant for two reasons. First, the findings imply a change in parent involvement

Table 1
Regression summary for types of parent involvement and grade level, SES, and student gender (Hickman, et al. 1995)

Source	DF	P	F
Home			
-Grade	3	.33	0.80
-SES	1	.22	2.18
-Gender	1	.03*	4.74
Communicator			
-Grade	3	.96	0.07
-SES	1	.50	0.83
-Gender	1	.05*	3.97
Learner			
-Grade	3	.81	1.02
-SES	1	.02*	4.91
-Gender	1	.73	0.10
Volunteer			
-Grade	3	.10	1.75
-SES	1	.09	2.26
-Gender	1	.33	0.96
Supporter			
-Grade	3	.0006*	8.40
-SES	1	.01*	6.86
-Gender	1	.41	0.68
Advocate			
-Grade	3	.58	0.63
-SES	1	.33	1.65
-Gender	1	.01*	6.70
Decision maker			
-Grade	3	.12	2.26
-SES	1	.98	0.07
-Gender	1	.08	3.67

*p<.05

practices over the course of a four-year high school experience. Second, waning parent involvement suggests that there may be other factors at play which influence students and the degree to which they are academically successful. With regard to low SES families, there is a stronger suggestion that other influences upon academic achievement may begin earlier than the last two years of high school. For example, Steinberg (1996) reported that even if a student's parents exhibit traits of authoritative parenting, the neighborhood influence and social class standing could have an effect on the student's level of success in school. Again, this suggested that influences other than parents are important factors in a high school student's ability to succeed. Keith et al. (1997) found that "parents are more involved when they are from higher SES categories and when their children have higher previous achievement" (p. 349).

Hickman et al. (1995) found that there was no statistical relationship between the parent-as-decision maker and the parent-as-volunteer types of parental involvement and GPA, SES, gender, or grade level, which tends to highlight the importance of involvement activities that influence parental communication and home learning strategies.

The implication of Hickman et al. (1995) focuses on the degree to which parents of average and low achieving students are being involved in school. It stands to reason that with less parental involvement, students in these categories are seeking other outlets for influence and guidance. This suggests that average students have been "lost in the shuffle" of research which clearly shows positive correlations and benefits to high achieving students and well-adjusted families. It seems warranted then that an investigation of average students be undertaken to determine what sources of influence are present and in what combinations these influences act to guide average students through the maze of a complicated high school.

High School Program Influences on Student Engagement

In the simplest of descriptions, high schools have two competing realms. The first is its formal organizational structure of classes, classrooms, and curriculum and the second, those structures that are included within the school but are co-curricular in nature, meaning such items as clubs, activities, and interscholastic athletic programs. The degree of success attained by students through their high school years can have a profound and lasting impact on their future life outcomes.

Quality Instructional Processes as Contributors to Student Achievement

High schools are substantially different from elementary schools both in organizational structure and curriculum. According to a literature review by Newmann (1998), research has not highlighted the significance of these differences to the degree that a thorough understanding of secondary school contributions is warranted. Newmann presents a model (see Figure 5) that highlights the core school processes that produce student achievement, those being student engagement, instructional quality, and the instructional capacity of a school. This representation suggests a necessary interaction of the variables, but not an overlapping of the variables. Newmann (1998) argued that improving the quality of classroom practices was still the central component in student engagement. Newmann acknowledged that the reform efforts must extend beyond the development of teachers, implying that non-classroom related issues were critical issues involved within the process of improvement.

Newmann (1998) continued the argument for student engagement and stated that students cannot achieve if they do not take school seriously. He avowed that student engagement resulted both from improved instruction and from the social support given by peers and parents. He concluded that high student engagement could improve instructional quality thus mutually reinforcing each other.

It is clear by Newmann's (1998) ideas that there is a need for a partnership to be formed between the school and its programs and those noninstructional influences that take place around and outside of high school settings. There is acknowledgement within this work that a significant influence on students emanates from peers and families. Newmann specifies that family interest in and respect for their children's schoolwork and the efforts of the staff are critical to academic success.

Newmann (1998) summarized that there are core processes (instructional capacity, instructional quality, and student engagement) that are affected by school leadership that begins to shape the foundation of the school's role in the engagement of all students. While recognizing cultural constraints and a dependency of "material security upon a narrow range of academic

competence" (Newmann, 1998, p. 104), the work concludes with the most powerful argument yet with regard for the need to overlap the instructional and non instructional worlds of students to search for the ingredients if successful student engagement and achievement in school: " I do not absolve educators from doing all they can . . . but an honest appraisal of the potential of this research to improve practice requires recognition of broader cultural tendencies over which educators alone have minimal influence" (p. 104).

Unfortunately, Newmann (1998) indicated that while his model is a thorough analysis of how high schools can and do contribute to the academic achievement of all students, he very clearly stated that research has not confirmed all of the causal relationships within the model as clear and indicated that other patterns are plausible. The ideas presented in this article are good ones and address important issues that face high school educators, students, and families. Where the work falls short lies within the model shared as the theoretical framework for high school contributions to student achievement. There is no overlap of internal and external factors that influence high schools. The untested relationships provided suggest that these are forces that work against each other or at the very best work opposite each other toward the common goal of instructional capacity leading to academic achievement. The theory that needs to be tested lies within the contextual nature of how these forces overlap and the degree to which outside support influences the processes within the school and the relationships within and outside of the school. It may be discovered that pathways leading toward the achievement of all students begins with the intersection of the influences and the engagement of the student as a stronger precursor to successful achievement.

The last interesting omission from the model is the degree to which co-curricular or non-classroom school activities can contribute to the overall academic success to the student. The only hint in the model is the inclusion of climate as a construct of the domain of instructional quality. It will be argued that there exist learning contexts beyond the classroom that can have a significant impact on the engagement and the ultimate achievement of students in high schools.

Principal and Teacher Effects on Engagement

A natural extension of instructional influences on student engagement and ultimately student achievement centers on the leadership roles of principals and teachers themselves. Even though principals and teachers are the focus of numerous studies in education, and more specifically, the leadership quality of the two groups, little information is available as to whether or not leadership provides motivation for engagement. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) concluded that principal leadership was found to be weak but significant whereas the effects of teacher leadership were not significant. This study is based on earlier work of Leithwood and Jantzi (1998) in which the influence of principal and teacher leadership on student engagement with school is mediated by both the school and classroom conditions. Interestingly, family educational culture, and not the SES of a family, is found to be a moderating variable, one that directly influences both student engagement and principal leadership.

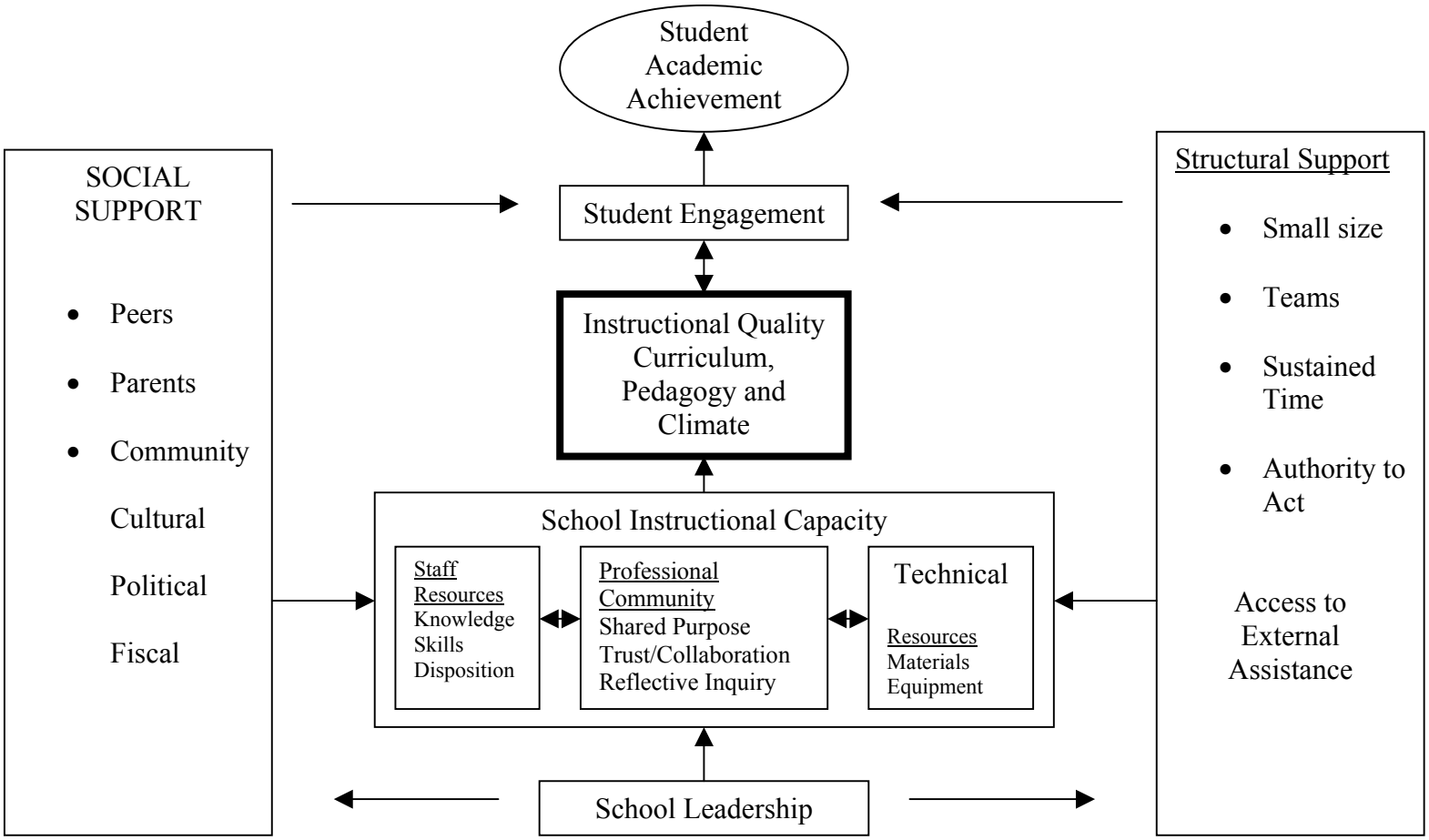

Figure 5. Newmann (1998). How schools contribute to academic achievement.

Survey data from an achieved sample of 1,762 teachers and 9,941 students in one large Canadian school district were used to detail the study findings. The population was considerably larger with a total of 2,465 teachers and 44,290 students in the district's 123 schools. Two measurement instruments were used. Teachers responded to "The Organizational Conditions and School Leadership Survey" and students responded to the "Student Engagement and Family Culture Survey."

Using student engagement as the dependent variable, Leithwood and Janzi (1999) found a startling result: teacher leadership effects are statistically insignificant. Principal leadership effects barely reached statistical significance (see Table 2).

Table 2
Leithwood and Jantzi (1999). Effects of principal and teacher leadership on school conditions

	Principal Effects	**Teacher Effects**	*combined effects*	
	Unique R^2 change	**Unique R^2 change**	**Adj. R2**	**F Change (2.107)**
Purposed and Goals	.11	.07	.26	20.10***
Culture	.26	.06	.45	46.30***
Planning	.16	.10	.39	35.79***
Structure and Organization	.27	.05	.44	43.01***
Information Collection	.19	.06	.35	29.92***
Conditions	.27	.09	.52	60.66***

NOTE: N=110 schools. Each row summarizes a separate regression analysis run to determine how much of the variation in each school condition was explained by principals and how much by teacher leadership. ***p<.001

There are two rather interesting interpretations of the principal leadership data. First and most obvious is the notion that there is no relationship between principal leadership and student engagement. Considering, however, that student engagement is not tied to teacher leadership and traditional classroom outcomes per se, the alternative conclusion has significant implications regarding the notion of influences outside of the classroom. There is some support for relationships with principals that can be found in Davidson (1996).

The focus of Davidson (1996) is the journey of the author/researcher through a qualitative process of interviewing 55 students in four desegregated high schools in California. There is a pertinent chapter entitled "Youths' Frames on Engagement" and solicits the opinions of these students on their own engagement in school. From interviews, five factors were determined, which youth suggest contribute to manifestations of disengagement and alienation: (1) patterns that emanate from academic tracking; (2) negative expectations; (3) differential treatment of varied ethnic and racial groups; (4) bureaucratized relationships and practices; and, (5) barriers to information. Davidson's (1996) contribution is small but significant. First, each of the barriers that are listed are controllable situations by high school principals and second, the study is a qualitative approach that used students as subjects thus producing a different perspective on how principals and perhaps teachers can interact with students and provide conditions which may be favorable to their engagement.

The family educational culture results are an interesting departure from the usual SES variable usage. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) make an important observation about this result suggesting that future school and leadership effects studies ought to conceptualize family variables more centrally in their designs which will lead to a systematic inquiry about how schools and families co-produce the full array of outcomes for which schools are responsible.

This potential lack of progress toward school effects on student engagement is alarming. If we are to re-engage the two-thirds of those high school students that have strayed from their academic goals (Steinberg, 1996), then it becomes imperative that the advice of Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) be acted upon. The challenge becomes the methodology by which the important family and school relationship information is collected and analyzed. With quantitative analyses finding marginal or questionable statistical relationships, the opportunity to solicit the opinions of the students themselves, through a qualitative process, seems a logical alternative. According to Cothran and Ennis (2000), we know very little about what students think about schooling and engagement. "Understanding the student perspective is important if educators are to conceptualize reform efforts that students will find meaningful, thereby increasing the likelihood of their engagement" (p. 107). Cothran and Ennis (2000) use a model developed by Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez (1989) (see Figure 6) to understand those concepts that mediate the extent to which a student is actively involved in the educational process. Using a qualitative method of constant comparison, the authors set out to garner student and teacher opinions on barriers to engagement in school. Four teachers and 51 students were observed and interviewed. The interview questions sought to encourage students to expand on the descriptions of their own engagement, engaging classes, preferred class activities, and changes that students would like to make within their school.

"All four teachers agreed that the single greatest impediment to student engagement was that students arrived in their classes with poor attitudes and low engagement" (Cothran, & Ennis, 2000, p. 110). This finding directly addresses the need for continued inspection of those influences on students outside of the realm of classes and classrooms. Even though teachers agreed on this point, they did not feel that being the prime motivating force for student engagement was their responsibility nor did they feel prepared to do so
Cothran and Ennis (2000) concluded that students saw few connections between school and life outside of their classroom experiences and indicated engagement was limited to connections made with teachers. "Only when teachers and students are freed from the impediments [lack of connection between school and outside; curricular and teacher preparation reforms] that keep them from engagement are they able to engage meaningfully with one another and the subject matter content" (p. 116). While this study qualified impediments as those strictly related to the classroom, there are definite connections to influences outside of the classrooms. Teacher motivation to teach in a creative manner and engagement of students can be a cause and effect relationship in either direction. In order for teachers to communicate more effectively and provide enthusiasm when presenting content an argument can be made that students who arrive to class more engaged can be the catalyst for an excited and engaged teacher. In order to ensure that students arrive to school understanding the power of their own engagement, it will be necessary to learn about the interaction of those influences outside of the classroom that can enhance the school engagement processes.

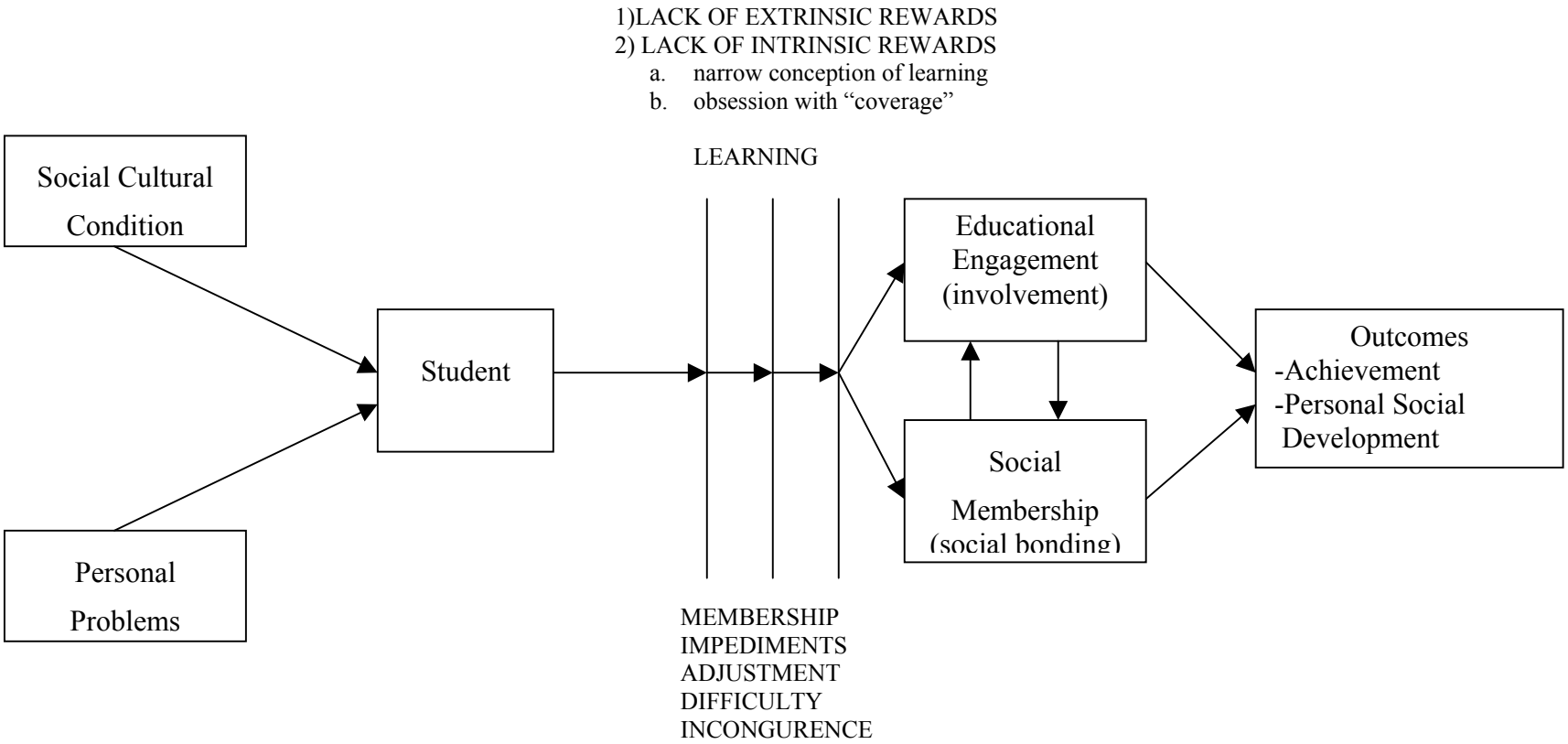

Figure 6. Comprehensive theory of student engagement by Wehlage et al. in Cothran & Ennis (2000).

Relationship of After-School Activities and Academic Achievement

Certainly there is no argument that the structures and processes present within classrooms are major influences on the academic achievement of students. But as discussed thus far, the contributions of families play an important role in this infrastructure as well. How students spend their after-school and non-school hours are also important ingredients in successful engagement and achievement.

Effects of Extra-Curricular Activities

More time in extracurricular activities and less time in jobs and television viewing were associated with higher test scores and class grades (Cooper, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999). Research presented an examination of the relationship between after-school activities and the academic achievement of students.

Four hundred twenty-four students in grades 6 through 12 and one parent of each completed a questionnaire concerning student participation in five types of after-school activities: homework, television viewing, extracurricular activities, other types of structured after-school groups, and jobs. Interestingly, the response rate was a low 31%. This certainly raises the legitimate concern that the respondents may have been significantly different from the non-respondents. It is clear that respondents were not a random sample drawn from the districts. Additionally, the questionnaire, titled the Homework Process Inventory, was developed explicitly for this study. The pilot testing of the questionnaire was done with a small heterogeneous sample of students, teachers, and parents. No coefficient for reliability is given.

Other issues emerged from the sample population as well. Of the three school districts agreeing to the study, only one urban district could be considered ethnically and culturally diverse, with 58% of the population being white and a staggering 45% eligible for free and reduced lunch. The two other districts, one suburban and one rural, were predominantly white, 94% and 90% respectively, with free and reduced lunch rates at a low 6.5%. The rural district reported a free and reduced lunch rate of 25%.

The flaws in the data collection and sample size suggest that a closer examination of the results is warranted. Mean differences in response rates were tested between student and parent responses revealing that there were significant differences in the responses to time spent in after-school activities. Parents and students did not agree at a very high level. This was attributed to differences in the estimated average time spent in activities.

Participation in extracurricular activities was associated with higher achievement on test scores, $r(320) = .17$, $p < .003$; and higher teacher-assigned grades, $r(357) = .18$, $p < .006$. Participation in other structured after school activities (non school related) was also associated with higher achievement test scores, $r(320) = .20$, $p < .0003$, and higher teacher-assigned grades, $r(357) = .12$, $p < .02$. Table 3 shows the correlations between the variables identified as activities and measures of achievement.

The most important finding of this study for the authors was that after-school activities contributed to the prediction of achievement. It is difficult for the reader to draw that conclusion knowing the sampling problems and response rates, as well as the imbalance of representation. The findings are consistent with the notion that this type of non-instructional participation

reflects positively on the achievement of the students. Disconcerting is the degree to which the sample affected the outcome. It is quite possible that well-adjusted, academically successful students correlated with activities producing the desired outcome. The study does not travel to the core of the issue, that being the motivation behind involvement and the influences necessary to become involved. Future research studies must explore the meaning of extracurricular activities for parents, students, and their peers. Once again, a synergistic approach is needed to learn of the characteristics behind the involvement of students.

A damaging conclusion can be drawn from this study: student engagement in the sampled school was critically low, or, only motivated or interested students were engaged in activities that support their academic program. There was no assessment of

Table 3
Cooper, Valentine & Lindsay (1998): Correlations between activity variables and achievement measures

After-school activity	Standardized test	Teacher-assigned grades	Residual grades
Amount of homework finished	.10*	.26****	.19***
Time watching TV	-.13**	-.11	-.13
Time in extracurricular activities	.17***	.18***	.12**
Time in structured group participation	.20***	.12**	.04
No. hours employed per week (full sample)	-.12**	-.17***	-.14**
No. hours employed per week (high-school-only sample	-.29	-.17**	-.11

*p<.10. **p<.05. ***p<.01. ****p<.001.

engagement and further, students were not asked to indicate their perceptions of their own engagement. While not an impressive study, it was chosen for this review largely because it seems to be the only recent study addressing the issue of activities encouraging engagement.

It should become obvious, even to the most casual observer, that while questions abound, school sponsored activities after school can have an effect on the engagement of individual students. Brown and Steinberg (1991) found that after-school participation enhanced student school performance.

To address these issues, a self-report survey questionnaire was administered in two parts (fall and spring) to all students present on the day of testing in three Wisconsin high schools and six in the San Francisco Bay area. All were public schools and varied in size from 400 students to 2500 students. In all three Wisconsin schools and three of the California schools interviews of a select portion of the students were also conducted. Data from these interviews detailed information on family and parental influences as well as location to peer group system. These findings will be discussed later in this review.

Central to the issue of after school activities was the sample of students drawn for this study. The average grade point average (GPA) was 2.75, considered average on most high school

4.0 scales. The findings related to noninstructional programs suggested a difficulty in predicting correlations. With academic achievement a controlled variable, extracurricular participation was associated with positive school outcomes, however the influences were modest. A need for further empirical testing and ecological model development is supported by the meager findings of these studies. The school's role in shaping influences may be more indirect than direct.

Involvement in extracurricular activities may raise a student's investment in school (Marsh, 1992). Further, Mahoney and Cairnes (1997) found that among those students labeled as at-risk, the dropout rate lowered for those who were involved in extracurricular activities. Completed research moves us forward toward understanding the relationship of these activities to student engagement, as it is clearly not sampling motivated students or students who have demonstrated records of success, but yet, we still do not understand the motivation of these students to become involved. Once again, research focuses on either high achieving or well-adjusted students, or low-achieving or at-risk students or finds slight correlations with those that do not fall into an extreme category. To find the answers we need relative to the ability of the school to provide motivation for engagement, students who are neither classified as top or bottom achievers should be the focus. To understand these complex relationships, we must address these issues with those students who, for lack of a better term, are average, or "in the middle." Submerged in this vast sea we call the middle is where the treasure may lay.

Parent Influences on Individual Student Relationships with Peers

A sense of security with parents and peers during adolescence seems to be related to adolescent self-image (O'Koon, 1997). There is a common belief that parents and peers represent opposing influences on adolescents. Seemingly, parents encourage academic achievement and peers distract from it (Coleman, 1961). An important component in beginning to understand the complex relationships of parents, their children, and their children's peers is a delineation of parent relationships. Much of the research centers on the concept of authoritative parenting and its effects on students and their relationships with peers. The original concept of attachment referred to the affectional bond between infants and their caregivers (Bowlby, 1982). This concept is being extended to include adolescents.

Parents and Peer Group Affiliations

Brown, Mounts, Lamborn, and Steinberg (1993) argued that parents retained a measurable amount of influence, albeit indirect, over their teen's peers. The study indicated specific parenting practices (monitoring, encouragement of achievement, joint decision making) were significantly associated with specific adolescent behaviors (academic achievement, drug use, self-reliance), which in turn were significantly related to membership in common adolescent crowds.

Linking these practices to peer group affiliations, Brown et al. (1993) derived a conceptual model of the connection between parenting behaviors (practices), peer group affiliations, and adolescent behavior (see Figure 6). To test this model, Brown et al. (1993) focused on three parenting practices – emphasis on academic achievement, monitoring, and efforts to engage the child in joint decision-making. To accompany these practices, three adolescent behaviors – academic achievement, drug use, and self-reliance, which are thought to best define peer groups.

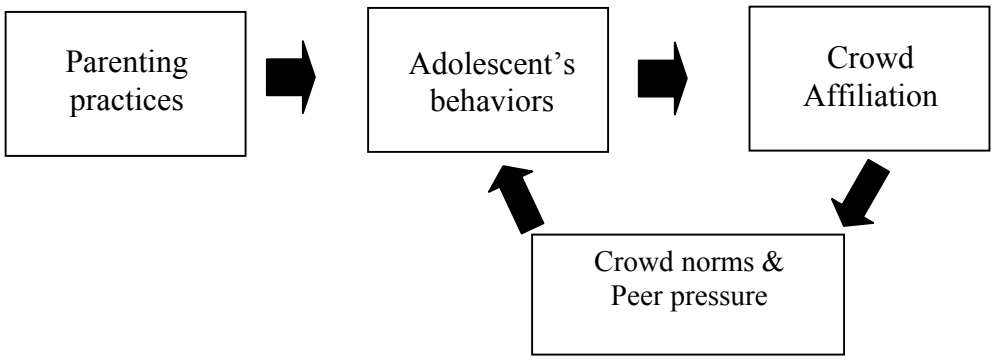

Figure 7. Brown et al. (1993) Conceptual model of the connections between parenting behaviors, peer group influences, and adolescent behavior

The sample for this study included six public high schools – three in the Midwest and three on the west coast. Schools included a small, rural (400 students) school with 98% being European-American from farm or working-class families; one, with a larger (1500 students), more ethnically diverse student body with only 70% European-American, from working and middle class families from a moderate sized city; one mid-sized (1000 students) school located in a predominantly European-American, upper middle-class suburb; a large, ethnically diverse school (45% of the 2500 students were African-American or Hispanic) located in a upper-middle-class community but also drawing from less economically-privileged families; a school where 1300 students were largely divided between working and upper-middle-class families with Asian-American and Hispanic students collectively outnumbering European-American students; and a large inner-city school with an ethnically diverse student body with African-Americans forming the largest single racial/ethnic group (40%).

Students from each of these schools completed a self-report questionnaire that focused on school-related behaviors (academic achievement, engagement in classes, extracurricular participation) but included measures of family relationships and parenting behaviors, peer relationships, deviant activities, and psychological well-being. The total number of student participants was 3,781.

The conceptual model hypothesized by Brown et al. (1993) suggested that adolescent behaviors would mediate the relationship between parenting practices and crowd affiliation. The findings of the study suggest (see Table 4) that while parental influences as defined as parent practices diminish as adolescents grow older, they are far from being ineffectual. Findings supported the notion that parental emphasis on achievement inspires higher academic performance that fosters association with a peer group identified as populars. However, when this emphasis on achievement is accompanied by efforts of parents to monitor their child's behavior, the child is oriented more toward the peer crowd labeled brains. These examples support the notion that parenting practices can influence students and their peer relationships.

The important qualifying factor in this study is that while parental practices held some influence over students and peer relationships, there is no discussion what direct effects if any parent practices have on peer relations. Brown et al. (1993) conclude their study with the following challenge: "…researchers are encouraged to pay more attention to the joint influences of parents and peers on adolescent behavior" (p. 480).

It seems appropriate then to include engagement in school as a behavior of adolescents. The information in this study provides a firm foundation upon which to build a new study that incorporates these ideas.

Table 4
Proportion of variance in crowd affiliation scores accounted for by background variables, parenting practices, and adolescent behaviors

Crowd	Background variables	Parenting practices	PP + adolescent behaviors	Total
Populars	.129	.009	.033	.162
Jocks	.073	.013	.016	.089
Brains	.088	.010	.139	.227
Normals	.070	.004	.007	.077
Druggies	.053	.026	.175	.230
Outcasts	.087	.001	.023	.111

Note. Brown et al. (1993)

Parenting Styles

Authoritative parenting is associated with school success (Steinberg et al., 1988). This early review of literature suggested that students who had consistently authoritative parents outperformed those whose parents provided a constantly permissive environment. One of the hypotheses proposed in the report was that authoritative parents encourage the development of independence and self-reliance in their children. A second hypothesis indicated that adolescents from authoritative households may be more likely to associate with both adults and peers who encourage academic success. Yet a third hypothesis stated that the connection between parental authoritativeness and adolescent achievement may be due to the effects of adolescent competence on parental behavior, rather than the opposite directional relationship.

Authoritative Parenting Within the Peer Network

Fletcher, et al. (1995) attempted to link the relation of adolescents' adjustment and behavior to their friends perceptions of authoritative parenting and in doing so found that competent adolescents are attracted to each other and their parents have influence of individual students and their peers.

A sample of over 11,000 students was drawn from nine high schools in Wisconsin and Northern California. Careful attention was paid to ensure a socioeconomic and ethnic diversity among the participants. The sample was reduced considerably due to incomplete surveys and

students who did not identify three friends. As a result, the sample dropped to 4,431 students. Of this sample, 43% were male and 57% female. The sample represented all grades in high school (9-12). Despite the work to find an ethnically diverse group, the vast majority of students were from upper-middle-class homes of professional parents. Students who were absent from school on the day of the survey did not participate. There is an important validity issue with regard to the relationship of absenteeism and school achievement. It is possible that more advantaged students participated in this survey. Because of the measurement need of peers, each student listed three friends who were in turn surveyed. Many items on the survey were directed toward parenting styles and practices. Table 5 shows the regression coefficients as they relate to the academic achievement of students. Authoritative parenting was positively linked to improved academic achievement and lower rates of delinquency and substance use. High levels of perceived parental authoritativeness were associated with lower levels of misconduct in school as well as individual student internalized distress and a higher level of psychosocial adjustment.

The results of the study clearly showed that having friends who believe their parents to be authoritative is associated with higher levels of school achievement (network authoritativeness). This relationship is reported to be mediated by the individual adolescent's peers. These complicated relationships invite other researchers to look at the role of non-familial adults within the realm of adolescent socialization.

As has been stated previously, there is a danger in sampling like socio-economically advantaged or disadvantaged students. Fletcher et al. (1995) stated that successful or well-adjusted students from authoritative homes seek the companionship (and are sought) of like peers. This same relationship holds true for those students who are not advantaged economically or who do not come from authoritative homes. These students as well tend to gravitate to like students. These relationships maintain advantages and disadvantages of the particular groups and raise once again validity issues with regard to sampling. If this is the case, then the over 4000 students who were well-adjusted more than likely picked friends who were well adjusted as well. Fletcher et al. (1995) reported a reluctance of socio economically disadvantaged students to name three friends. Given this, it is quite easy to see why the results displayed strong correlations. Clearly the authors cannot determine the effects of authoritativeness in the peer network at different socioeconomic levels.

Does the level of a student's relationship with parents transcend to satisfying relationships with peers? Schneider and Younger (1996) hypothesized a strong positive relationship between the attachment of students to their parents and the student's ability to have positive interpersonal relationships with peers.

Correlations of Parent-Adolescent Attachment

Schneider and Younger (1996) selected 63 tenth grade students, 95% of which were Caucasian, to participate in the Inventory of Parent Attachment (IPA). It was clearly noted that the sample was not random, as the study was limited to those who agreed to participate. While this study does meet the research challenge offered by Steinberg (1988), it falls very short of measuring a true representative sample of students necessary to draw realistic conclusions about this important topic.

Table 5
Regression coefficients for relations between authoritativeness in the adolescent's home, prevalence of parental authoritativeness in the peer network, and indicators of academic achievement

Variable	B (boys)	β (boys)	B (girls)	β (girls)
Grade point average				
1. home authoritativeness	.15	.19***	.15	.20***
2. home authoritativeness	.14	.17***	.14	.18***
network authoritativeness	.08	.11***	.08	.11***
3. home authoritativeness	.08	.10	.04	.05
network authoritativeness	.06	.08*	.03	.05
interaction	.02	.08	.03	.16
Time on homework				
1. home authoritativeness	.16	.12***	.23	.18***
2. home authoritativeness	.15	.11***	.21	.17***
network authoritativeness	.08	.06***	.08	.07***
3. home authoritativeness	.12	.09	.21	.17*
network authoritativeness	.06	.05	.08	.07*
interaction	.01	.03	.00	.00
Bonding to teachers				
1. home authoritativeness	.14	.23***	.14	.23***
2. home authoritativeness	.14	.23***	.14	.23***
network authoritativeness	-.00	-.01	.02	.03
3. home authoritativeness	.09	.14*	.23	.38
network authoritativeness	-.03	.05	.06	.11***
interaction	.02	.11	-.03	-.19**
School orientation				
1. home authoritativeness	.14	.24***	.14	.24***
2. home authoritativeness	.14	.24***	.14	.24***
network authoritativeness	.02	.04	.00	.01
3. home authoritativeness	.09	.16**	.15	.25***
network authoritativeness	-.00	-.00	.01	.02
interaction	.01	.10	.00	-.02
Academic competence				
1. home authoritativeness	.15	.25***	.18	.27***
2. home authoritativeness	.15	.24***	.17	.25***
network authoritativeness	.04	.07***	.06	.11***
3. home authoritativeness	.06	.10	.07	.10
network authoritativeness	.00	.00	.02	.03
interaction	.03	.16	.03	.19**

*p<.10. **p<.05. ***p<.01.
Note. Fletcher et al. (1995)

As could be expected, Schneider and Younger (1996) found that students communicated more with the parent with which they perceived a more trusting relationship (see Table 6). The results suggest that there is a significant impact of alienation from parents on peer relationships. It is stated that adolescents will very likely become involved in outside peer activities to compensate for poor relationships with parents. One of the more interesting findings indicated that adolescents who had positive relationships with their parents were rated by their parents as

having little social competence in peer relationships. This raises the question about jealousy or resentment by the parent toward the peer relations of their children.

Table 6
Intercorrelations of adolescent-parent attachment scales

Scale	Mother Communication	Mother Trust	Mother Alienation	Father Communication	Father Trust	Father Alienation
MC		.53**	.13	.46**	.33**	.09
MT			.17	.25	.37**	.19
MA				-.10	.00	.31*
FC					.46**	.02
FT						.12

*p<.05. **p<.01 (two-tailed)

Note. Schneider & Younger (1996)

While the conclusions need to be interpreted with some degree of caution, there are important conclusions from the ideas presented in this study and others that highlight parent relationships and peer relationships.

Families, Peers, and Engagement: Literature Conclusions and Directions

Themes in Family Involvement

Distinct themes within the arena of parent and family involvement emerge throughout the review of the literature which addresses specific high school issues. Epstein (1992) has defined six categories of family involvement as having effects on the achievement of students. Sanders, Epstein, and Connors-Tadros (1998) build upon the Epstein typology and find correlation of these areas of involvement as well as parental support and high school student achievement to be significant. There is even the suggestion that involvement can influence the educational culture of a family. Patrikakou (1997) and Keith (1997) both cite parental expectations of student achievement and Keith adds parent child communication as key factors in helping students succeed. Deslandes et al. (1996) as well as Hickman et al. (1995) both cite parent support as leading to better grades with Hickman et al. (1995) limiting that effect to the lower high school grades.

The actions of parents within the context of the educational lives of their children can be described in two categories, involvement and style. The involvement of parents or families includes the engagement of families in the instructional and noninstructional lives of their children as well as the family's educational experiences and values about the importance of education.

The term authoritative parenting emerges through the literature as a manner in which researchers define parent practices of monitoring, encouragement of achievement and joint decision making (Brown, et al., 1993). Steinberg et al. (1988) stated that authoritative parenting is associated with school success. Fletcher et al. (1995) suggested that authoritative parenting in the adolescent's peer network is positively related to his or her performance in school. Schneider and Younger (1996) confirm the existence of links between parent adolescent attachment and

adolescent social competence. Given these complicated relationships with children and their peers coupled with the expectations parents place on their students with regard to success in school, this concept can be developed under the heading of parenting style.

Themes in Influences on Student Engagement

Attention turns next to school influences on the engagement of students. In this particular domain several themes emerge from the literature. Leithwood and Janzi (1999) found a weak significance between principal leadership and student engagement but surprisingly add to the family involvement domain by strongly suggesting that the educational culture of the family and not the socio-economic status play a role in student engagement with school. Cothran and Ennis (2000) logically added that positive classroom connections with teachers built a bridge to the students and ultimately positively affected their engagement. Cooper, Nye, and Lindsay (1999) and Brown and Steinberg (1991) reaffirm the idea that non-classroom experiences including co-curricular activities and homework can have a positive effect on student achievement. We can assume that engagement is a positive factor in that achievement.

It can be surmised that the three typical ingredients in high schools, those being, the principal, classroom teachers, and non-classroom activities all can have a positive effect on students. In large high schools with larger numbers of principals, it might be hypothesized that the relationship with the principal can be extended to other administrators such as assistant principals and program directors. School involvement then, describes the efforts of school personnel, programs, practices, and policies to engage students, their families, and their peers in the instructional and noninstructional processes and influences in schools.

Themes in Family Influences on Peers and Students

Finally, the literature explores themes in family influences on individual students and their relationships with peers. Often, students respond that the best experiences of school are related to social situations rather than academic experiences, however, peer group dynamics can also be a source of stress that can easily distract students from the learning process. Peer culture prescribes school as a place to live more so than a place to learn (Brown & Theobald, 1998). Peer relationships do not arise independently of adolescents' family relationships (Strouse, 1996). Adolescents may become involved in outside peer activity as a compensation for unsatisfactory relationships at home, confirming the existence of links between parent adolescent attachment and adolescent social competence (Schneider & Younger, 1996). This notion of peer relationships is an important one to add to the discussion of influences upon the engagement practices of individual students. The influence of a student's social network on the engagement with instructional and noninstructional experiences is described as peer relationships.

As has been described in the definitions portion of chapter one, individual student engagement is described as the psychological, social, and emotional involvement of an individual student in instructional and noninstructional school experiences.

Emerging Domains of Study

To begin to synthesize the literature, a matrix was developed which clustered the individual results of the studies presented in this review (see Appendix A). Upon categorizing

and studying the similarities and differences among the individual study results, definite themes emerged. The themes that emerged appear in appendix B. From these themes a matrix was developed to begin the process of determining the interrelatedness of the ideas presented within the domains and to act as a catalyst for the development of critical questions to be asked within this study. This conceptual matrix appears in Appendix C. Literature review matrices of studies used in this chapter appear in Appendix D. The process of funneling information presented in the research through the use of matrices, led to the formulation of the domains and definitions for this study.

Table 7 shows the domains that have emerged from the review of literature and the definitions that will act as the guiding parameters for questions posed to high school students in an in-depth interview process. A complete description of the methodology follows.

Table 7
The description of the domains of study emerging from the literature

Domains of Study Emerging from Literature

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION
Family Involvement	The engagement of a student's family in their instructional and noninstructional experiences including the combined family educational experiences and the values placed on education by families.
Parenting Style	The relationship with a student and that student's peers as well as the instructional and noninstructional expectations placed on the student.
School Involvement	The efforts of school personnel, programs policies, and practices to engage students, their peers, and their families in instructional and noninstructional experiences.
Peer Relationships	The influence of a student's social network on engagement with instructional and noninstructional experiences.
Student Engagement	The psychological, social, and emotional involvement of an individual student in instructional experiences.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research can be conducted in numerous ways, many of which have long traditions behind them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Marshall and Rossman (1999) qualitative researchers face three challenges: (1) developing a concise and thorough conceptual framework, (2) planning a systematic and manageable, yet flexible design, and (3) integrating these in a document that convinces the reader the study "should be done, can be done, and will be done" (p. 9). This research study engaged in systematic inquiry and brought about a better understanding of the relationships between the combined influences of families and peer relationships on the engagement of high school students.

Research Questions

The overall guiding question for this study was: How do high school students vary their engagement with school when influenced by the interaction of family involvement practices and peer relationships? Subordinate questions that relate to the question were: (a) Do high school family involvement programs influence individual student engagement? (b) What is the ability of high school instructional and noninstructional programs to positively influence student engagement practices? and, (c) What effect do parental influences have over the relationship between individual students and their peers?

The Setting

The strength of this particular research design was the inquiry into how the various components of families, peers, schools, and individual students meld together to create systems and processes which influences engagement practices of high school students with regard to instructional and noninstructional experiences. As was stated previously in this research, there were compelling reasons to select Stonewall Jackson High School as the site for the research to take place.

A more in depth examination of Stonewall Jackson reveals a culturally diverse school with 68% Caucasian, 22% African-American, 10% Latino with the remaining 2% including Asian, Asian-Islander, Arabic, Indian, Pakistani, Latvian, Native-American, Nigerian, Russian, and several other eastern block and European countries. Stonewall is host to a growing English as a Second Language program. The transience rate for the school is 23%, meaning that from the beginning of the school year to the end, 23% of the student population will come and go.

As was discussed in the introduction to this study, Stonewall has had a varied and checkered past. From the inordinate number of principals, to negative perceptions and achievement, the school has struggled to find its place within the community and the system. Several challenges faced the new principal in 1995, the largest, a mandate from the central office and community to improve the achievement of students and the perception of the school.

Beginning in 1995, Stonewall Jackson High School became involved in the Bridge Project, a national grant project designed to use telecommunications technology to promote family involvement in schools. The project was funded by the American Business Collaboration, a team of 22 fortune 500 companies that pledged over $100 million dollars over ten years to

incorporate before and after school care, workplace daycare, and eldercare programs around the country. The Bridge Project was a relatively small portion of the grant that was designed to encourage schools to understand the importance of family involvement and understand how technology could "bridge" the gap between homes and schools.

The theoretical model used in this project was the *Transparent School Model* that touted the idea of transparency as a metaphor for the impact of telecommunications technology on family involvement (Bauch, 2000). Stonewall Jackson was one of 104 original schools to apply and receive grant funds for the project. Included in the funding was administrative training with regard to family involvement research and specific technological training to implement the system at the school site.

During the first year of the project, baseline data showed a 594% increase in the amount of contact between teachers and parents via voicemail. The positive reception of this kind of system by parents was an indication that a need to involve families in more significant ways was necessary to achieve the much sought after improvement of the school. In October, 2000, the system was expanded to make teacher grade books and attendance information available to parents via the Internet or telephone. Of the potential 2000 families represented by the school population, approximately 950 families signed waiver forms to receive login and passwords to the computer-based system.

Following the implementation of the Bridge Project system, programs and practices designed to enhance the involvement of families were created. School governance councils were reformed to include a larger parental representation. Outreach programs found teachers and administrators with parent interpreters, hosting meetings in communities containing a high density of families for whom English was not a first language. Transportation was provided for families to attend school events.

The school atmosphere was reconstituted to send a friendlier message to parents and families visiting the school. Directional signs in English and Spanish were placed throughout the interior and exterior of the building to better direct parents to key locations. Greeters were placed at the main school entrance to help visitors find their destinations. Translation services were advertised and communications from the school were printed in two languages. Messages sent to families via the telecommunications system were sent in Spanish and English based on the coded information in the student database system. A much-touted removal of the counter in the main office led to cosmetic improvements with the offices and public areas of the school that were designed to present a more welcome and positive feeling. School newsletters were increased from four times a year to monthly. A website was established to allow those families access to the Internet, viable and current information about the school.

In association with the local library system, a grant was developed and awarded to create a computer lab in the shopping mall adjacent to the school, as a place for families not only to understand library and Internet services, but also to gain valuable information about Stonewall Jackson High School. The LEAP (Linking Education and Parents) program was developed to offer classes to parents based on survey information collected from parents on interests. Classes in academic assistance, adult English, computers, college financial aide, and the Internet, among others are all offered to parents at times convenient to them.

Large gatherings of families for important issues such as information for upcoming freshmen parents and parents of graduating seniors were moved to Saturdays to encourage more family attendance. Many meetings and conferences have been rescheduled at times more

convenient for parent attendance. Student led conferences, as well as Special Education IEP meetings are encouraged.

Training and staff development programs played a key role in the development of parent involvement programs. All staff were trained in the importance of parent involvement and trained in the use of the telecommunications system. Each new group of teachers to the school receives extensive training in the area of parent involvement. The expectations to promote the involvement of families into classrooms are written into the goals and objectives of all teachers. Classified and support staff are given "customer satisfaction" action plans in which the needs of students and families are foremost in the minds of all employees, from secretaries, to security personnel, to custodial staff. Training in school governance is required for all teacher, parent, student, and administrative representation to the school site council. Teachers and parents work together in training sessions on communication, goal setting, and consensus building. Each year the building principal trains all parents in the interpretation and formulation of the school budget.

As critical as the need for family involvement is viewed, so is the idea that students need to take part in the ownership and operation of the school. Initially, the student government organization was reformed and expanded to include more students, representative of the school population. All school councils and committees have student membership positions self-selected by the student body at-large. A student multicultural board was developed to promote and celebrate the diversity of the school. Clubs, sports teams and other school organizations have been expanded to include the interest and needs of the entire student body.

Most significantly is the change in the philosophy of orienting new students to the school. Beginning in 1999, a program entitled "One of Us" was implemented as an alternative to the traditional evening freshmen and new student orientation program. Over 100 Stonewall Jackson students are carefully selected representing all academic, socioeconomic and cultural interests of the school, to train as "mentors" to the freshmen and new students. The orientation was moved from the evening to the daytime and renamed the "I Care" day. The program is completely planned and executed by the student mentors. New students spend the day with present students learning pre-determined information, but also learning from a peer perspective, the intricacies of navigating a large and complex high school. Participation in traditional evening orientation program brought an average of 330 students in the building for a 90-minute presentation and tour. Since the inception of the One of Us program, student participation has risen to 450 in 1999, 575 in 2000, and 650 in 2001. The average freshmen class for these years was approximately 600.

The need to recognize and reward all students for accomplishments brought about the inception of the PRIDE (Personal Responsibility in Daily Effort) program. PRIDE is designed to put into place mechanisms that reward all students for improvement regardless of their level of performance. In addition to rewarding the high achieving students, students who struggle with school or who are deemed at-risk are also recognized for improvements and achievement. The impetus of the program suggests that motivation is derived from recognition and celebration that in turn can promote a more consistent effort. In addition to student recognition, parents and teachers are also recognized as part of the program.

Parent attitudes, measured by a survey instrument developed in the Prince William County Office of Planning and Assessment shows a significant increase in parent satisfaction, 34% in 1995, 59% in 2000. Teacher satisfaction in 1995 was rated 39% and in 2001 is 76%. Student satisfaction in 1995 was 31% and in 2000 was 43%.

The school's crowning accolade is its feature in Time Magazine (May 21, 2001) as High School of the Year. The school was selected to receive this recognition for both its commitment to the involvement of parents and the challenging academic programs that are available to all students.

The selection of Stonewall Jackson as the setting is critical to examination of the effects of family involvement and peer relationships on the engagement practices of high school students with regard to instructional and noninstructional experiences.

Population and Sample

The population for this study encompassed the students who attend Stonewall Jackson High School (n = 2,400). The sample derived from the population was designed to produce rich information and data that in turn helped to examine the processes and ultimate theory of the interactivity of individual students, their families, and peers. The criteria that was established is as follows: (a) grade level, (b) neither high or low achieving, (c) distribution between identified rigorous courses and regular courses, (d) representative of the cultural and socioeconomic diversity of the school, (e) gender. As a result of these criteria, the final sample of students eligible for this study was 656. Appendix E contains the sample of students by grade level, ethnicity, and gender.

It is important to note that a rationale was developed, based on the review of current literature, which specifically identifies students who can be classified as students in the "middle," neither those that are not high achieving nor low achieving. It is the opinion of the researcher, based on the literature review and personal experiences, that interviewing students from this identified group produced a rich a rich body of data from which an examination of influences could occur. Too often these types of students are ignored in educational research. The sample ultimately drawn from this body of students needed to also capture the rich diversity of the total school population. A complete explanation of the process used in determining the final sample appears later in this chapter.

Grade Level

The numbers of total students by grade level were determined. Appendix E also shows the breakdown of the representative numbers of students selected from each of the grade levels. The sample included the populations in grades 9, 10, 11, and, 12. The number of students in grade 9 is almost double the number of any other one grade level, thus making the sample group of ninth grade students selected for this study double the number of any other specific grade level group.

Determining Achievement Levels

There were numerous concerns that existed in selecting the sample. First and foremost, the study's intent was to focus neither on high or low achieving students. Therefore, criteria needed to be established to identify this particular population. Using grading and Prince William County Schools honor roll criteria, any student who appeared on any honor roll for the preceding nine weeks of the study was ineligible for inclusion into this sample. Honor roll criteria includes the Principal's honor roll, made up of students who have all grades of A and the regular or school honor roll which is comprised of students who have all grades of A or B. A locally

developed honor roll called the Stonewall Scholars honor roll allows students enrolled in International Baccalaureate classes who attain grades of all A grades and B grades with one C grade, inclusion into the Stonewall Scholars listing. These students were also eliminated from the population.

Attention then turned to low achieving students. This provided more of a challenge in terms of identifying criteria to include or exclude students. A decision was made to exclude those students who have more than two grades of F on their most recent report card. This determination was made by the internal student support process that automatically places the names of all students with more than two grades of F into committee discussion and support. Given that these students have a support mechanism which comes into play based on their grades it can be assumed that students with two grades of F or less are the low point in describing average or low average achievement.

Instructional Involvement

Students have the option of participating in rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) or Pre International Baccalaureate preparation courses (Pre IB). The sample delineation was limited to those students who chose to participate in no more than one IB or Pre IB course. For those few areas in which the school offers Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the same criteria applied, that being, enrollment in no more than one AP level course. Any student who appeared as taking more than one IB or AP course was eliminated from the sample.

Cultural and Socioeconomic Diversity

The sample subjects involved in this case study include 20 students representative of the cultural and socio-economic status of the school. Of the students ultimately selected for this study, the majority was white, non-Hispanic with a proportioned representation of African American and Latino students as well as other minority populations within the school. Four students were selected based on their inclusion on a listing of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. The final sample of students reflects the rich diversity of the total school population and not the diversity percentages of the sample population.

Gender Distribution

The sample included a balanced number of male and female students based on the total school population. The total school population of males was 1190 and the total population of females was 1186. The sample population rendered a slightly different balance with 355 males and 301 females in the sample. Of the 20 students ultimately selected for the study, 11 were male and 9 were female.

Gaining Access and Entry

Prior to the commencement of creating a subject pool, the Superintendent of Prince William County Schools and the Prince William County Office of Planning and Assessment were contacted and permission was sought to conduct the study (Appendix F). Once permission was granted, the process of defining the pool of potential students from which to draw a sample

was begun. When signed consent forms were collected, students were considered part of the study. A different office from the researcher's scheduled the interviews at times convenient to the students. Copies of the completed study will be made available to any parent who wishes to see the final result.

Process for Obtaining the Sample Participants

With a sample population of 656 students in place, attention turned to creating a process to select the 20 participants representative of the school and criteria established above. The participant selection was random and done by using the school student management system to create a sample of the 656 students. The database was altered to remove the names of the students but leaving their grade level, gender, ethnicity, and economic status in view. Added to the listing was a chronological listing of birth dates of all 656 students in the sample. The use of birth dates in chronological order further randomized the order of the sample.

It was arbitrarily decided to initially select the sample first by grade level. The data base was reviewed and when the first ninth grade student appeared, that student's gender, race, and free or reduced lunch status was recorded. Careful attention was paid to ensure that the criteria established in the process were followed. The process continued in this fashion until each of the ninth grade students was selected, paying careful attention to gender distribution and diversity. Each of the three following grade levels was then reviewed and students were selected in a like fashion. Once this process was complete, the participant group was again checked to ensure that all criteria had been met. Free and reduced lunch status was randomized throughout the entire sample of 20 students and did not necessarily represent a specific free or reduced population at the specific grade level, but rather mirrored the free and reduced lunch population of the entire school.

Once the first 20 students were selected, letters were prepared to the subjects and their parents explaining the study and their selection (Appendix G). Students and parents were invited to ask any questions necessary to help them determine their decision for participation. After the letters and information were distributed, students were instructed to discuss the matter with their parents and if they wished to participate, to return a signed copy of the consent form. Unanticipated in this process, was the need to have at the ready, translated versions of both the letter and the consent forms. Having to create these forms slowed the process considerably.

Of the first 20 students invited to participate in the study, only 9 students accepted the offer. As each student declined, the list of students by birth date was consulted and the next student with the necessary criteria was identified and approached about participating in the study. This process of garnering the 20 subjects took over one month. 57 students were asked to participate to ultimately get the 20 subjects needed for the study. Students very often forgot to respond, forgot their forms, or misplaced their forms. Each of the consent forms required a parent and student signature. Many forms came back with one of the two required signatures missing. After the first few problems of this nature, numerous copies of letters and forms were available. Students were regularly asked if they were able to participate. A few carried the signed consent forms around for a week or longer citing their forgetfulness to turn the forms into the office.

Of particular interest was the degree of difficulty in finding African-American males to participate. The largest number of students declining the study, that being 11, is represented by this group. Two of the students who were eager or receptive to the study declined after

discussing the issue with their parents. No attempt to discern the reason for this was made during this process.

No student who committed to the study changed their mind or abruptly ended their participation. Once the group of 20 was established each of them stayed with the process until the conclusion. All 20 students were given the opportunity to read their completed transcripts subsequent to the interview. Only two students made any corrections to the transcripts.

Procedures

The sections to follow describe the design of the study, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The research design was a case study approach (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Yin, 1994). Gathering the data in this manner provided a rich and in-depth analysis of how the interaction of peers, families, and schools affect the engagement practices of individual high school students.

Pilot Study

To assist in the process of refining questions and training interviewers in the process of interviewing students, a pilot study was planned and conducted at a neighboring high school. Permission was sought and granted by the school principal (Appendix H). It was decided that two students would be solicited for the study. The students matched, as closely as possible, the type of student being interviewed in the actual study. The students were solicited and agreed to participate in the pilot study. Parents signed all necessary consent forms. Unfortunately, on the day before the interviews were to take place, one of the students was forced to cancel their interview, leaving us with the option of either having one interview or finding a second person. Within a day, a second person was found, consent forms signed, and the interviews took place.

Prior to the start of the interviews, the aspect of portraiture was discussed due to the researcher not being in the room at the time of the interviews. The process of attaining a quasi portrait of the interviewers was developed and is explained in detail in Chapter 4.

As a result of the pilot study, a review of the transcripts, and discussions with the interviewers, there were obvious changes necessary. First, the flow of questions seemed awkward and disjointed. Interviewers and the researcher collaborated on repositioning questions to allow one to build upon the other. Second, more information about the impetus of the questions, with references to the domains of the study were added for the interviewers. Lastly, potential follow-up or probing questions for the interviewers to create the best situation for rich and in-depth interviews were added. The discussions with the interviewers were extremely beneficial for two reasons. First, the interviewers provided object analysis and criticism of the process, which ultimately helped the changes to the protocol and second, the researcher was able to help the interviewers garner a more in-depth understanding of the purpose of the study and the interviews. The changes to the interview protocol were reviewed and approved by the chairperson of the study committee. The interview protocol is located in Appendix I.

Case Study Research

Case studies are the preferred method when “how” or “why” are central to the question being posed by the researcher (Yin, 1994). The methodology of this research was a case study of

20 high school students to explain the patterns related to the combined influential effects of families and peers, and schools, on the engagement experiences of individual students. Further, it was hoped that understanding more of how these forces of peers, families, and student interact could identify plausible relationships. Yin (1994) makes a pivotal point that is salient to the issues surrounding this study. It is understood that the research reviewed throughout this study does not provide the researcher with answers, but rather, has developed questions about the phenomenon to be studied.

Van Manen (1990) refers to interviewing as understanding a personal life story. The notion of the lived experience of students, acting as a foundation for this human science research, is supported in the context of Van Manen's rationales for interviewing, those being, to study how people see themselves and to study people to determine how they feel about specific issues or more specifically, how they respond to certain life situations. It is easier to talk about these experiences rather than to write them.

The Role of the Researcher

It cannot be denied that the researcher's personal experiences played a significant role in this research. The commitment to the engagement of families in the educational lives of children coupled with creating a school environment that involves students as stakeholders provided the researcher with a rich background from which to build the foundational components of this study. The introduction to this study provided a framework of past history with regards to initial experiences in the principalship.

A concern emerged regarding the principal of a high school selecting students and interviewing them on topics that include school programs and policies that would result in the potential for student reluctance to give true feelings, ideas, experiences, and impressions. To combat this problem, the primary researcher did not conduct the interviews. To control the personal influences of the researcher, the identity of the subjects remained anonymous. Most significant of these methods was the removal of the researcher as interviewer.

To further minimize the impact of bias, a structured process of data analysis was followed. At the end of each interview, the researcher worked with the interviewers and summarized the major points that had been shared by the subject in the interview. Each interview was transcribed by a third party as soon as possible after the conclusion of the interview and allowed each subject and interviewer to review the transcripts for accuracy.

Significance of the Methodology

As was demonstrated throughout the literature, the vast majority of research available about the topics of student engagement and the mediation ability of peers and families is primarily limited to quantitative research methods. Several concerns emerged from the review suggesting that the type of research subject as well as the context in which the subject is studied could be improved to have a better conceptualization of the combined forces that form the foundation of this study.

This research charged that collecting information and data from students, those very people for whom policies and practices are enacted, is critical to further understanding the combined effects of peers and families upon individual students. The study of family involvement is well represented in research, as are the individual effects on student achievement

and engagement as is school effects and the relationship of certain types of parenting practices and their effects upon students and peer relationships. The significance of this study was to look at these issues as an interactive or overlapping system so as to understand further important relationships between families, peers, and individual students and their interactive and combined effects on the engagement practices of individual students in instructional and non-instructional experiences in high school. This study contributes to the understanding of how high school administrators and teachers, as well as parents, can assist in the academic, social, emotional, and psychological development of all students so that the percentage of those students who are engaged in school increases.

To best understand the interaction of these relationships, the research was designed as a case study using the in-depth interviewing of 20 high school students as a means for collecting data. The boundaries between this phenomenon of the interactive qualities of peers, schools, and families upon individual students are not clearly evident in the analysis of present literature. Researchers continue to suggest interactions be explored which combine these domains and chart their effects upon individual students.

Another clear argument for the case study was related to theory design. A theory has been developed and proposed in this study that suggests the type and quality of interactions of the domains presented. This theory development and its creation prior to the conduct of the study clearly suggests that the case study method is more logical due to the need to develop the purpose of the study, as opposed to other forms of qualitative research, which deliberately avoid specifying any theoretical propositions at the onset of the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Research Approach

This case study of 20 high school students proposed to look for cultural perspectives and local reactions to the relationships between school, families, and peers on the combined effects of the engagement practices of individual high school students. This cultural perspective implied that an in-depth look into processes affecting the phenomenon was warranted. The research relied on in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection. The purpose of the interviews was to have high school students discuss their perspectives of these issues. Specific discussions of interview processes follow.

Interviewing Children

It is important to note the sensitivity with which interviews with minor children need to be conducted. Working with adolescents has unique challenges and rewards. Decisions about how to gather data with various age groups require sensitivity to their needs, their developmental issues, and flexibility (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Students were interviewed in a comfortable setting. All facets of the study and procedures were explained to them including the statements that they did not have to answer any question with which they feel uncomfortable and they could end their involvement in the study at any time.

To comply with University human subject research guidelines, the identity of the subjects had to be concealed from the researcher to reduce the potential emotional harm to subjects. While some details of the interviews are unique to individuals, there was no way for the researcher to determine the identity of the subjects.

Interview Overview

Typically, qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Generally, the researcher has a few set general "open-ended" topics to help uncover the participant's viewpoints about issues and uses probing questions gently to elicit complete and rich responses that described the participant's involvement in the phenomenon.

For this case study, a degree of systemization in questioning was necessary. General questions have been created based on the domains reported in Chapter 2. A rich and diverse body of data was necessary to define emerging themes and guiding principles for this empirical review. The individual "lived-experiences" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 61) which are critical to theory testing were best understood, documented, and analyzed through a process of in-depth interviewing. The case study format relied primarily on the in-depth interviews of high school students.

The interview of each subject consisted of four guiding questions. These questions were designed to elicit a free flow of information from the subjects. Each question began with the phrase "tell me about" so as to provide the subject with a forum to expand on the subject as he or she saw fit. Several probing statements were developed as well and if necessary were used by the interviewers in a follow-up or clarity-seeking manner. When subjects shared information that took the conversation along new paths, they were encouraged to be thorough by probing questions that may not be listed on the initial interview protocol. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed as soon as possible after the conclusion of each interview.

Source Document and Artifact Collection

A second set of data was used to further analyze the engagement practices of students as they are influenced by peer relationships and family involvement. Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, and Steinmetz (1990) discuss the importance of checking data by a variety of methods. The authors note that the intersection of two or more pieces of data allows for the triangulation of findings and allows the researcher to "cross check" the information received. In this case study, student transcripts, grade reports, and usage data from a telecommunications and Internet system were reviewed and used to support findings. Field notes from the interviews as well as portraiture notes were also reviewed. A more in-depth discussion of portraiture appears in Chapter 4.

Validity and Ethical Considerations

All research was conducted within the guidelines of the Virginia Tech Human Research Board. The study commenced only after the full approval of this committee. As a result of the Human Research Board review, a second consent form was added that described the process of audio taping in more detail. Students and parents were required to sign two consent forms to participate in the study. Both consent forms appear in Appendix J.

A more difficult issue arose in terms of the validity of the interviews. Marshall and Rossman (1999) discuss the role of the researcher that can entail varying "participantness" (p79). It is agreed that some level of involvement of the researcher is necessary and is argued that much of that involvement has already taken place.

The researcher is the principal of the high school site and is the primary force behind the numerous reforms and programs developed and implemented to improve the school. This level of bias toward the role of the school was mediated by a restricted involvement in the interview process. The researcher selected two staff members willing to give of their time to conduct the interviews. These selections were not made in an arbitrary manner. First and foremost, it was necessary to find two people who demonstrated a positive rapport with students and who were generally viewed as student-centered. Next, the topic and subjects required interviewers who had experiences in drawing out of students, responses that were rich and in-depth. It was also important that the interviewers should have a degree of skill in navigating potentially alarming responses or navigating discussions that provoked great emotion in the subject. This assignment needed experienced educators who were armed with the necessary knowledge to conduct in-depth interviews while protecting the student at all times.

After much deliberation, two seasoned staff members were selected as interviewers. The first, Ms. Rebekah Wight, is the Director of Guidance. Prior to this assignment, Ms. Wight was the school career counselor and quickly established herself as a person who related to students very well. Her counseling background was beneficial in those interviews where difficult subjects were exposed in the process of questioning. In her role as director of guidance, Ms. Wight comes into contact with all factions of the school population and is masterful in dealing with any and all issues that may appear before her. She became a logical choice for this process.

The second choice for the interviews was Mrs. Maureen Ellis. Mrs. Ellis is a veteran staff member teaching cultural anthropology. In addition to the obvious advantage of an anthropological background, Mrs. Ellis also possesses a great deal of savvy in dealing with students and is a well-respected and highly visible member of the staff. The duo of Ms. Wight and Mrs. Ellis seemed an ideal combination to ensure that interviews would be rich, in-depth, and kept within the guidelines presented and all times, with the best interests of students at the forefront.

A meeting took place with both interviewers to review the questions and the interview format. Questions were modified with guiding principles so that both interviewers were reminded of the purpose of each question and how it relates to the overall study. As part of the training, interview techniques and tape-recorder operation techniques were also reviewed, emphasizing the need to ensure that all interviews were recorded appropriately. Interviewers were instructed that at no time should the subjects name be used in any written documents or on the tape recordings. All subjects were given a subject number and were referred to by this number on field notes, portraiture notes, and tape recordings.

The tape recordings of the interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after the conclusion of each interview. Unanticipated in this process were the numbers of subjects who either forgot their interview appointments or rescheduled their appointments. As a result, there did exist a backlog of tapes being transcribed, resulting in a large number of transcriptions arriving to the researcher at one time, as opposed to intermittently throughout the process. Conversations with the interviewers about their perceptions of the interviews in order to gain a level perspective with the interviewers took place regularly throughout the interviews. Interviewers were given copies of interview transcripts to review for accuracy. The purpose of the audiotaping was thoroughly explained in the written approval and consent forms that students and their parents signed and was again explained at the onset of the interviews. All subjects had the opportunity to review the transcripts of their interview and make any changes or corrections based on their review.

Data Analysis

This case study research centered on in-depth interviews of 20 high school students, field notes, portraiture notes, and certain artifacts created by the high school. Understanding that the skill of the researcher was best described as novice, it was important to identify a process that provided a vehicle for data analysis but did not inhibit the process of discovery and the potential for emerging themes. After careful consideration, the constant comparative method of data analysis as outlined by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) was the chosen method for the initial data coding. A complete description of the process appears in the next sections of this chapter.

Unitizing the Data

As each interview was transcribed, the headings of each transcript were noted with the subject and page numbers. Duplicate copies of the transcripts were made so that a clean copy was available at all times. The next steps in the process were to begin reading and re-reading the transcripts to find units or chunks of data. Lincoln and Guba (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) first described this process as unitizing the data.

Framed by the focus of the inquiry into the engagement of high school students with instructional and noninstructional programs and the degree to which family involvement and peer relationships influenced that engagement, the process began with a careful review of transcripts to better understand the meaning of the words and actions of the participants. Each of the interviews was carefully read. A line was drawn across the transcript each time a unit of meaning was identified. In the left margin of the transcript, the subject and page numbers were noted for easy reference to complete transcripts. This same process was used for field notes, personal journal entries, and other artifacts that warranted this treatment.

Once the process of unitization was complete, each transcript was cut apart into the identified units. Each unit was then taped to a card and labeled the card with the subject number and other pertinent information about the subject including, grade level, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. This process was completed for every transcript and every unit within the transcript. At the conclusion of the 20 transcripts, about 900 cards were created, each with a specific unit of data.

The Process of Discovery

Adhering to the Maykut and Morehouse (1994) process, the process moved to personal reflections on recurring ideas and themes, both from journal and field notes and the data already presented during the process of unitization. It was during this process that words and phrases that answered the questions in the focus of this inquiry were developed. The original discovery themes appear in Appendix K. The original themes were used as the first provisional coding category. This process was followed for each of the cards completed in the unitization process. During this process original themes were combined and in some cases re-coded familiarity with the data and the process increased. Understanding the inductive nature of this process, codes were changed and new data was discovered.

Refining Coded Categories

The next step in this process was to look at groups of cards and determine the degree to which characteristics were similar and then writing a propositional statement (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) that served as a rule for including or excluding cards in the coded category. The propositional statement is defined by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) as a "general statement of fact grounded in the data" (p. 139). At the completion of this step of the process, 81 coded categories with propositional statements emerged. These statements appear in Appendix L.

Categorical Coding of Data Cards

Each coded category and propositional statement was then given a code and each of these codes was transcribed onto the cards that fit the particular category. Like coded cards were placed in envelopes with the code, code name, and propositional statement on the outside of then envelope. The data codes used for the categories appears in Appendix M.

Relationships Between Categories

With 81 envelopes filled with 900 cards, the time had come to study the relationships across the data. A careful analysis of code categories and propositional statements was done to determine the relationship of one statement to the other. A giant-sized conceptual model drawing was placed on a wall and was first thought to be a logical place to begin to try and discover relationships between the categories. Large-type versions of each of the codes and propositional statements were created and then cut into strips. The next step was to place them on the wall-sized model in different patterns and groupings. During this phase of the research, it became clear that the model did not meet the needs of the emerging data. The model did not address what the data seemed to be suggesting, that being, there was more to the interactive relationships than what had been determined in the model. Further, the school, its staff, programs, and practices needed to be more of a contributing factor in the equation and was somewhat underrepresented in the original model.

With several frustrating days lapsing with no progress toward finding relationships, a concept emerged about the relationship of the data to the model. It seemed that between the overlapping relationships and the engagement of students there was an intermediary step that was both a result of interaction and a catalyst for engagement. It was with this thought that coded categorical relationships began to emerge and the process of discovery became somewhat meaningful and rather exciting. Chapter 4 includes a thorough discussion of the themes and ideas that emerged from the coded categorical data. A new wall chart was ultimately developed with larger themes borne from the data as headings. A copy of that chart appears in Appendix N.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Case Study Analysis

This research attempted to examine the degree to which high school students vary their engagement practices with school when influenced by the interaction of family involvement practices and peer relationships. Related questions centered on which high school instructional and noninstructional programs, as well as family involvement programs, can influence the engagement of individual students. Lastly, the research attempted to understand parental influences and their effect on the relationships between individual students and their peers. A thorough analysis of the twenty interviews with high school students provides a rich reservoir of information from which clear themes emerge from the qualitative data. This chapter will provide an in-depth discussion of the research results and emerging concepts. Each of these concepts will then be discussed at length using specific data to support the various conclusions.

Woven throughout this discussion of these research findings, illustrations of selected students are included to enhance and breathe life into the data. Participants are introduced and their illustrations developed throughout this section to assist with the understanding of how engagement is affected by those closest to them, namely their family and their friends and what role, if any, the school plays in enhancing student engagement. The chapter closes with an overview of the amended conceptual framework and a discussion of the concepts that emerged from the research that support the changes to the theory presented in chapter one of this study.

The Influence of Portraiture

In order to respond to concerns about validity and reliability of the data, I removed myself from the interviews due to my position as high school principal. As was discussed in chapter 3, interviewers were trained and conducted the student interviews so as the identities of the individuals remain confidential to me. This process satisfied the Human Research Review Board in order to get final approval for the study. The resulting challenge in this situation is my ability to garner a feeling for the personality, appearance, and demeanor of the student during the interview process.

Portraiture as a method of inquiry is distinctive in its blending of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity of the human experience (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Given that the researcher was not the interviewer and that the essential element of portraiture is contact, someone else was needed to act as the researchers eyes and to capture the tone and nuances of the interviewees. It was concluded that the alternative was to have one of the two interviewers become a textual artist to help illustrate the contextual aspects of each interview.

To suggest that the process ultimately used was portraiture as described by Lightfoot & Davis (1997) is misleading. Because true portraiture involves an in-depth relationship between researcher and subject, the process ultimately developed for this study took, to the degree possible, the essence and influence of portraiture. A quasi portraiture form was developed and appears in Appendix O. This form allowed the interviewers to capture not only the words of the

students, but also their mood, attitude, appearance, and demeanor. These detailed notes act as a basis for the descriptive qualities of the verbal illustrations that are introduced in this chapter.

Case Study Participants

Each of the 20 Participants in this study was assigned a case number based on the order of their interviews. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant. The case number in no way had any bearing on the student or their characteristics. Citations for these interviews are represented by an "S" for subject, followed by the case number, followed by the transcript page on which the data can be located. As an example, a quote from subject number 1 from page 7 of their transcript would be cited as S1/7. A table of the 20 student subjects, their grade level, race, gender, and regular or free lunch status appears in Appendix P.

To enhance the illustrations of the selected students, I have assigned them a pseudonym. Their direct comments will appear in text boxes throughout the body of this section. The citation within the textbox, however, will be consistent with the citation method described above.

Research Results Regarding High School Student Engagement With School

Overview

The data collected in this case study suggest that the interaction of schools, families, students and their peers while catalysts for engagement cannot be assumed to have an automatic and direct relationship to student engagement. The interactions of these entities act as a catalyst from which a new dimension emerges. This new dimension features five forces for student engagement -- those being, desires, attitudes, motivation, behaviors, and actions. These five forces are ignited by the interaction of students, their peers, families, and the school, and when evident in the life of a high school student act as a conduit to individual student engagement with school. Throughout the cases, it becomes clear that as the forces for engagement fluctuate in a student's life, their level of engagement with school is affected. From these cases emerge students who are immersed in school learning and activities and can be characterized as engaged and successful, as well as those that can be characterized as somewhat disengaged with others falling somewhere between the two on this plane of engagement.

The Forces for Engagement

Each of the five forces for engagement will be explained and explored using the data to support each of the ideas presented. Those students selected as portraitures have been given a pseudonym in the text, but the reference in the accompanying text box is the subject interview number.

Desire as a Force for Engagement

Dreams and Goals

> Paula
> Reason to get good grades? I always wanted to make my mom proud of me. The reason I want to graduate so bad is because nobody in my family actually graduated from high school (S10/13).

Students expressed having dreams, goals, and desires for themselves with regard to their future (S3/8, S4/13, S5/13, S6/3, S9/10, S12/10, S13/4, S15/11, S16/5, S17/13, S18/5, S19/3, S20/15). They understand the correlation between their desires for the present and future, and the need to be successful in school (S4/11, S9/10, S8/11, S13/9, S19/3). These desires are sometimes motivated by life altering events, such as the death of a parent as is the case with the excerpt from Paula's interview above. The desires of family and friends and the need for these relationships help to shape the force of desire within individual students. In all of the cases, students had some level of desire to achieve and move forward in their life.

Future Plans

Students were able to communicate their desire to complete high school and create a plan for their future. These plans included a wide range of desires from entering the family business to being a singing star. There were differences in the degree to which students were able to articulate their plans after high school but the commonality among the students was a desire to do well, or at least not to fail, so as to have options later and hopefully the chance to fulfill their dreams and future desires (S9/10, S12/10, S17/12, S19/3, S20/15).

> Marta
> My main thing is that I want to work after school. The reason I am studying is that I want to be able to help my child once he starts going to school. If he does not understand something in English then I can help him out. It is mostly for him, to help him (S18/5).

A notion not considered at the onset of this study was the idea of a student as a parent. When soliciting students for this study, Marta was very eager to participate. She was listed on the student information system as a tenth grade, Hispanic, female. Marta asked for the information to be translated into Spanish and through an interpreter indicated to me that she wanted her family to review the documents. A few days later, Marta reappeared with the signed consent forms eager to have her interview scheduled. It was during the interview that Marta shared that she was 19 years old, a native of El Salvador, married, and the mother of a one-year old. The family that signed Marta's consent was her husband. Marta is part of the school English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program and had a very different dream and desire for her success, that being a successful life for her child.

Parental Desires

It is clearly evident that students are able to not only express their desires and dreams for their future, but too, understand that their parents also share their desire to achieve their dreams.

Students understand that their families have dreams for them and these dreams and desires often manifest themselves as expectations placed on the student (S2/6, S6/10, S7/5, S8/9, S9/8, S10/10, S11/12, S14/6, S15/7, S19/8, S20/8). Unfortunately, expectations are not always high. Students are accepting of their parent's expectations, either because they are able to make the connection between the expectations of their parents, their present desire to succeed and their future desire to make their goals and dreams a reality or they have adapted a minimalist approach that their parents seemingly condone (S3/5-6, S7/5). Students from families classified as socio-economically disadvantaged report no less of a desire to succeed nor do they indicate their families' expectations to be less than that of any other family (S20/8).

Family Expectations of School Achievement

Family expectations almost always manifest themselves into expectations for school achievement, primarily, grade expectations. Common to the cases is the desire for families to see their children be successful, meet their dreams, goals, and desires, and often, do better or go farther in life than they did. Family expectations range from minimally passing classes, to children demonstrating their personal best (S3/12, S6/9, S9/8, S11/3). There was no case in which a family was portrayed as uncaring about their child's success, although the range of expectations did correspond directly with the level of peer interactions and the degree to which the student was engaged in the school (S2/6, S3/12, S6/9, S9/8). There are also data to support the notion that there are those families who do not articulate high expectations or desires for their children. These students do not see the expectations set as being high (S3/10).

Mark exhibits all of the characteristics of a normal high school boy, who has a wide circle of friends, a nice home, concerned and involved parents, and a school engagement pattern that could be considered positive. He plays for the school soccer team, and as a senior, understands that doing well is important to his future. Mark is comfortable in his interview, folding his hands on the table, and smiling at his interviewers. Mark is small in stature, standing just 5'8", with close-cropped sandy blond hair and bright and attentive blue eyes. He is a respectful young man, not sitting before the adults sit, and making sure that his eye contact is not only directed at the person talking with him, but that it also involves the second interviewer. Mark is happy to participate in this interview and is willing to answer any question posed to him.

> Mark
> The first expectation is that they would like to see, not necessarily an A in every class but at least if I had a B that there would be a legitimate reason and not that I didn't turn in work. If I got a B and turned in all of my work and went to tutoring she . . . they would be understanding. I think our family rule is to do your personal best and nothing less than that (S4/9).

Mark is a transfer student, originally to become involved in the International Baccalaureate program. Mark did not make the decision to leave his base school and attend Stonewall--Mark's mother made that decision for him. It is with this comment that the first inkling of Mark's relationship with his parents, particularly his mother, begins to emerge. Mark interchanges the word "they" with "her" fairly regularly, giving the impression that while he wants you to believe he is discussing family issues, it is his mother's will that he is sharing.

The Role of Friends in Student Desire for Engagement

As important as family desires and expectations are to individual student desires, friends play an important and often parallel and intersecting role as well. Students report that they tend to be attracted to friends who have similar attitudes and interests and in whom they can place their trust (S4/8, S5/23, S8/16, S9/14, S10/18, S12/6, S13/8, S17/14, S20/16,). These similar characteristics which attract peers to one another can include desires to do well, be successful and set goals for the future, which mirror those attributes of parental expectations as well. This obvious interaction between the families and peers of a student is the primary foundation upon which the force of desire is built.

Karen is a self-assured senior who has seen 13 different moves with her family during her school career. Even though she has not had the opportunity to be in one place for an extended period of time, she relies on friendships to help her reaffirm her personal inspiration to do her best. The desire to acquire close friendships allows students to treat close friends like family (S5/23).

Karen

They[friends] all know that I am very motivated and that I am very inspired to be successful in life and they just think it is wonderful. My friends are all very intelligent (S1/7).

Defining Close Friendships

Common interests and activities indirectly provide desire to be engaged in school when friends hold similar plans for the future and it seems there is a level of interaction with family to assist in future goal setting and attainment (S15/11). As has been stated, friends share similar or common interests and have similar future plans. These commonalities indirectly provide desire in students to be engaged with their learning to help shape their preferred future. Overwhelmingly, students rate common interests, trust, and honesty, as necessary components for friendships (S2/10, S4/8, S5/22, S8/18, S12/15, S16/12, S17/12).

There emerges from the data a clear theme of an interaction between families and peers with regards to common interests and desires as well as an emerging theme of expectations and success. It seems that close friends and their families hold similar values and these values help to support and maintain friendships between students (S17/12).

Discussing Family with Friends

Close friendships include discussion of families. These friendships can influence the desire of a student in powerful ways when particular students have experiences in their life that they use to influence their friends. It is quite obvious that the death of Paula's mother plays a powerful role in the shaping of her friendships and how she provides advice about friends and family.

Paula

The reasons my friends are so close to me is because we all have something in common with our whole families. All four of us, we really don't really get along with our fathers. Some of us don't even know our fathers. I help my friends out with their mom's problems because my mom passed away and I tell them "you better respect your mom." That is the only person that you have. Some kids take their parents for granted and I really, really, really, don't like that at all (S10/18).

Comparing Close Friends and Acquaintances

The importance of friendships as a component of student desire is strengthened when students continue friendships, even though there are differences that would normally result in less than close friendships, or acquaintances (S11/11). Friends and families share specific ideals which instill desire in students, chief among them academic success in school and future goals. Students admit that they have various acquaintances that cannot be categorized as close friendships, although they see these acquaintances as important components of school socialization. It is only with close friends that shared desires prove to be a force for engagement with school. Karen is clear about the kind of person she is drawn to and how that relationship inspires her academic progress in school.

Karen

I don't know, I guess I am just drawn to that kind of person. I guess because I like school so much and I like learning that I guess I am really drawn to the more academic people that are more interested in their future and things like that rather than the here and now, just today. . . in my very, very, very, close friends, I do think that it is very important because I don't think that I could have a really intelligent conversation with someone who has no motivation or talk about the future as to where I have a plan and they might not (S1/5,10).

The Interaction of Family and Friends

It is clear that both families and friends shape desires, and these interactions are the basis for influence on the individual student. Interactions about the importance of family, grades, achievement, future goals, and dreams are all interconnected when students have both families and friends who provide expectations, support, and inspiration to do well. Desire to be engaged with school and ones own learning then becomes the first force that leads to the successful student engagement with school. This research shows various levels of desire in students that can be attributed to the various levels of family expectations and degree to which friends share similar interests and future goals. As evidence of these important relationships, I would like to introduce you to Jason.

Jason has emerged as a young man who is marginally engaged in school. He is involved in no clubs or sports and places little importance on interacting with school activities. Even though his grades are acceptable, he clearly attributes his success to taking the "easiest courses" and indicates no interest or desire to challenge himself in school. Jason indicated that he does not consider the expectations set by his family as high. His parents are divorced and he spends time with each of them, although the majority of his time is spent with his mother. His primary residence is with his mother, who lives within the boundaries of the school. He reports that he rarely has school conversations with his parents, and outside of occasional comments about not failing, there are few

Jason

INT: Do your friends get good grades?
JASON: I'm not sure, I don't think so.
INT: You don't really talk about grades?
JASON: Nope.
INT: Do you think they probably get similar grades to yours?
JASON: I think they get lower.
INT: You think they get lower?
JASON: Yeah.
INT: Maybe F's?
JASON: Yeah.
INT: Do you think they have the ability to do more?
JASON: Not all of them (S3/13).

expectations placed on him. Later in the interview, Jason was asked about his friends. He described them as being similar to him, which supports the notion of friendships built on common interests. Jason vaguely refers to college or future education as a goal but does admit it is important to his family. His older brother is presently in community college. In order to determine if the interaction of family and friends, with regard to desire is a discovery of this research, it is important to know Jason's views of his friends and their engagement. What emerges from this interview are the competing expectations of Jason's family and the low expectations and performance of his friends. Jason's own view of his friends indicates that he not only has low expectations for himself, but also has low, or perhaps lower, expectations for his friends.

In contrast to Jason, Matt can be described as very engaged in school and school related activities. Matt appears to be the "All-American" boy. With short-cropped black hair, athletic build, and boyish charm, Matt exudes confidence in himself even before he speaks. He prefers to dress in something more than a tee shirt and jeans to come to school. Matt is extremely personable, thanking the interviewers for their time and repeating his eagerness to participate. Matt sees participating in this interview as helpful to his school and is more than happy to cooperate.

Matt

INT: Do your friends get similar grades?
MATT: Most of the time. A lot of my friends usually have straight A's or straight A's and B's, stuff like that.
INT: Do you have any friends that get lower grades than you?
MATT: Maybe just like in one class. For the most part they are all about the same (S16/9-10).

After some problems academically in ninth grade, Matt is now on the honor roll and playing varsity soccer. It is important here to note that Matt's exceeding of the criteria for inclusion in this study came after his initial selection. He met the sample criteria when selected. He also plays on five other soccer teams outside of school and is a paid soccer official on the weekends. Matt informed the interviewers that college and the need to succeed is reinforced by his parents "every day." Even though his parents are divorced, he maintains close communication with each of them and attributes his desire to do well to their constant encouragement and expectations. Similarly, Matt discusses the academic prowess of his friends, most of whom which are heavily involved with soccer.

Both Jason and Matt are tenth grade Caucasian males attending the same school. Yet each has a very different experience. Jason is barely involved in school, Matt is extensively involved; Jason does the bare minimum to pass; Matt is on the honor roll. During the interviews Jason was evasive and seemingly unwilling to give long or detailed answers. Matt, on the other hand, was relaxed and eager, emitting a kind of self-assurance, with eye contact, smiles, and humor peppered throughout his responses. Jason was quiet, guarded, with little eye contact and an obvious hesitancy to answer questions and a distinct discomfort during many portions of the interview.

Matt's parents have a desire for their son to do well and be successful. They encourage his success each day. Matt's friends have similar interests and together, his friends and family instill in him the desire to be engaged with his learning, his activities and his future. In contrast Jason, whose parents are also divorced, has little expectation placed on him by his family or his friends. Jason finds nothing at school to be encouraging or interesting and as a result, spends his time with friends in activities not associated with the school in any way.

Conclusion

The interaction of friends and family can either create or not create a desire to be engaged with school. As this study unfolds, it becomes clear that while desire is not the only force from which a student decides to be engaged or disengaged from their learning and school, it is very much a necessary component and a foundation for the assemblage of forces for engagement.

Attitude as a Force for Engagement

With the force of desire firmly in place, the next data set to emerge from the research was the force labeled attitude. Understanding that the catalyst of interaction between families, friends, and students is also necessary to create this second force, it seems that the school as the fourth sphere of interaction appears, but in an indirect manner. Data indicate that there are programs and efforts on the part of the school that in turn, provide parents with a positive attitude about the school (S5/17, S12/12). This positive parental attitude is not lost on the student, and manifests itself with regard to grade satisfaction, determining a relationship between activities involvement and academic achievement (S12/12). As was evident in determining the interactions that promoted desire among students, the attitudes of friends about school play the same role within the attitude of the individual student. However a new theme emerges that supports attitude, that being the notion that close friendships involve close family relationships as well (S2/11, S14/9). Students also report that acquaintances and friends across peer groups are important in shaping attitudes about school involvement and engagement (S7/8, S3/20, S4/21, S5/23, S18/18,).

Student Attitudes about Achievement

Student attitudes about their own grades vary. An alarming discovery seems to link student grade satisfaction with easy classes (S3/4, S4/10, S6/9, S11/13, S13/9, S16/7, S17/8). Several students saw their classes as easy. There were two likely explanations for these comments. Either student academic ability made their courses seem easy, or students have made a purposeful decision to take easier course or they perceive the courses they are taking as being easy. The data do not clearly confirm which of the two premises is the reason for the attitude although some of the students interviewed admitted to taking easier courses (S6/ 9, S11/13).

Students enjoy their successful achievement in school. There was no participant who was failing at the time of the interview or whose grades plummeted below the criteria set for inclusion in the study sample. Those students, who have improved from previous years indicate a pride in themselves and a feeling of self-worth (S3/4, S4/10, S6/9, S11/13, S13/9, S16/7, S17/8). Students express some level of regret with their previous past failures or poor performance (S13/4,9).

Effort

Within the investigation into attitudes and grades, the subject of effort emerges as a window into the attitude toward school by the particular student. In most cases, students view their grades as acceptable, but note there is room for improvement (S12/9, S18/3, S19/7, S20/8). Trying to do well in school, or to improve one's standing in school is strongly suggestive of

improving or somehow altering an attitude so that improvement can occur. Students are very clear in communicating that effort is the key to improvement. Attitude can be a force that changes or alters effort. In the cases where the student identified improved effort as the reason for improved academic standing, students very clearly stated that their attitude about effort made significant differences (S20/8).

The Option of School

The essence of school as a requirement or being the best option among several options open to students does affect the attitude of the student in a positive manner, even though the student sees school as somewhat of an albatross (S14/2). There seems to be a normalcy and routine associated with attending school that appeals to students and helps to shape their attitude about school and their own involvement (S10/18). There seem to be two distinct viewpoints regarding activities involvement. The first attitude maintains that activities are somewhat of a detriment to school performance; the second is the opposite, that activities are a motivator and assistance with overall school performance (S15/6, S16/8).

Interacting with Friends

Data clearly show that friendships are an important ingredient in a student's desire to be engaged with school. That same premise holds true when attitudes are formed about school engagement. Friendships are now expanded and students report that the families of close friends are connected to their own in some fashion (S2/11, S14/9). In contrast to close friendships and their properties, students feel that acquaintances are important factors in motivation for school engagement and also help with socialization in school and at school activities (S12/14). Student socialization in school is expanded to included acquaintances thus improving their attitudes about school and its inhabitants stand to improve with friends who are categorized as acquaintances (S7/8).

Friends and Achievement

There is some reason to suggest that even though students have made distinctions between close friends and acquaintances, that line is blurred when pressing the issue of engagement with academics. There are those students who maintain that their close friends have similar attitudes and maintain consistent school achievement (S2/7, S20/9). Other students very clearly state that they have friends who fall along a continuum from achievers to "slackers" (S3/19, S4/18). It can be interpreted that close friends are more similarly aligned with the student and their achievement than are acquaintances. Students very clearly report that they have friends who take school seriously and friends who do not take school seriously (S2/9, S12/14, S14/9, S19/11). These different kinds of friends could possible explain why parents are motivated to make judgments about their child's friends or hold particular attitudes about particular people. It may be confusing to parents to determine which of their child's friends have significant influence over their child, which tends to make parents suspect of all of their child's friends and acquaintances.

As a senior, Mark has experienced many friends through different interactions and experiences. He believes that while close friendships are vital, acquaintances should be seen as important relationships that play a different role than close friendships. Mark does not feel that he should ignore these types of friendships because he feels that however informal, casual friendships can be extremely valuable.

> Mark
> Just because of the fact that they know you, they might, if you were in a jam, they might still pull through. They might not be your best friend or even a friend at all . . .I say don't close doors on an opportunity (S4/20).

As Paula's interview progresses, it becomes clear that Paula's strength is a direct result of the influence of her mother and much of her will and desire to succeed is to carry out the dreams her mother had while alive. Paula, who now lives with her aunt and uncle appreciates the generosity of her relatives, but has a difficult and sometimes distant relationship with them. Paula places great value on friendships, whether they are close or not. Perhaps it is the grief she carries for her mother, or her difficult relationship with her relatives with whom she lives. Perhaps the importance of friends stems from the recent relocation to Colorado by her three older brothers, all of whom dropped out of high school. Ultimately, Paula's attention to friends could be a result of or some combination of all of these forces in her life. Paula does not give a clear view of how her attitudes about friendships were formed, but what is clear is her strong desire to have as many connections to friends as possible.

> Paula
> I mean you have the same interests or whatever, but you don't see them as much. You don't talk to them as much. You see them in the hall and you say hi . . . [J]ust in case you need someone to talk to or just have a friend around. You got to have lots of friends. It's pretty nice to have friends. (S10/19).

The Interaction of Family and Friends

Family Judgments and Comparisons of Friends

With close friends and acquaintances comes family interaction with friends. For those students whose parents are engaged with them in school and activities they report enjoying good and open communication (S15/1). Family attitudes about friends do not impact their child's friendships (S3/18). There are situations when parents make comparisons with friends and the student finds these comparisons unwelcome and a negative reinforcement (S5/20). Parents also make some judgments about their child's friends that discourage the interaction of friends and family. (S1/8, S3/12, S4/17, S5/18, S6/12, S9/13).

Student Perceptions of Parental Attitudes

Student attitudes about their parents can be negatively impacted by the actions of a parent with regard to judgments about the student's friends. During his interview, Mark made it clear that he disagrees with many of his mothers opinions and resents her attitudes about people based on her judgments. Mark seems to be caught between adolescence and adulthood. Physically, he is an adult, but he is still very much forming opinions and garnering his independence from familial control. What is clear almost from the beginning of Mark's interview is his mother's control in his life and his ongoing struggle to convince his mother to broaden her attitudes and beliefs about friends and outside influences.

> Mark
> It is a little difficult having both my mom and then that friend in the same room. The fact that my mom has certain opinion of somebody she will let it be known what that opinion is . . . [M]y mom has a certain requirement people have to meet. She tends to stereotype people when she sees them (S4/17).

There also exists the opportunity for parents to be incorrect in their attitudes about their child's friends. In the case of Karen, parents held positive attitudes about her friendships. Karen's friendships, which acted as her path to drug use, were completely misread by her parents. Her parents only learned of the truth at an interaction session in a drug rehabilitation facility in Utah.

> Karen
> They liked the friends before, but I was actually addicted to drugs because of some of these friends and I got sent to, and that on top of my disorder, I got sent to a program in Utah and at the end of two months my parents were allowed to come see me on the condition that I wrote my life story out on paper and had my psychiatrist read it and make sure that everything was there. Things like saying things that I had done in the past, drugs and everything like that . . . [A]ll three of us were just crying. Me because I was so embarrassed…and both of them because they weren't expecting any of this (S1/8).

School as Indirect Influence with Attitude

Even though no specific data came from this research regarding the school's role in the force of attitude, there is an indirect connection between families and school with regard to attitude. Parent attitude about contacting the school seems to be positive (S5/17, S12/12). The school's efforts to promote involvement are much more pronounced in a later discussion of behaviors, but it is important to note this indirect connection between the school and parent attitudes.

Teacher Actions

Specific teacher actions were mentioned as helping to shape a positive attitude of the school for parents. When parents know that teachers are working to assist their children, their attitude about the school is positive. During the early part of the 2001-2002 school year, a popular senior was killed in a car accident. This tragic student death affected scores of students and their families, none more so than Lisa.

Lisa is an attractive girl with stylish clothes and a "cheerleader" look. She is very popular in school and spends a great deal of time outside of school riding and taking care of her horse. Lisa appeared relaxed and confident throughout the interview, smiling and looking straight into the eyes of her interviewers. It is evident early in a conversation with Lisa that her relationships with friends definitely override her familial relationships or relationships with other adults. She is a social being, who thrives on being at school, being accepted, and having as many friends and acquaintances as she can possibly have. Lisa was devastated by the death of her boyfriend. She missed a great deal of school causing her to achieve very poor, and in some cases, failing grades for the first quarter of the 2001-2002. Even though Lisa reports that several peer groups and friendships have been altered as a result of her boyfriend's death, she has found solace in her close friends, horseback riding, and school and once again is academically successful and moving on with her life.

> Lisa
> Yes, cause they were really pleased with what they did with all of us after [student] died. I am a little more shy towards the teachers. I am not one to go up and get my work that I missed. They just wanted to make sure I got everything and the teachers were all pretty cool about giving me extra time and a little easier stuff because I had missed the in-class part. I know [her teacher], she stayed after one afternoon with me and re-explained stuff so I would be ready for a makeup test (S17/10).

Conclusion

Attitudes about school, family, and friends are borne from the interactions of these entities and seem to play a role in the degree to which students are engaged with school. Their own satisfaction and effort can be connected to how their families and friends' attitudes intersect with their own. Coupled with this, family attitudes toward the school and also toward friends have an impact on the degree to which individual students are engaged with school. There is also evidence that supports acquaintances and peers play an important role in providing a needed attitude resource. The interaction of attitudes of families and friends supports the attitude of the individual student necessary to be engaged with school, learning, and school related activities.

> Lisa
> Because of what happened there everybody has kind of gone their own way. They all decided to go do different things and they get upset because oh, we aren't a group together now. It's because they don't put the effort towards it. They judge everything I do because I went out with [student] for like, forever…they wanted me to sit home and cry forever and I wasn't going to do it (S17/11).

Motivation as a Force for Engagement

Motivation to learn is a student's desire or willingness to engage and persist in academic activities in school. Students fall along a continuum of purposeful learning, just as they do along a line of yearning for learning, ranging from weak to strong motivation to do assigned school work (Brophy, 1986). Data from this study suggest that student motivation to become engaged in school is built upon their desires and attitudes.

Student Self-Actualization

As has already been demonstrated, students lacking the desire to be engaged or the attitude necessary for engagement in instructional and noninstructional activities related to school find themselves somewhat removed from the culture of the school. As has been the case with the first two forces, motivation can certainly be intrinsic, with the subject indicating that they are their own person (S8/11) or they care about their future and ultimately care about themselves, which leads them to be intrinsically motivated (S6/16, S7/3). Motivation can have little to do with school, friends, or family and can be as simple as wanting to be able to have or drive a car (S5/6, S6/8, S15/7).

Friends as an Impetus for Motivation

More important though than intrinsic motivation or motivation which emanates from outside of the realm of school, friends, or family, is the idea that motivation to do well in school is derived from friends. Subjects report that friends who are successful in school help their own motivation to be successful (S2/12, S19/14). There is evidence in the data that suggests that motivation to do well is respected by friends (S7/8). Students also report that even though some acquaintances try to dissuade them from doing well, they do not listen, and continue to be motivated by those friends who share the desire and attitude necessary to be successful (S7/9).

The School as Motivation

Enthusiastic and Caring Teachers

Within the force of motivation enters a direct connection to the schools efforts to promote a positive culture for all inhabitants. In half of the cases, teachers were specifically mentioned as having a motivating effect on students. Satisfaction with teachers is a motivating force for student engagement (S13/5, S14/3, S8/4). Teacher actions, as simple as noticing what students accomplish, also motivates a student to be engaged (S10/6). In the case of a special education student, reliance on the case manager to work through issues and problems and to help make important school decisions is critical to the students motivation to stay successful (S10/10). Foreign students, who struggle to immerse themselves in an American school culture, also very much appreciate the assistance of teachers and see their help as a motivator (S7/10, S11/6). The enthusiasm of teachers also plays an important role in the motivation of students to be engaged in school (S4/4). Teaching style and enthusiasm can determine a student's motivation to perform (S5/14).

Karen and her family are very much affected by the enthusiasm of teachers. The efforts of teachers to reach out to her as well as vary their instruction, not only pleases Karen's parents, but has helped Karen to quickly adjust to her new state and school. Karen indicates that her friends share her opinions. Karen's happiness is a direct result of her experiences with her teachers and her friends.

> Karen
> In California, like I said, the teachers . . . weren't involved at all. My parents are very pleased that the teachers are so involved and so willing to help if I need help and about how much I participate in the school work and group discussion . . . [M]y friends feel that as well . . . [T]his is a little bit much going from no friendliness at all to like super happy friendly people. It make me kind of like, wow, what am I supposed to do. I am just as happy as I can be (S1/9).

Student Mentorship as Motivation

The school's "One of Us" program, a program that places the orientation of new students into the hands of students at the school is identified as a source of motivation, largely due to the ability to meet actual students, have questions answered by people other than adults, and to have the opportunity to acclimate themselves to the environment without the fears that usually come from the opening of school (S2/2, S16/3, S19/4). Student feelings of belonging increase their desire to be part of the school (S7/10).

School Environment and Programs as Motivation

There are data that strongly suggest the school's ability to provide encouragement through its programs and environment act as a motivator to not only individual students, but their friends as well. Identified as motivation was the school's national ranking in both *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines and the degree to which that would help with college entrance (S16/2). The school's environment is friendly and that there is a willingness to help and encourage all students. (S4/3). The efforts to promote family involvement with technology, which will be discussed later, is also seen as a benefit to students and motivates students to stay current due to its ease of use (S4/5). The after-school tutoring program, which pays teachers to be available in core areas two days a week ensures that teachers will always be available for extra help. This program is seen as a benefit to students and motivates students to stay involved with their academic program (S4/14, S6/3, S8/10, S12/8). All of these issues speak to the environment and school culture that help to motivate students. Students also suggest that all of the school's motivating forces are together, a motivation to do well (S20/3).

Parent Interaction as a Motivational Factor in Student Engagement

Parents interact in a number of different areas that can be categorized as supporting a student's motivation to be engaged with school. Even though I have categorized two family motivational factors within the research categories, they are closely connected. Parents discussions with their children about education and their specific discussions about grades both act as motivators to students. In a general sense, students seem to appreciate the discussions and expect that their parents will have certain standards for academic achievement and school involvement and performance (S13/10).

Parent Experiences

Parents use their own experiences as motivators for their children by encouraging their children to be successful in school to avoid mistakes and difficulties that they have endured during their lives (S4/12, S5/21, S12/11, S13/10, S16/8). Students, like Jason, who seem to be somewhat disengaged from school report that while there is no specific discussion of school goals, he understands that his parents want him to do better. He understands that he could be rewarded for his efforts, but continues to attain marginal success in school even though he said this potential reward is a motivator.

Jason

INT: Now what do you think they would do if you brought home straight A's
JASON: I would probably get a reward or something like that.
INT: Does that motivate you to try and do better?
JASON: Yeah.
INT: To try and get more A's
JASON: Yeah (S3/13).

Discussing School with Parents

Specific conversations about grades usually include praise for good school achievement and encouragement to do even better, which students see as motivating. (S10/8, S13/5, S1/5). Students enjoy family support, however there seems to be a point at which these discussions taint the motivation in a negative manner. As I learn about Mark, a distinct problem emerges regarding his attitude toward his mother and his frustration with many of the attitudes she holds. Mark wants to please his mother, but feels he is never successful in doing so. He sees his mother's expectations as a moving target that he can never hit.

Mark

I would say not my dad but my mom does sometimes. She tends to push too hard and ride really tight on the reins . . . [W]hat she will say is get all B's. So I'll get all B's. Then she will be like why aren't your B's, A's? So then I go well Mom you asked for B's so you got B's . . . I don't know, but if that is not met then you don't have a life. I guess it gives you motivation to excel better the next time (S4/13).

Paula's difficulties in forging a relationship with her Aunt become more pronounced during discussions of school achievement. Paula understands that her Aunt wants her to do well, but very clearly explains that she is not appreciative of the manner in which her Aunt goes about trying to motivate or impart advice or encouragement. Paula very clearly enjoys the social and interactional aspects of school and resents her Aunt reducing the importance of school to graduation.

Paula

PAULA: It is mostly "well just make sure you have all those grades by the time you graduate." There is nothing encouraging, just "graduate."
INT: You don't feel very positive when she talks to you?
PAULA: No.
INT: Is it important to her that you do well?
PAULA: In a way yeah, and in a way no. She acts like "well that is just your problem." It is not really an encouraging thing (S10/12).

In order for parental motivation to be a positive force in the life of their child, and in order for that positive force to help their child be motivated to be engaged with school, there exists a balance between praise for achievement, discussion of grades and grade goals, and a

respect that the student understand what is necessary to be successful in school. This balanced combination of support and interaction provides the motivation for engagement (S1/5).

> Mark
> Sometimes we [friends and friends parents] talk about that [physical closeness], about the closeness that there is at their house. We [family] eat dinner together and everything, we still have strong ties. But if like those guys were getting along it would be good because that closeness would be good cause you can relate easier when a person doesn't have to come all the way downstairs to talk to you. When you are right there, it is best (S4/22).

An interesting theme emerges from a discussion with Mark about motivation. Mark's concerns with his mother's attitudes expanded to include his home. Mark lives in a new development in a new home that is large. He describes his room being on the third floor of his house and having to walk two flights of stairs to have a discussion with another family member. Mark rarely brings friends to his house, because of his dislike of his mother's instant judgments and behaviors around his friends, but he does spend a great deal of time at the homes of his friends. Mark is a transfer student, and as a result, has to travel a significant distance to visit a school friend's house, but he does this fairly routinely. Mark describes his friend's houses as more desirable because they are smaller and provide a physical and spiritual closeness that is lacking in his own home

While it is unclear what inspired Mark to discuss the importance of physical space within his home and the home of his friends, it is definitely something he thinks about enough to discuss with parents of his friends. In some ways, this interaction with the parents of his friends motivates Mark to focus on the positive aspects of his home and family, and ultimately, his need to be successful.

Friends can provide motivation to endure specific classes through class selection and participation influence. (S4/23, S16/13). Friends and their families also provide encouragement and motivation to be involved with specific programs and encourage the student to understand they have a wide variety of options after graduation (S20/15).

Conclusion

Motivation becomes the third force necessary for students to be engaged with instructional and noninstructional school activities. Those that are engaged report interactions of their parents and their friends with regard to various aspects of school and school-related issues. Both families and friends, and in some cases, friend's families play a role. The school seems to enter the equation in a direct way when focusing on motivation. A large portion of a school's ability to motivate students rests with the teaching staff. Other school motivators are its physical environment and the programs it develops to promote positive interaction between all students. Brophy's (1983) continuum of purposeful learning states that a student's motivation to learn can be positively enhanced. With the force of motivation as a factor in the engagement of students in their own learning, the motivation of the student then encompasses the desire and willingness to persist in school activities necessary to move the student through to a yearning for learning and to accomplished assigned tasks in school.

Behaviors as a Force for Engagement

Considering that desires, attitudes, and motivation comprise the emotional aspects of a students engagement with school, then the behaviors that a student exhibits or in which they participate act as somewhat of a crossover from those aspects that are emotional in nature, to those that begin to construct the outcomes of interactions with families, school, and peers. The behaviors that a student exhibits can act as one of the forces by which engagement with school can be identified. As is the case with the other forces, the interaction of school, friends, and family is an ingredient that, when left out of the equation, does not support the engagement of students with school.

The Behaviors of Friends and Families

Students who understand that their parents care about them and want them to do well in school, exhibit engaging behaviors in school and at home (S2/1, S7/2, S12/2, S14/2, S17/2, S20/13). Students identify discussions about school and friends as relationship behaviors that they welcome (S6/3, S8/8). Parents also exhibit behaviors, such as discussing the importance of involvement, as ways to encourage their child's participation in school (S12/12).

Interaction with Families of Friends

Students often view the parents of friends as their own parents or a second family (S2/11, S8/18, S12/15). Students also indicate that talking to friends' parents is similar to talking with an adult friend, rather than viewing that person as a parent, or their friends' parent (S19/3). Students who establish relationships with parents of friends tend to exhibit behaviors that are more closely aligned with their real personality, rather than presenting themselves in a different fashion (S9/15). It is important to students to feel welcome in the home of their friends, and by their friend's parents (S14/10). Parents in these situations are involved with their children and their children's friends so as to understand more about their children's friendships, especially if a great deal of time will be spent between friends.

Karen finds it interesting to meet and interact with the parents of her friends, as she sees this as another window into the dimensions of her friendships. She is accepting of the notion that the parents of her friends wish to meet her and indicates that her parents do the same thing. She seems to enjoy meeting the parents of her friends and understands that parents feel more comfortable knowing whom their child is with.

> Karen
> Whether it is just their house or their family actually because you see how they look alike or how they might laugh the same or something like that; It is fun . . . I know all of their parents. I think a lot of my friends kind of have the same relationship I have with my parents where they like to meet my friends if I am going to go out and be with them for a little while. So that they feel more comfortable with me, rather than me going out with somebody that they have no clue who it is (S1/11).

Friend's Families Provide School Assistance

These relationships between the student and the parents of their friends can move beyond just the comfort and acceptance level to a level of trust that allows the student to engage parents of friends in conversations about school or about personal matters. Students can gather

information about school and their future indirectly, by being witness to the career of their friend's parent, or understanding the educational background of their friend's parent (S16/12). Parents of friends also assist with homework problems for the student (S2/12). Students having difficulty with their own parents will talk to the parent of a friend to garner a perspective on their own parent's behavior (S20/4). Students indicate that they would be comfortable discussing a problem with the parent of a friend, but may not normally engage in school-related conversations (S15/12). Students sometimes believe that their friends' parents are a better help than their own parents and that this relationship is also a help to their own parents (S8/18).

Families Comparing Friends

Other students indicate no special relationship or communication the parents of their friends (S2/21, S5/25, S6/16, S15/12). As negative as students are about their own parents making comparisons to friends, so are they negative about parents of friends making comparisons to their own children about them. Paula is unhappy about times when her friends' parents make references to her success in school and becomes concerned about her role as leader of her group of friends.

> Paula
> Some of my friends' parents are like how come you can't be more like Paula; she is more put together. I am like – don't compare me to them, please . . . [I]t is kind of weird and my friends are like oh God. I am like I am not perfect. I am nowhere near it. It is just that some friends think that they should do what Paula does. I am 18 and I have to be responsible for their actions when I am around them. They see what I do and they do it (S10/19).

A Friend's Parents as a Better Option

Friends of parents can be perceived as a better option when a student needs to discuss a problem. Problems that are difficult or cumbersome to discuss with one's own parents can be discussed with parents of friends (S16/12, S17/13). Karen's story is by far the most compelling in this area, having suffered a drug overdose without the knowledge of her parents. The parents of a close friend helped get her through this frightening ordeal. This closeness with her friends' parents was life altering.

> Karen
> It was the . . . lady and her husband because their son was my best friend for almost five years. He is very, very close to me and I was in some big trouble last year. I had overdosed on a drug and I had to go into the hospital without my parents knowing. So I had gone to their house first and said I am really scared and I don't know what my parents are going to say and I did end up telling them because I just had to talk it out with her first. I don't want to hurt my parents and I don't want to make it seem like I did this out of spite or to you know, harm them. I want them to know but I don't know how to say it. I did go to them first and I found that very helpful (S1/12).

Parent Interactions with Their Children's Friends

Parents of students interviewed know most of their children's close friends, but do not know all of their children's acquaintances. Involved parents want to know about acquaintances with whom they are unfamiliar and children are accepting of these parental behaviors (S20/11).

Parents Accepting Friends

There is a definite theme of parents who exhibit behaviors of acceptance toward their children's friends. They encourage these friendships in their home and are involved with their child's friends (S12/12, S13/12, S14/8, S16/10, S19/10). This interaction is consistent across the students, with variances in the amount of time spent in homes and the level of involvement of parents. There is a stark contrast with those few students who feel their parents do not know their friends (S4/15, S17/12).

Jason reluctantly shared that he very rarely brings friends to his house due to its condition. He indicates that this problem does not bother him but it is unclear if this is his actual feeling on the matter. Jason was often rather stoic through his interview. It is difficult to discern what bothers him and what does not. What Jason wants to project as his feelings and the truth and what the reality of these are may very well be two different things. Jason's lack of engagement with friends in his home seems to mirror his lack of engagement with school. While talking with Jason, one gets the distinct impression that there is something more to this problem than just a messy house. Several attempts to expand on this topic were ignored by Jason during the interview. His discomfort in discussing this situation further suggests that he is not "fine with it" but is troubled by the fact that he cannot invite friends to his home. Interviewers tried to determine if Jason's response to his mother's potential concern over a messy house was just that, or if his answer of "probably" was in reference to his friends not being at his home. Jason did not answer the question.

> INT: Why don't you bring your friends home that often?
> JASON: My house is messy so…
> INT: Your house is messy?
> JASON: Yeah, we can't have that much guests.
> INT: Do you like your house being messy?
> JASON: I'm fine with it.
> INT: Doesn't bother you?
> Jason: No.
> INT: Does it bother your mom?
> Jason: Probably (S3/16).

The Negative Impact With Comparing Friends

The relationships of friends knowing each others parents and parents being in tune with peers and peer relationships are indicative of behaviors which lead to the engagement of students with school. Overwhelmingly, the data clearly show that parents do not make comparisons between their children and their children's friends (S6/11, S7/6, S8/8,15, S14/6, S15/8, S16/8, S17/9, S20/9). The only indication of an acceptance of this comparison by a student is if the parent uses an example only to identify the pitfalls of low achievement (S19/8). In those cases where parents compare their child to their child's friends, however, the results are always negative in the eyes of the student (S13/10).

> Paula
> It is kind of like, I'm not them so don't compare me to them. She compares me to other people's kids and it really irks my nerve…Just, that way she can make me feel bad about myself . . . I am not going to be perfect. I told her I am Paula and that is who I am going to be regardless of you like it or not. You like it or not I am going to be who I am (S/10/14).

These comparisons are most upsetting to Paula, who hears from her aunt (guardian) on a regular basis about the positive traits of friends, even though Paula is academically successful and well adjusted at school in light of her mother's untimely death. Paula has the distinct impression that her aunt simply does not like the person that she is.

Paula

PAULA: She tried to discourage me from my cousin.
INT: How come?
PAULA: I don't know! She is a nice person. I don't see why. She [cousin] is crazy and fun. She doesn't do drugs, she doesn't do anything wrong!
INT: What is she [aunt] worried about?
PAULA: I don't know! She thinks that I am like most of these kids that go out and hang out on the street and lie to their parents. If I am going to say I'm going to do something, I am going to tell you directly to your face what I am going to do. I am not going to hide anything or go behind your back. I am going to tell you (S10/16).

Parental Advice About Friends

Parents advise their children about friendships (S4/17, S7/7, S8/14, S10/16, S12/13, S14/9, S15/10, S16/10). Parents want their children to be safe and want them to make good decisions, even if their friends have made poor decisions (S16/10). The general theme among parents is to encourage their children to be independent enough to walk away from negative situations. Some parents encourage their children to meet all different types of people and give various people a chance at friendship (S12/13). It is not surprising that Jason reports never getting any type of advice about friends or friendships (S3/19). There is some idea that this lack of advice signifies a type of trust that the parent has bestowed upon their child, a trust to make good friends and behave appropriately (S19/11).

Paula's aunt is inconsistent with her advice about friends. This inconsistency leads to confusion and anger in Paula's mind about her aunts motives and causes Paula to surmise why her aunt behaves this way. Paula is agitated and leans forward, eyes fixed on the interviewers as she tried to explain this situation. Paula's aunt makes comparisons of Paula to her friends and sometimes embarrasses Paula by comparing her friends to Paula. Paula does not get the sense that her aunt appreciates her independence and sense of who she is. Paula is virtually estranged from her uncle, who lives in the same home. Yet despite this, Paula is academically successful, engaged, and involved with school.

Mark has had a difficult high school career. Throughout his first three years, Mark has seen failures and near failures. He began as an advanced student in the International Baccalaureate program, but as time and minimal achievement wore on, he took more and more regular courses, distancing himself from the rigorous curriculum. Mark's mother, so concerned for her son's graduation, quit her job as a teacher to see Mark through his senior year.

Mark

My mom gives me advice like this person is in the Honor Society . . . 3.5 GPA[grade point average] . . . go talk to them. My other friend that may be struggling in a class she doesn't see it as her own son that is struggling she is like oh that kid doesn't have the highest grade. She is more hung up on somebody's GPA than on their actual personality (S4/17).

Mark's difficulties with his mother's attitude and expectations manifest themselves again in a discussion about advice. While Mark is a respectful and polite young man, never raising his voice or becoming disrespectful, agitated, or angry, he loses eye contact when discussing his mother's attitudes. It becomes quite clear during this portion of the interview that Mark wants at some level, his mother's acceptance of who he is as a student and

perhaps as a person. Her constant comparisons to more intelligent students, or students who are more successful, Mark believes, makes his struggles almost invisible to his mother, yet at the same time the dominant focus of his relationship with her.

Mark is successful as a senior, with a 3.0 grade point average. Throughout his interview, Mark never mentioned that his mother ever praised him or congratulated him for his efforts, only that he should strive to do better. Even with this difficult circumstance in the relationship with his mother, Mark is an engaged high school student, getting above average grades in his classes, finishing a technical certificate program, playing soccer, and interacting with numerous friends. It is clear however that Mark often compares himself and his attitude like that of his father, rather than his mother (S4/14).

Conclusion

These two cases illustrate that family interaction with friends is a critical component in the behavior of students toward school. While it is obvious that positive interaction begets positive results, and no interaction supports a lack of student engagement with school, there is a suggestion that even though students' relationships with their families can be strained or frustrating, the interaction of family and peers is still an important force as to how the child exhibits behaviors that assist them to be engaged or disengaged with their school.

Action as a Force for Engagement

The final force for student engagement with instructional and noninstructional activities centers on the actions of the students themselves, their friends, the school, and their families and also requires an analysis of what if any interaction there exists between the groups. This research finds the strongest evidence yet that the interaction of these four entities creates a clear path for the engagement of the individual student.

Student Involvement with School

What was somewhat surprising to see was the degree to which individual students took action to become involved with their school. Students who responded to questions about their own academic standing, overwhelmingly indicated that there was always room for improvement (S2/6, S4/13, S5/12, S7/5, S8/13, S10/11, S11/14, S14/6, S15/6, S17/8). Students identified areas in which they struggle that sometimes lead to frustration and failure, or near failure. In most cases, students accept the responsibility for their grades, but have definite opinions on their teacher's role in their grades. Two problems emerged with regard to teachers. First, non-English speaking students feel that those teachers who do not make some accommodation for them in class, help to create the frustration that leads to failure (S7/5, S11/14). Unresponsive teachers who believe or assume that students automatically comprehend information, act as a deterrent to the level of success the student would like to achieve (S10/11).

Involvement with Grades

In other situations, unique events, such as the student death referred to earlier, caused students to lose focus on their grades for a period of time (S17/8). Students report that tests are a

stumbling block and even though they turn in work on a regular basis, a test causes them to panic and as a result, attain a lower grade than they would like (S4/13, S14/6). Students who were absent from school, made arrangements to complete missed assignments so as to not permanently compromise their academic standing (S2/6). Students also report attendance to the school-sponsored tutoring program on an ongoing and regular basis to assist with their assignments (S4/4, S8/10, S12/8, S13/8).

Family and Friends as Support Mechanisms

There exists an exciting interactive quality when the investigation turns toward the resolution of grade and achievement issues. Most definitely, families and friends converge in academically related issues such as grades and homework. Students report that they are comfortable going to their friends or their families for homework assistance (S13/8, S14/5). Family involvement with homework tends to fall within three distinct categories: (1) Trust that the student has completed the necessary or assigned work (S13/8, S16/6, S17/7, S19/6); (2). interaction with the student in terms of help, assistance, checking, or support (S6/9, S7/5, S11/13, S12/7, S13/8, S14/5, S15/5, S20/7); and (3) no assistance or interaction from family (S9/9). There is some notion that parents respect the maturity and responsibility of the child as a reason to trust that homework is being completed. This may be the perception of the child and is impossible to determine without asking the parent directly.

Parent Interaction With Grades

Student and parent interaction about grades or problems can best be characterized by conversations that parents have with their children relative to improving their academic situation. Parents question their child's classes and teachers, as well as homework when trying to determine the source of the problem (S2/7). Parents also direct their student to get assistance from either their teacher or the school-tutoring program (S15/6). The most common response to academic problems in school is to either praise the attainment of positive achievement or discipline their child, in the form of grounding or a hiatus from activities until the grade returns to an acceptable level (S5/13, S9/10, S11/14, S12/10, S13/5,10, S20/9). It is important to note that the intersection of friends and family with regard to this topic comes in the form of restrictions from socializing with friends. Students noted that one of the actions their parents take is to restrict their time with friends, which students find unappealing (S5/13, S13/10). Parents also restrict their child's involvement with sports and activities as a consequence for poor school performance (S16/8). For those involved in sports or activities, this practice is unwelcome.

School Programs for Family Involvement

The school's programs of family involvement are most noticeable when analyzing the interaction of students and parents and the school's technology system that allows parents the opportunity to see their child's progress, attendance, and cumulative average and also allows parents to listen to recordings from teachers of classroom happenings and upcoming assignments. This system, called Parent Link, is by far the most far reaching of the school's efforts to promote family interaction with the academic life of their children. Only two students reported that their parents did not use the interactive system. Students perceive their parents

ability to acquire this information on a regular basis as a positive aspect of being involved with school (S2/2, S4/5, S7/3, S8/5, S12/4, S14/3, S15/2, S16/2, S19/3). Students sometimes do not appreciate the negative repercussions of parents seeing poor grades or missed assignments (S20/3).

Jason reports that his mother uses the system frequently and rewards him with praise when grades are good. Jason also reports that he is grounded when grades are not good. Jason's mother's interaction with Parent Link seems to be the only time when there is communication between Jason and his mother relative to school and conflicts with earlier data which suggests that in the case of this family, the school provides the vehicle for educational dialog between parent and child.

> Jason
> INT: She uses it all the time? How do you feel about that? [using Parent Link]
> JASON: Well, pretty good, I guess 'cause she can see how well I am doing.
> INT: So when she sees that you are doing well, does she talk to you about it?
> JASON: Yeah, she says congratulations and stuff like that.
> INT: How about if you are not doing well?
> JASON: Then she usually grounds me.
> INT: Do you feel that your mother…looking at your grades has helped you do better?
> JASON: Yeah, I think so (S3/5).

The Parent Link system has helped to change parental perceptions of the school. According to James, his mother would have difficulties with the school and teachers that usually ended up with James' mother yelling at the teachers. James reports that his mother does less yelling and takes less time off from work.

> James
> Last year I had a hard time with the principal and she would always come to school and start yelling at the teachers. Then the teachers would get mad at me and then I would start to cry. Now that they have this system she doesn't yell as much as last year. She also doesn't have to take off work to come (S14/3).

Students admit that the system has helped them to achieve academically and improve their achievement, but readily admit they do not like the fact that their parents have access to this type of information at regular intervals throughout the year. Only those students that are seniors reported that they use the Parent Link system as well to check on their own academic standing (S1/7, S4/13, S6/5).

As a comparison to other efforts the school makes in promoting parent involvement, only students who reported involvement in music or sports activities reported that their parents attended their games or concerts (S4/10, S8/10). In one case, the student was out of town during the school "One of Us" orientation program, and her mother came in her place, posing as a ninth grade student and following the days schedule as if she were the student. The student reports her mother having and maintaining a very positive outlook toward the school as a result of this experience (S20/4).

> Tyra
> I don't like it, but it has helped. I used to not come to school and then she [mother] would find out. They send the letters home and they call our house. She is like you have to go to school (S9/4).

The only general school event that students indicated their parents attended is the annual back to school night. About 40% of the students indicated their parents attended the Back-to-School night, which interestingly, mirrors the percentage of parents who usually attend, that being slightly higher at 45%. This percentage was calculated based on the number of families who signed a release form for their Parent Link access numbers at the back-to-school night meetings. All of the students whose parents attended back-to-school night are also involved with the Parent Link system. Students reported that if the school wanted to improve the ability to

involve parents, there should be more opportunities for families and students to come to school and meet with school staff, similar to the back to school night (S1/3, S8/7, S9/4, S16/3). Students who are non-native speakers asked for increased translation for themselves and their parents, as well as daily announcements in both English and Spanish (S7/4, S18/5).

Parent involvement with school

Parents as Volunteers

Parent volunteerism showed the smallest amount of parent interaction with school, with students reporting that outside of athletic booster club participation, usually working at games and events, there is no other evidence of parent volunteerism or involvement with the school PTSO program (S15/6, S16/7, S20/7).

Parent Communication with School

> Mark
> I think the fact that you can send something and you don't have to go in and talk to the teachers. You can just send something while you are at work and you will have a reply when you get home by the afternoon. I think they [parents] like the fact that it is instant communication (S4/12).

There is a great deal of school contact by parents. Students indicate that parents usually use the telephone or e-mail to contact teachers about school-related issues (S4/11, S5/15, S8/14, S12/5, S13/11, S16/9, S19/9, S20/10). Students also report that while their parents did have conferences, that type of interaction was generally more prevalent when the student was younger. (S1/7, S6/6). E-mail is seen as a preferred method of contact for parents due to the speed in which parents receive a reply.

Student perception of parents contacting school is generally positive, however, there is a feeling of frustration when parents return with information from the teacher that the teacher did not share with the student (S20/10).

Family and Friend's Actions in Course Selections

> Dierdra
> Sometimes I am frustrated when they [teachers] tell my parents something that they didn't tell me. Then my parents will look at me and ask, "Why didn't you tell us this?" (S20/10).

Other school actions that help to determine this force as one which supports the engagement of students is the interaction of families and friends regarding course selections. Students report that their peers are influential in helping them not only select a particular course, but also to stay in the course when the student experiences difficulty (S5/26, S8/19, S12/15, S15/13, S16/13, S20/12). Other students report that they talk to their parents about these types of decision (S2/12, S5/16, S17/15). There does exist, however, interaction between parents and friends in as much as students will solicit both their parent's perspectives and their friend's perspectives on making course selection decisions.

Mark summarized his process as first listening to what other students were saying and then having a conversation with his father relative not to the course, but the importance of having a course in computers. Mark clearly states, however, that the motivation to stay in the two-year class comes from his friends.

> Mark
> I would say a lot of people were talking about the program [CISCO] and I knew I wanted to do something along those lines. So I signed up for that but then there were times in the beginning of the first year when I really thought about dropping it . . . my peers really influenced me a lot to stick with the program. . . . [M]y dad, to him, it was more of a personal choice. He was like I am not going to push you one way or another because he didn't want to be the deciding factor. (S4/23)

Student Engagement in School

As evidence of engagement, students report a wide variety of involvement with school classes, sports, and activities, as well as being involved in those activities that are not part of the school instructional or non-instructional program. Students name numerous school classes as their favorites or ones they enjoy. Their reasons are many with ease of the subject matter, fun, and friendships being the most noted reasons to enjoy a particular class (S4/19, S5/15, S11/15, S18/3, S19/3). Students report being involved in a wide variety of sports including basketball, football, cheerleading, soccer, and ice hockey (S4/2, S5/6, S8/7, S11/8, S15/3, S16/3, S17/3). Non-athletic activity participation included the school step team, FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) Club, Literary Magazine, and the "One of Us" orientation program (S6/4, S10/8, S19/4, S20/4). It is very clear that the overriding factor in deciding to join a club or sport is because of a friend's involvement or because a significant number of students in the student's close friend and acquaintance circles are involved as well (S1/4, S8/9, S10/10, S12/7, S15/5, S16/6, S17/3,7, S19/6, S20/6).

> Susan
> I guess having a job I have to show people that I am strong enough to go do things. So going to school and having a job and having to deal with friends; having to deal with all that stuff, everyone thinks I am doing a really good job with it. My schedule is really busy. That is why I don't really do anything at school because I don't really have the time (S13/7).

School is not the only place that students interact and there are also connections between non-school activities with peers and families as well. In many cases, student's activities outside of school are either an extension of their school experiences such as community sports teams, voice lessons, and activities that involve computers (S2/11, S4/2, S10/9, S15/4, S16/4, S20/5). Religious clubs, organizations, and church, are important non-school activities as well (S2/3, S14/4).

Student Jobs

A large source of data for interaction of students, families, and peers outside of school comes from discussion of student jobs. A large number of students have jobs. Parents can be concerned about their child's work schedule and school schedule and set limitations (S9/7, S16/5, S20/6). Students realize and admit that their job may be impacting their schoolwork and if they

> Susan
> My parents are involved with my friends and they all love my parents. My mom does everything for them. For football games she makes dinner for us. She bakes them bread. She likes all my friends and they like her too. She just lets them come over if we don't have anything to do and she is like I'll cook dinner. Sometimes if we don't have enough money to go out then she will make dinner (S13/12).

were to work less, their grades might be better (S9/6). Some parents however, encourage their child to have a job to promote responsibility or to pay for those items, like a car, that students desire to have (S1/5, S6/7) Students also feel that their job, such as a job in a daycare center, or in cosmetology benefits their education by providing them experiences in areas of interest and helping them to focus on post-high school plans and goals (S1/4, S2/3, S9/5). Many students work in family owned or operated businesses either during the summer or doing the school year, giving parents direct control of the type and amount of work (S5/10, S10/5, S14/5, S19/5). Non-native speaking students feel that working allows them to practice their English and helps with family finances and expenses (S11/9). Students see keeping a job and going to school as a combination that proves their responsibility to take on simultaneous tasks. They understand that school is a priority and in most cases, they or their parents do not allow work to negatively impact school. Susan summarizes this concept succinctly with her comments about proving to others that she is capable of balancing these different responsibilities, even though it means she misses out on being involved in school activities.

> Susan
> . . . [M]y mom is really involved with my friends. Everyone comes over every Sunday and we all just hang out at my house (S13/3).

"Hanging Out"

Most notably among descriptions of time spent outside of school, the phrase "hanging out" is by far the dominant comment. Students enjoy unstructured time with friends at the mall, or movies, or they engage in neighborhood games such as roller hockey or basketball (S5/9, S11/9, S16/10, S19/5, S20/11). A larger number of students identify their houses as the preferred place to invite friends and "chill out." Many times, parents are present and interact with the student and their friends. Often parents are supportive of the social interaction and assist with preparations for meals, or just genuinely enjoy the company of the child's friends (S2/9, S5/19, S8/12, S10/15, S15/8, S19/10, S20/11). There are times during these types of home activities when parents will take the opportunity to discuss school or stress the importance of doing well in school. Students report that not only do their own parents engage in those actions, but when they go to their friend's houses, their friend's parents also engage in the same actions (S1/9, S9/14, S19/9).

Parents are not always supportive of their child's friend visiting their home. Some students report that it is easier to go to someone else's house (S14/8, S20/12). In Mark's case, the concerns he has about his mother's attitudes relative to friends and school, coupled with his opinion of his house having somewhat of an unwelcoming feeling is a detractor in having friends at his house. Mark's response to a somewhat personal question highlights his reluctance to bring friends to his house and his own discomfort with his home environment.

> Mark
> I wouldn't want to bring somebody home and if they saw my parents and then left and I came back, I wouldn't want to hear anything. I think more along the lines that it is just like to me, it is not as fun to stay at my own house. So when I have people over there to me is not as much to do. When I go over to their house their mom just seems like a lot less strict and we chill and do whatever. But, at my house you are like, no, don't do that (S4/22).

Discussions and Interactions with Friends

Students discuss a wide variety of topics with their friends and value their friends' advice. They also feel free to give advice and want to be supportive of friends, especially those who are experiencing problems in their lives. Most importantly, friends help friends with schoolwork and school-related issues (S1/7, S14/5, S17/11, S19/6, S20/6). However, students face real-life issues and confront friends about destructive behaviors as an intervention strategy. Much of Lisa's interview was connected to the death of her close friend. She also discussed her interventions, as well as the interventions of other friends, to help a close friend who was engaged in destructive behaviors that seemed to spiral out of control when the student death occurred.

> Lisa
> [Student's] death really bothered him. I was like if you don't straighten up drugs and stuff can get you going basically the same way. You can overdose, or you could do whatever just being stupid and drive home drunk. It can happen to anybody . . . [E]verything that people had to say to him finally hit him in the head that he was doing stupid stuff (S17/13).

The Value of Friends

Students place a great value on the opinion of their friends. Lisa, who struggled with depression, was annoyed by a counselor's comments relative to the help that friends can give. She sees her friends as providing the most comfort in her life and while she does not shy away from discussing issues with her parents, she is adamant that friends are absolutely essential elements and keys to success.

> Lisa
> I went to get a physical and they recommended me to a counselor. She was like your friends can't do anything for you. Don't talk to them about this. I just wanted to smack my doctor. They [friends] were the ones that I feel more comfortable with. Going to a counselor didn't help me at all (S17/10).

Paula best illustrates the power of peer relationships and the degree of importance placed on them. It might be natural to assume that with the death of her mother, her older brothers educational failures and her relative unhappiness living with her aunt and uncle might be a motivating force in considering graduating early from high school and leaving her aunt's home. To the contrary, Paula wants to stay part of the school culture and experience all high school has to offer together with her friends. Even though she is encouraged to graduate early, she resists, opting for the full high school experience.

> Paula
> My friends are always telling me "why don't you just graduate early, you are smart enough . . . [Y]ou are missing out on your whole freshmen year and your whole senior year. I want to be, in my senior year, like you know (S10/16).

Leaning forward as she spoke with stylish brown hair flowing toward the edge of the table, Karen continued to discuss her drug problems in California and her subsequent stay at a health facility. Karen portrays herself as her own person with a keen sense of style as evidenced by her well-kept appearance and neatly done makeup. Karen explains that it was not her parents, or her friend's parents that assisted her in her most critical hours after her overdose, but it was her close friend. Karen may very well be alive because of the actions and interventions of her friend. Even though her friend tried on numerous occasions to intervene and counsel her away from drugs, Karen did not listen. The testament to their friendship was that her friend did not abandon her in her time of need. With courage and maturity beyond his years, Karen's friend found her, brought her to the hospital, and then contacted her parents. With a calm voice he explained her problem and urged them to come to the hospital immediately.

> Karen
> He was against everything. He said, "you need to stop all of this nonsense. You need to get on with your life and get over all of this before it becomes a real addiction." I always listened to him but I never really took it in and said wow, he really knows what he is talking about; I really shouldn't do all of this. He was still there to talk to me. I had overdosed at somebody else's house about twenty miles away from his home and I called him and I told him I don't know what to do. I can't breathe. He said you stay right there, sit down, and I will be right there. He drove and got me . . . and took [me] to the hospital (S1/12).

Summary

The theory presented in the chapter emerges from the case study interviews and subsequent analysis of 20 high school students. The power of peer relationships and family involvement is strengthened by their interaction in the life of a high school student. Data from the study clearly shows an emergence of forces for engagement as a result of this interaction that when evident in the life of an individual student, greatly enhance the ability for a high school student to be engaged with instructional and non-instructional activities. It becomes clear that a students desire, attitude, motivation, behavior, and actions are forces that propel students toward successful engagement with school. The catalyst for these forces are the important interactions of school, its programs and practices, specifically those programs and practices which promote family involvement; the family and the degree to which they are involved and engaged with their child, their child's friends, and the degree to which they are involved within the context of the individual students' life inside and outside of school. These interactions by themselves do not necessarily promote the engagement of high school students directly, but indirectly, act as the first step in a series of events which when present, create an engaged and successful high school student.

A New Dimension

Brown, et al. (1993) concluded their study with a challenge to future researchers to focus on the interaction of families and peers to assess the behaviors of individual students. That challenge gave forward momentum to this study. The findings of this research points to different combinations of relationships between schools, families, their children, and their children's friends. A clear pattern, consistent through the case studies, emerged which strongly suggests that the interactions of families, peers, and individual students act as a catalyst that ignites

various forces that ultimately support the engagement of students with their school instructional and noninstructional activities.

The Revised Model for Student Engagement

Introduced in chapter one, the conceptual model touted the strength of interaction between families, individual students, and their peers. These overlapping relationships are surrounded by outside influences such as non-school activities, other adults, and neighborhood dynamics, all which were hypothesized as having some degree of influence with regard to the overlapping relationships. It was implied that when the individual student, peers, and family interacted in a positive and balanced manner with outside influences acting as a microsystem around the overlapping spheres, the engagement of the student with school would emerge.

Research outcomes imply that the school becomes an overlapping sphere of influence along with the individual student, peers, and family. The outside influences are better described as a macrosystem that encompasses the overlapping spheres. The interaction of the school, family, individual student, and peers within the context of outside influences is the catalyst to the forces of engagement described throughout this chapter. These resulting forces then determine the degree to which students are engaged with their school. Figure 8 depicts the revised model that includes the new dimension of the forces of engagement.

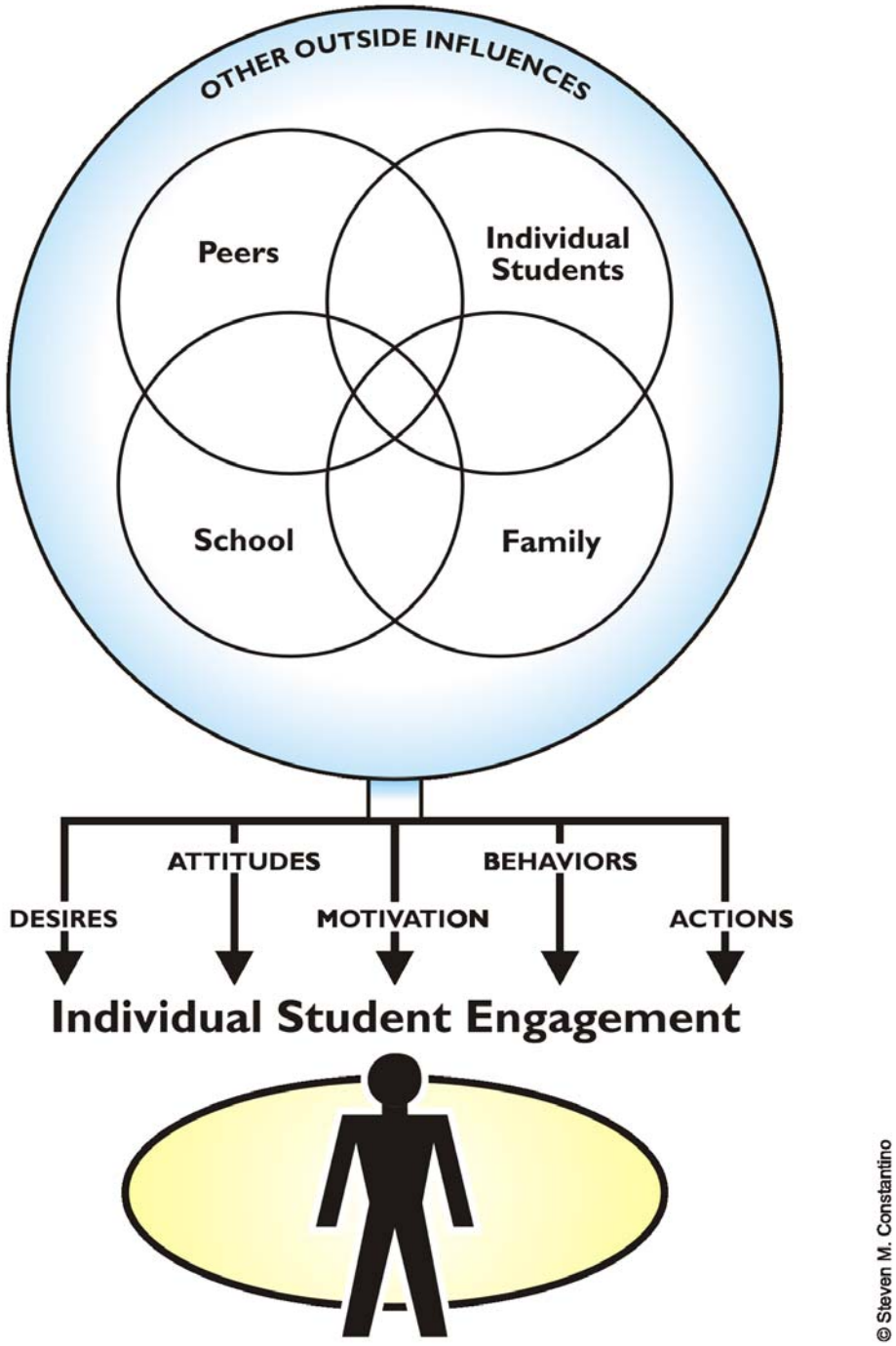

Figure 8. The revised model for student engagement: The forces for student engagement in school as a result of the interaction of schools, families, peers, and individual students

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this case study research was to examine how the interaction of family involvement practices and peer relationships affected the engagement of individual high school students at a particular school in both instructional and noninstructional settings. The study involved the collection of data through a case study involving 20 high school students at Stonewall Jackson High School in Manassas, Virginia. Data analysis began with the transcription and coding of the first interview and continued throughout the study until the final report was completed. The research resulted in a revised conceptual model of understanding how the interaction of schools, families, individual students, and their peers acted as a catalyst for five forces for engagement that examine how a high school student is engaged in instructional and noninstructional activities.

In this chapter, I summarize the findings in terms of the revised conceptual model and discuss my interpretations of the relationship between the overlapping spheres of influence with regard to schools, families, individual students, and their peers, and the forces for engagement that emerge from this overlapping and interactive relationship and ultimately become the predictors of student engagement with school.

Discussion and Conclusions

It seems only logical to commence with a discussion of the revised conceptual model (Figure 8) as a point of departure in discussing the results of this study. Each of the spheres of influence represented in the revised model depict a possible conduit to individual student engagement whether acting alone or in tandem with one or more of the other spheres. Each of the circles will be discussed separately as to their relationships to student engagement followed by a discussion of their overlapping properties.

Peers

Throughout the collected data, students identified their peers as important components of their own school life and engagement. There were those occasions within the data that suggested peers and peer relationships alone defined the engagement practices of individual students. Peers with similar values and interests tended to be described as close friends while others were acquaintances, but also important to the individual student. Discussions of future plans and goals often take place between students and their close friends. Homework assistance, class choices, and in many cases achievement were all influenced by close friends and acquaintances.

Interacting with friends is almost universally seen as important in the life of a high school student. Whether that interaction takes place in school, in homes, or in other public places, it seems to be a key component of an individual student's interest in instructional and noninstructional activities. There are some students who can be heavily influenced by friends in a very positive or negative, even destructive manner. Families and schools seem to have minimal impact on those students who place great value and emphasis on friendships and listening to friends to make decisions about school. The power of peers and peer relationships can act as a

single force in determining the degree to which an individual student is engaged with their own learning and school activity.

Individual Students

Individual students themselves, in some cases, can determine their own level of engagement without the influence of schools, families, or peers. Even though these students do not seem isolated from the other spheres of influence their individual determination to either succeed or fail rests with themselves. Some students indicated it was their own inherent desire to do well or participate in school that shaped their engagement. Students in this category interacted with family and friends but displayed enough resiliency and self-efficacy to make conscious decisions about their engagement with school.

Individual students who acted as their own catalysts for engagement tended to have unique circumstances in their lives. Whether it was the death of a parent, drug addiction, the death of a friend, or other life-altering situation, these students showed a general tendency to think, act, and respond more independently rather than rely on family, friends, or school, or the interaction of these entities.

As students grow older and mature through high school they tend to rely less on family, peers, and school and more on their own decision-making processes to determine the outcomes of their school experiences. Seniors often reported that they understood the ramifications of failure or the need to do well in particular courses due to college admissions or other post-high school opportunities. In some cases, older students reported that their decisions were theirs alone even though their close friends and families may have worked to persuade them otherwise. Older students seem more comfortable with their opinions and are not easily swayed by peer groups or adults who may see the situation from a different perspective.

School

Most significant in the data collection and analysis is the emergence of the school as a sphere of influence rather than a component of the macrosystem of outside or other influences that surrounds the overlapping spheres. It became clear that the school plays a more central and prominent role in shaping engagement practices of students.

Students interviewed for this study see the role of teachers as a critical aspect of the school's influence upon them. The school environment and efforts to promote a positive culture are noticed and appreciated, but teachers are clearly a driving force within the school sphere as to the individual engagement of students.

Teachers who recognize them for their efforts and assist them with their work, decisions, and socialization in school motivates students. Teachers that are seen as friendly and caring play an important role in determining the degree to which a student will provide the necessary effort to be engaged and successful in a class. Students quickly understand teachers who may not be engaged with their own teaching and thusly provide no encouragement for engagement in learning. However, even in those cases where a teacher may not be providing the necessary motivation, it is the notion of the importance of school that seems to provide the motivation to engage and be successful among some students and overrides negative teacher, family, or peer forces.

The school's efforts to promote positive peer relationships and provide avenues for students to participate and garner a sense of belonging do not go unnoticed. Student report a high level of interaction with programs designed to help them acclimate into the school culture and fulfill a basic sense of belonging. Coupled with this are efforts to provide an inviting and inspiring environment within which students can take ownership and pride. Generally speaking, students reacted favorably to these school practices and in some cases found them to be a strong motivational force in their quest for success.

Family

The involvement of families in the lives of their children remains a strong component to student engagement in school and school-related activities within the sample of students interviewed. Families who are involved and engaged with their child and their child's school can provide their children motivation to do well and achieve to their highest level. Family expectations alone can be a driving force in student engagement.

It was obvious in the case study that the vast majority of students had strong feelings about their family and their family's involvement with school. For example, even though students were not overly enthusiastic about their parents' ability to access grade and attendance information with technology, they welcomed their parents review either to celebrate their successes or to openly discuss problems in school. This interaction between students and their families seemed to be important in determining the engagement level of students. If parents used the information to praise their child or help their child, the interaction was welcome. However, if the information was used to belittle their child, demean their child, or punish their child, the information then became a deterrent to school engagement. Whether viewing this phenomenon positively or negatively one cannot discount the important relationship between children and their parents.

Families who maintained a positive attitude about their child's school helped their child be more engaged and successful. In some cases, students reported that there was a time when their families argued with school personnel and that terse relationship resulted in the student's withdrawal from school and specific classes. Students in the study were cognizant of the schools efforts to promote family involvement and in those cases where students reported no real encouragement for engagement from the school, they did report that the positive relationship between the school and their family helped promote more positive parent-child communication.

Students found that their parents' encouragement and goals for the future assisted them in focusing on their own school engagement. Parents who shared their dreams, goals, and desires with their children and well as continuously reaffirming the importance of education, were a prime force in the engagement of many students. Parents who chose to compare their children to other children or who fixated on certain aspects of school provided a clear deterrent to their child's engagement with school.

The Four Spheres of Influence

There are numerous points where peers, individual students, schools, and families overlap their influence that ultimately results a continuum of student engagement from minimal engagement to significant engagement. What emerged from this study was a phenomenon that occurs as a result of the interaction of families, peers, individual students, and schools. Data that

emerged from the study clearly show that student engagement in school is predicated on five forces for engagement, those being desire, attitude, motivation, behaviors, and actions. Schools can promote the engagement of students by encouraging the involvement of families in the educational lives of high school students and by supporting program offerings both of an instructional and noninstructional nature. Families of students do have influence on their children's relationships with peers and there is significant interaction between students and the families of their peers.

The Forces for Engagement

Data were coded and analyzed through a process of unitization (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Distinct themes emerged strongly suggesting that high school student engagement was not a direct result of family and peer interactions, but that those interactions acted as a catalyst for the emergence of forces that when identifiable in the life of a high school student were a measure of the level of student engagement with school. These forces were labeled desire, attitude, motivation, behaviors, and actions.

Definitions of the Forces for Engagement

Desire as a force for engagement can best be described as the degree to which individual students have an intrinsic wish to be successful in their school life and establish future goals for themselves. Dreams of what the future can hold are also an important component of desire.

Attitude as a force for engagement describes individual students' feelings and thoughts about their engagement with school and school related activities. Attitude is largely based on their own experiences and those of their friends and families.

Motivation as a force for engagement describes the extrinsic influences in an individual student's life that helps to shape their engagement with school and school-related experiences.

Behaviors as a force for engagement describes the students' emotional association with school and how they act toward school and the manner in which they participate in school and school-related activities.

Actions as a force for engagement are students' dealings with school and school related activities and how those dealings positively or negatively affect their own engagement with school.

How the Forces for Engagement Emerged

Within the context of this study, each of these forces represents a necessary component of engagement for an individual student. The interaction of families and friends, as well as outside influences are evident within the structures of each of the forces. As the study matured, the different levels of engagement of each of the students involved in the case study became clearer as the forces in that particular individuals life became clearer.

The forces for engagement were not clear at the onset of the study, nor were they clear in the initial stages of unitization and coding. As cases were analyzed and themes created, there was no immediate pattern that emerged from the data through the initial process of discovery that would have predicted the forces as an outcome. As rules of inclusion were written to assist in the

coding process, themes began to emerge and an exploration of these relationships and patterns across categories provided the first sign of the phenomenon of the forces of engagement.

By virtue of the fact that each participant added credibility and strength to the phenomenon of the forces, there was no participant who could be considered completely disengaged from their learning or school. There were, however, varying levels of engagement among the participants, from minimal engagement with school to a high level of engagement with school. Participants were selected based on criteria established in chapter 3 of this study. It is interesting to note the degree to which most participants were open with the interviewers sharing information about both their school and home lives. In some cases, participants shared very private and somewhat emotional information with the interviewers. As the individual participant stories unfolded, the ability to understand the intricacies of student engagement emerged more clearly.

Desire as a Force for Engagement

As evidenced by the data that emerged from this study, there are several components that support an individual student's desire to be engaged with instructional and noninstructional activities. Included among these components are the dreams and goals of the student and how they view their future. The desire to achieve was born from the student's own discussion of their long-range goals or dreams for their adult life. The future plans of the participants were varied, but what remained consistent was a vision of the future and a desire to do well in school now. In addition to the student's own desire, students' reported that their friends held similar desires for a successful future, even if plans for the future were not the same.

Parental desires ran parallel to student desires and students were cognizant of their dreams and goals matching or being similar to the dreams and goals their parents held for them as well. In discussing these goals with parents, students reported that parental desires often emerged as school expectations, whether those expectations are instructional or noninstructional. Parents expect the best efforts of their children and are ultimately satisfied when these best efforts are recognizable. In the cases of best efforts, parents were not as focused on the grade, but the process in which the student found themselves engaged. Students whose parents articulated a future vision and held expectations high tended to be a bit more engaged than those students whose parents did not communicate high expectations to their children. Expectations held by the families of students almost always were described in terms of student grades. Most students were able to articulate that their families desired to see their children become more successful than themselves.

The interaction that supports this first force begins with the expectations of families being similar to those of the student's friends. Friends who hold similar interests and desires as well as those who set goals for achievement and future direction supported the same qualities promoted by families. Students who have families and friends that share desires, dreams, goals, and can articulate expectations as they relate to future success, appeared to be more engaged with school than those that did not experience this interactive support. Common interests among friends and the establishment of close friendships help to promote the desire within individual students to be engaged with school. The desire to learn, to be successful, and to meet future goals is a force in the engagement of students in high school.

Attitude as a Force for Engagement

The second force for engagement to emerge from the discovery process is attitude. For the first time in the inquiry, the school possesses an interactive quality, but does not emerge as a direct influence on attitude. There were no data to suggest that school experiences, such as the regular classes a student attends, had influence on student attitude. School experiences did provide families with a positive attitude about the school that in turn, helped to promote a better attitude in the student. Attitude about grades and achievement among students varies from those that want high grades to those that are satisfied with average grades. The degree of difficulty of particular courses seems to be a factor in student attitudes about achievement. Generally speaking, students want to do well and enjoy successful achievement in school.

While course rigor is a factor in student attitude, effort is clearly a focus. In most cases, students whose grades are average or a bit below average freely admit that additional effort is needed in order to improve their academic situation. Students whose attitude about achievement is positive tend to understand that effort can make a significant difference. Some students view participating in school as the best option open to them and it is this notion that drives their attitude. There is a dichotomy of opinion among students with regard to activities. Some believe activities promote a positive attitude and achievement, other see these activities as a deterrent, and still others have no opinion.

Friends play an important role in attitude and are an important ingredient in a student's attitude regarding school engagement. Students also connect with the families of their close friends, which is a new component to outside influence, as an important staple in attitude toward school engagement. Even though these friendships can alter individual student attitude, the idea that friends promote or discourage achievement is blurry at best. Students who are doing well in school clearly state that they have friends who fall along a continuum from good attitudes to indifferent attitudes. A strong theme throughout the interviews is the idea that close friends have similar feelings and desires in many aspects of school, including achievement.

These different kinds of friendships tended to act as a rationale for parents to make judgments about their own child's friends. Families rarely make comparisons between their children and their children's peers, but do make judgments about their child's friends that do discourage the interaction of friends and families. Student attitudes can be altered by their own perceptions of their parents' attitudes about friends. This was significant evidence of the ability of parents to influences their child's relationships with friends.

The school becomes an indirect support mechanism for attitude. According to the students interviewed, their parents have positive feelings about contacting the school. This indirect support of attitude is the first piece of evidence, that the effort of a high school to promote the engagement of families becomes an influence in the lives of students. The role of teachers is important in any discussion of the school as an interactive partner with either families or students. It is quite clear that caring and engaging teachers do more to support a positive attitude among students than other school-related programs or practices. The intersection of family, friends, and school support and nurture the force of attitude within individual students and is necessary for students to be engaged with school.

Motivation as a Force for Engagement

Motivation is identified as the third force for engagement with school. Motivation can be intrinsic in nature but this intrinsic quality seems more directly related to a student's desires, dreams, and goals for the future. Motivation can have little to do with friends, family, or school, as was described by those students who want to do well in order to get their drivers license.

Peers can be a force in the lives of students with regard to motivation to be engaged in school. Friends who are successful in school can be a motivating factor and also, friends who support success in school are described as motivating to individual students. Once again, those students who share dreams, goals, and desires with friends find this kinship motivating in nature. These shared ideals not only motivate students, but also help them to a level of self-actualization regarding their role within the context of school and community.

We again find teachers playing a significant role in the school-related motivation of individual students. Satisfaction with teachers, and teachers paying attention to students and their accomplishments are seen as factors that motivate students to become and remain engaged. Students in unique situations, such as those in special education programs or those who are non-native speakers, rely heavily on the involvement of their teachers and see this relationship as a motivating force for engagement. These students and their specific needs help the student to attach themselves to their teachers and often make decisions only after consulting with that teacher. A teacher's style, enthusiasm, and attitude all play a role in the degree to which schools are part of the motivation equation.

The school's ability to provide student-to-student mentorship opportunities also became a factor in motivation. Students who participated in mentoring opportunities or who attended programs that included student mentors suggested that these experiences helped acquire friends and acclimate themselves to the school environment. These outcomes helped students become motivated to take an active role in school. The school also provides unique opportunities for students to be engaged, such as a technological communications system, tutoring programs, clubs, sports, and other school-related activities.

Students expect that their families will have standards in place for academic achievement. Families that discuss education and specifically discuss achievement in terms of grades are more likely to provide motivation for their child to be engaged with school. Families use their own experiences as motivators for their children. Even those students who appear to be at the lower end of the school engagement spectrum understand that their parents have a desire for them to do well. This parental desire often translates into motivation for the student, however, that motivation in and of itself, may not be enough of a force to help a student become engaged with school.

Students discuss many aspects of school with their parents. Students report receiving praise for doing well in school and it is this praise that students find to be motivational. There does appear to be a point where too much emphasis from parents on their child's grades can have a negative affect on the motivation of the child. Important in discussions regarding grades and achievement is the notion that parents respect their child's understanding as to what is necessary to be successful in school.

Like desire and attitude before it, motivation becomes the third important force that supports a high school student's engagement with school. The combination of these three forces allows seem to precede specific behaviors with regard to engagement and ultimately take specific actions to solidify their engagement with school.

Behaviors as a Force for Engagement

Behavior as a force for student engagement is the first of the forces that begins to link a student's emotional behaviors and self-actualization to forces that begin to construct how a student is actually engaged and further, how those behaviors and actions themselves promote the positive engagement of high school students in school.

Students exhibit engaging behaviors when they have a thorough understanding that their parents care for them and desire them to do well in school. Parents discuss with their children the importance of education as a way to encourage participation in academics and co-curricular activities. In addition to their own parents, students view the parents of friends as adults to whom they can turn for questions and conversations about school and other issues important to them. Parents are usually involved with their children and their children's friends and as such offer expanded opportunities for their children's friends to discuss important issues that lead to more positive behaviors for engagement with school. Students who are having difficulties with their own parents often turn to the parents of friends for assistance in understanding their own parent's behaviors. Often parents of friends are seen as a better option than their own parents to students in search of an adult with whom they can discuss problems or issues.

Relationships between parents and their children's friends are interesting components in the behaviors of engagement exhibited by individual students and are a indication as to the degree parents can affect the relationship between their own child and their child's friends. Parents who accept their children's friends and who do not make comparisons between their child and their friends offer a better atmosphere for students to exhibit positive and self-assured behaviors toward engagement with school. Involved parents want to know about friends and often encourage friends in their home to support their child and ultimately ensure positive behaviors. In those cases where parents use friends to make comparisons to their own child, the child resents the comparisons and the negative affects of the comparison contribute to negative school and social behaviors. Students who find themselves in this situation often do not invite friends to their home and find more comfort being away from their own home.

Student behaviors of engagement include welcoming advice about friends from their parents. They understand that their parents want them to be safe and desire them to make good decisions. The behavioral influences allow students to understand right from wrong, the importance of school engagement, and helps them to either avoid or remove themselves from negative situations. An important behavior among students who are engaged with school is trust; trust in parents and the motivation of their parents and trust in their friends. Once again there is a catalyst of significant interaction of families, students, schools, and peers that promotes behaviors leading toward student engagement with school.

Action as a Force for Engagement

Action as a force of engagement with school is the final area in which the overlapping influences of schools, families, and peers support the notion of student engagement with school. It is quite clear that these overlapping relationships build a support mechanism for an individual's involvement in school.

Students understand clearly that when their achievement is less than stellar, avenues for improvement exist. Students are willing to accept the responsibility for their grades, but point out that unresponsive teachers hinder their ability to improve their own academic standing. Non-

native speaking students desire more teachers who accommodate their language barriers in order to improve their academic standing. No student reported a desire to fail or an unwillingness to improve their academic standing after an absence or other event that kept them being completely successful. Students take advantage of school-sponsored tutoring programs to assist with their academic achievement. All of these actions support the notion that students are engaged with their learning, albeit at different levels. Seniors tended to better understand the importance of earning higher passing grades both for graduation purposes and college entrance purposes.

There is a definite interactive quality that supports student action toward engagement regarding grades and achievement issues. Families and friends converge in the life of a student in typical situations such as homework and other types of assistance. Although students report minimal conversations about specific grade issues with each other, it is clear they assist each other with homework and class related problems. Engaged parents are involved with their children, asking them questions about school, homework, classes, and teachers. Parents also trust their children and often ask questions, but do ask to see homework or other proof of engagement. Students seem to enjoy this trust and the combination of trust and discussion provide the necessary interaction between students and their families that ultimately supports the individual students actions for engagement with school.

School-family involvement programs, especially programs that promote interaction between students and families, are important in supporting engaging actions of students. In this study, the school's ability to put into place a technology system for families and students was a factor in the engagement of student and families. This system helped parents to garner a more positive perception of the school largely because it made available the types of information most requested by parents, that being grades, assignments, and attendance data. Even though students have mixed responses to their parents having access to this type of information, they admit that the system has helped them to achieve academically and has helped them in their own actions of academic engagement. Families review information together to set or modify goals and expectations. Seniors tend to use the system to track their own academic standing.

Parents felt free to contact the school by telephone and e-mail in order to make inquiries about their children or to solve problems or concerns. The use of telephones and e-mail is a more prevalent manner of communication than the teacher conference, which no student reported as the primary manner in which their parents garnered information.

Only a few students reported their parents attending general school activities. Parents of students involved in activities attended the activities to support their school and their child. Parents of athletes also donate time to school booster organizations as way to contribute to the school. The only general school event that students reported significant parental attendance was the annual back-to-school night celebration. Parent volunteerism among these students was the smallest component of the parent involvement programs.

Connors and Epstein (1998) discussed the needs identified at high schools involved in the National Network of Partnership Schools for one year and found that these schools generally needed more ability to communicate regularly about students' performance in school. They also found weaknesses in volunteer programs as well as parent-teacher organizations. The usual discussion of the six types of involvement was missing from the high school portion of the study. General school activities created as a result of the association with the national network found similar conclusions to this study, that being, that a primary area of improvement could be parental attendance.

There was significant interaction between families and friends centered on student actions and decisions regarding course selections. Students reported that they solicited opinions from both their parents and their friends about these types of decisions. Peer involvement was also noted as a deterrent to dropping a course. Interestingly, students reported that their friends provided a great deal of encouragement to continue in courses when they became difficult and students began to think about dropping the course.

Student actions for engagement encompass a wide variety of involvement with courses, clubs, activities, and athletics as well as being involved in those activities that are not connected with the school. Students report that while there is some encouragement from parents to be involved in noninstructional activities, students reported friendships and camaraderie as a reason to become involved in instructional and noninstructional activities.

Student involvement in outside activities influences engagement actions as well. From religious groups to jobs, students note that these types of activities are important components of their life. Students admit that in some cases jobs negatively impact their schoolwork. Parents run the continuum from supporting their children in their job to not allowing their children to work or to work long hours. Students enjoy unstructured time away from school as well and report that being with friends and "hanging out" is an important pastime that they look forward to and enjoy. Often, this unstructured time happens in the homes of friends and parents become involved with providing dinner or conversation, making friends welcome in the home. Students report all of the actions as supporting them in their engagement of school. Their ability to dictate their own time away from school helps to focus them on their engagement with school.

A student's actions in school, at home, and in their neighborhoods and community seemingly dictate the degree to which a student feels compelled to be engaged and involved with the schools instructional and noninstructional programs. Parents and families contribute to these actions by supporting their children's friendships, discussing school, and providing support for their children's friends. This family and non-family interaction seems to be important to the individual student's actions toward engagement with school.

Limitations of the Study

During the course of this case study research, limitations arose that may have affected the data collected. As has been mentioned before, studying ones own school can in itself be a limitation with regard to the potential for bias in coding and analyzing emerging data. A significant amount of planning before and during the study limited the degree to which bias played a role in this study. Every attempt to remain personally detached and objective from the research site and participants was made to create the best possible scenario for useful data and information.

It is quite possible that some subjects were relatively new to the school and as such, had not fully participated in the peer programs available nor had their families perhaps taken advantage of the programs offered to encourage their involvement. It could be argued that either transfer or freshmen students had a minimum exposure to the processes in place at the school. These limitations could bring about difficulty in assessing the school programs and practices in place to enhance family involvement and peer culture. Eliminating students who were freshmen or new to the school would secure a sample of students that were exposed to the various programs.

Implications for Practice

In this section, I focus on schools with regard to how the interaction of family involvement and peer relationships enhance the individual student's engagement with school. High schools could be well served by seizing the opportunity to engage families in school programs and activities. At the high school level, families seem most interested in the academic performance of their child. The degree to which the school can provide this type of information on a regular basis seems to improve the families' perception of the school and enhances the interaction of families and their children. This is not to say that volunteer programs, activities, and other avenues for involvement are not important, however, they definitely rate less than the need for families to understand the achievement of their children. At the high school level there is an overwhelming desire of families to be more involved with the academic lives of their children.

The need for schools to promote family involvement and engagement can positively affect the attitude and perceptions of families and ultimately students. It is clear that when families have a generally positive view of the school, they share that positive view with their child and subsequently the child holds a positive view of school as well. This positive attitude promotes discussion between families and students, as well as families and friends.

To further enhance the positive perception and attitude of families and students, teachers should understand their pivotal role as the representative of the school. Students were fairly consistent in stating that engaged, involved, and caring teachers, were prime reasons to be engaged and stay engaged with school. Other school programs, clubs, and activities were not viewed as important. It would serve high school principals well to reinforce clear expectations for student engagement with teachers and to provide them with information and professional development with regard to family involvement and student engagement. Students look to their teachers for guidance, learning, support, and assistance. Teachers can be effective and important ambassadors to families and community and are a driving force in the school's ability to promote family engagement as well the engagement of individual students.

High schools should broaden their efforts to welcome and invite parents into the school setting. It is noted with some dismay, that while parents are seemingly involved with their children and have generally positive feelings about the school, the degree to which they are physically present in the school, whether it be the normal school day, or after school for activities and events, is minimal. With the exception of back-to-school nights, parents are generally not physically present in the school building even though students report that their parents feel welcome. When asked about other ideas for family engagement, students consistently offered ideas that promoted their families attending more school events. These ideas suggest a student desire to have their parents more involved in the school environment and perhaps a sense of pride in their school and accomplishments and a desire to share that pride with their families. Events that included the entire community, including teachers, could be a powerful force in building the relationships necessary for high schools to garner the partnerships they seek.

The style of parenting displayed by parents can be enhanced and improved with efforts from the school. High schools can enhance the flow of positive communication between families and students by providing to them information about classes, assignments, grades, activities, and other school-related topics. Parents will discuss these topics with their children and children generally appreciate knowing that their parents care enough to discuss issues, concerns, ideas, and school happenings. Because of the interaction of students, their friends and their friends

families, information provided by the school might not only be communicated between parent and child, but will very likely be communicated between children and their friends parents

Establishing effective two-way communication and family involvement to promote the academic success of high school students is only a portion of the equation. Understanding the power of peers and the in-depth interaction that occurs between individual students and their friends is also necessary to support the forces for engagement of high school students. High Schools with over 1000 students could very well be destined to remain nameless and faceless emporiums where students mimic the art of learning but are in a slow decent toward disengagement from education. It is these types of high schools that Steinberg (1996) discusses when he shares impressive statistics regarding the large number of disengaged students and families. High school leaders must focus not only the reforms necessary within classrooms, but also those that contribute to positive school cultures and engaged communities. Outside influences, like friends, families, jobs, and church all have an impact on high school student performance. Students in this study clearly identified the interaction of friends and non-family adults when making decisions about courses, and the degree to which they would be involved in school.

Recommendations for Future Research

The case studies represented in this research speak to the obvious interaction of schools, families, individual students, and their peers and also recognize the importance of those influences that are outside the realm of the formal classroom. Its key findings suggest that this interaction is necessary to promote the effective engagement of high school students through five forces for engagement, those being, desire, attitude, motivation, behaviors, and actions. Future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study in urban and rural areas to determine the degree to which these forces remain consistent. Further, it would be interesting to test or expand the theories presented in this study with similar separate case studies of families and educators. Through an understanding of family perceptions of the same issues discussed with students in this study, more useful information about how to directly engage families may emerge that would be beneficial to all high schools who wish their students to perform and achieve at high levels. Similarly, studies of teachers and administrators could possibly assist in determining how high schools can support the involvement of friends and families with school related issues and also how teachers and other school employees could enhance these efforts.

Future research needs to compare and contrast high schools that have made significant efforts to promote the types of involvement and engagement necessary for students to be engaged with school with those school who do not see a benefit or are not able to articulate a vision in this area. Case studies of individual schools in a comparative nature could help identify practices and programs that meet the needs of families, students, and the community at large.

This study centered on students who were neither high achievers nor low achievers, but rather those students found in the middle of the two. While other studies reviewed earlier involve students who are more academically successful and motivated, it may be necessary to replicate this study with those students who are not achieving and whose disengagement with the school is obvious and well-documented. There could be rich information available from students who do not see themselves as successful and who may have little hope of being successful in high school.

Personal Reflections on Research Methodology

In reflecting on the process and outcomes of this study, I can identify aspects that future researchers might find useful in replicating or designing similar research. The largest issue in this study was the degree to which I was removed from the actual process of interviewing. Studying one's own school is a challenge. Being the principal of that school further complicates the processes necessary to conduct an in-depth case study. Answering concerns of validity and reliability removed me from the process. While there were mechanisms in place to gather information, it was still necessary to rely on others to describe first-hand encounters with students. Even though I was ultimately pleased with my ability to create student illustrations, I struggled with the aspects of portraiture and remained concerned that I was not in the room or able to see students respond and react to questions. Those future researchers who wish to study their own environments may wish to consider a combination of quantitative and qualitative processes in hopes of removing some barriers to information. I would also adjust the pace of interviews and transcript coding. Toward the end of the interviews, transcripts and interviews were coming at a rate faster than my ability to read and absorb information. This caused me to code and recode information in order to be sure that the process of discovery was intact. This was a tremendously long process, taking more than one month of daily work to complete. An entire room was filled with wall charts, discovery themes, and unitized cards that seemed to reflect themes. I did not anticipate that students would reschedule and miss interview appointments that caused the flow of interview transcripts to become erratic. Lastly, I would be prepared with translated consent forms and letters and would also seek a translator far in advance of the actual interviews.

Concluding Remarks

This case study clearly shows that high school students who are engaged with their school have an interactive support network of parents, peers, and non-family adults within a network of outside influences that assist them with numerous aspects of instructional and noninstructional activities. High school students who are engaged with school exhibit characteristics or forces that are necessary for their successful engagement. These forces include, desire, attitude, motivation, behaviors, and actions, and come about as a direct result of the overlapping spheres of school, family, individual students, and peers. Outside influences are also important to understand the dynamics of engagement present in the engagement of high school students.

High schools that promote family involvement have a positive impact on the ability of families and their children to interact not only within the family unit, but with friend's families as well. Parental influences over their children's relationships with friends tend to be stronger when students are less engaged in school and parents have fewer opportunities with school involvement. Conversely, families who are in tune with their child's school and are provided the necessary tools to be involved, interfere less with their children's relationships with friends. The engagement of high school students with their education can only exist in arenas where all stakeholders are joined in their efforts to promote student success.

Epilogue

I would like to return to that pivotal lunch with the superintendent and the school board member almost 7 years ago. I was asked a decisive question that centered on my role as the principal and the reforms that I would implement that were different from the long line of predecessors that held the job before me. I had an instinct that day that the answer centered on people, listening to them, responding to them, and helping them to become part of a school from which they had become seemingly disenfranchised. My response that day was disjointed and somewhat inept. At the time, I did not fully understand or appreciate the importance of relationships in the academic engagement of students. The importance of family involvement in the educational life of a child was a concept that I had not yet fully explored or even discovered. I walked into the job knowing that people would make the difference, but with really no idea of how that was to occur.

As a student of quality management I believe in listening to customers and responding to their needs. I believe there is an appropriate process and system for all aspects of leadership and management. I also believe that the role of the principal encompasses not only the leadership of a school, but the community in which it resides as well. Over these past 7 years, I have learned a great deal. In many ways, my experiences as principal of this school were the catalyst of this study. In my own mind, I wanted to not only answer the questions posed in this research, but to document the renaissance of a school that many people thought was destined to failure. This research study was designed to describe through the stories of students, the interaction of family involvement and peer relationships on individual student engagement. The research tends to support several aspect of reform within the parameters of family involvement and peer relationships within one comprehensive high school.

Listening to Students

There is a vast array of knowledge to be gained from listening and interacting with students and ensuring their role in the governance and operation of schools. As I reviewed the comments of young people throughout this study, I was amazed at their intellect and insight into their own education and their own situations with school and their families and friends. Students have a great deal to offer and can be central to any high school administrator who seeks to create a school culture that is welcoming, accepting, and one that nurtures the academic success of all students. I continue to hold the belief that we may ultimately fail at the high school level if we have a mindset of creating environments "for" students. The answer, in my mind, has to do with our ability to create environments for learning "with" students. This shift in philosophical practice helps to hold the door open to a positive and healthy school culture and ultimately the engagement and achievement of all students.

Authors and researchers have used different measurements to define achievement. The inspiration of this study is borne from the notion that before any achievement can take place, a student needs to be engaged, at some level or many levels, in their instructional program and must be encouraged to become involved in the noninstructional offerings as well. I have counseled and mentored many students in my career and perhaps instinctively learned that before I can attempt to promote academic success, I must help the student to see a reason for being successful. More often than not, this reason rests in the degree to which a student can be engaged

and motivated by the school, its personnel, and programs. I have had the distinct pleasure of shaking the hands of numerous high school graduates at their commencement who just months earlier had no hope or desire to successfully complete high school. As I reflect on these experiences, I now believe that the environment of the school coupled with the involvement of parents and families may have played a role in their desire to be engaged and successful.

Professional Development for Teachers

None of our goals or desires for our high school students can be attained if we have a teaching force that does not conceptually understand the importance of building positive relationships with the families of their students. Traditionally, we have done little to promote family involvement as a viable professional development strand in schools. Much of our professional development for teachers centers on instructional practice, curriculum implementation, and the role of testing in promoting higher standards in education. It is my experience that as important as these strands are, so is the concept of families involved with their child's academic life. Helping teachers work with families to understand teaching methodology, curriculum, and high standards is central to our desire to help all students learn.

The Involvement of Families

High school students in this study rely on their families for help, guidance, and assistance. We as high school educators cannot hide behind adolescence and the teaching of responsibility to students as reasons to ignore our role in promoting the involvement and engagement of families in the educational lives of their children. Now more than ever, families need assistance. They need to know how their child is progressing through school and what they can do to support their child's ultimate achievement. In my experiences, I have never met a parent who did not want a better life for their child. Whether they were supportive or unsupportive of the school, my interactions with families have a common strand, that being, the success of the child. This research has reaffirmed my commitment not only to continue seeking successful avenues for family involvement, but to also share experiences and ideas with my colleagues to promote this often overlooked component to school reform and student success.

Families who feel connected to their child's school also feel more connected to their child. Adolescence is certainly a difficult period for families. As parents, we must balance our desire to be involved with the child's need for growing independence. Having a positive connection with their child's school helps to support not only a relationship with that school, but relationships with their own students. Countless parents have discussed with me their ability to have conversations about school because of our efforts to share information about their child in a trusting and continuous manner. Families begin to connect with the school, feeling welcome upon entering the building and knowing that whatever their concern, someone will help them. This attitude that families garner from schools that promote family involvement is an essential component in building a positive school culture that not only permeates the building, but the community as well. More high schools need to adopt these ideas and implement programs that will bring families, students, and their friends closer together in support of academic success for all.

The Discovery of Proof

During the course of this research, America experienced perhaps the most significant challenge to democracy and freedom. The tragedy of September 11, 2001 will be with us forever. It was on that day that that tangible proof emerged suggesting the efforts to unite a school and community over the past 7 years were beginning to become part of our school culture.

Hundreds of students at Stonewall Jackson High School have parents who are in the military and work at the Pentagon in Washington DC. At the very moment we learned of the Pentagon attack, we placed our crisis plan into motion, knowing full well that when students heard of the disaster, they would become frantic with worry for their parents and family members. We set up the school auditorium as a place for distraught students to stay while we sought information. We had our entire counseling staff on hand to deal with the almost 300 students who appeared once announcements of the problem had been made. We also know that parents would instinctively want to be with their children at this time of national tragedy and put into place a plan for what we knew would be an onslaught of parents heading toward the school.

After ensuring the plan was in place, and making sure that staff members who had spouses at the Pentagon were cared for, I took up a position outside in the school's driveway. It was only a few minutes before cars began to appear. With each minute, the line of cars grew longer, twisting its way out of the school driveway and down the road and out of sight. I spoke to each and every person driving into the school and explained what were doing and how they could be united with their child. So caught up in the emotion of this day, I was fixated on the cars entering the school and did not notice what was happening behind me.

An assistant principal had come outside to offer assistance and began talking with parents with whom I already had spoken. In the majority of cases, the parents declared their appreciation for our personal welcome and as such, felt that their presence would only cause further disruption. What I did not see were many of the cars leaving the school property as fast as they had appeared. While schools were reporting hundreds of students being released to parents, we released but a handful. Those parents who chose to stay at school did so to help and assist the school staff. Parents donned visitor badges and lined up like new recruits anxious to assist the school on this difficult day.

Students in school came forward to assist as well. Students acted as greeters, escorting parents to waiting areas where coffee was being made. When parents wanted to be with their children, it was our students and faculty who retrieved the student and united the family in an area filled with comfort and caring. I realized that this interaction of adults and students was not a tangible part of our emergency plan, but certainly was evidence of our efforts to make people feel welcome.

When I returned to the building, I was immediately struck by a sense of calm. People were talking, helping, hugging, and were genuinely caring for each other. At that moment a parent burst through the main office door. In tears she saw me and walked toward me. Without speaking she hugged me and after a minute explained that her husband and father of three of our students was in the Pentagon and that she did not know his condition. Through her tears she said something that I will never forget. She stepped back, grabbed my hand and said "Mr. Constantino, this school may be the only family I have left." We learned later that her husband was safe and the family was reunited.

At the very moment of that comment, however, I knew exactly how to answer that question asked of me 7 years ago.

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APPENDIX A

LITERATURE REVIEW RESULTS COMPILATION BY DOMAIN

Parent Involvement	Student Engagement	Peer Relationships
Parenting styles have a relationship to student achievement Parent involvement contributes to student achievement Parents can have a powerful effect on students grades Parent involvement has indirect effects on student achievement Student perceptions of parental expectations is a strong indirect effect on student grades Positive correlation between student success in school and parent attitudes toward school Parents level of education has significant effect on teens learning at home Parent education is a significant factor in involvement at school Parents respond favorably to schools that promote their involvement Trust of a parent and communication with that parent is highly correlated Attachment to parents is linked to social competence Student self-image enhanced by attachment to parents Home-based parent involvement activities are more beneficial to high school students Parents as supporter are more effective at grades 9-10	Student attitudes are barriers to engagement Confusion as to who accepts responsibility for engagement Violence in schools limits student engagement Communication is a bridge to engagement Caring environment leads to student engagement Enthusiastic, active learning leads to student engagement Teachers can be a bridge to student engagement Family educational culture is strongly related to student engagement Student outcome is tied more to outside influences than teacher classroom practices Principals can affect student engagement After school involvement predicts success in school Participation in extracurricular activities forms a positive identification with school Academic tracking encourages disengagement Negative expectations encourages disengagement Varied treatment of races encourages disengagement Bureaucratized relationships encourages disengagement Lack of information flow encourages disengagement.	The school day encompasses more than just classroom experiences Students respond that social situations are the best part of their school day Peer group dynamics are a source of stress that can distract students Peer culture prescribes school as a place to live more so than a place to learn Peer groups exist apart from adult direction Ability among peers is valued more than hard work Alienation from parents has more influence over peer relations than positive aspects of attachment Adolescents may become involved in outside peer activity to compensate for poor family relationships Direct relationship between adolescents' relationships with their parent and peer crowd Healthy home relationships translate to normal peer crowd affiliation Peer relationships do not arise independently of adolescents' family relationships Peers authoritative parents positively influence individual adolescents. Student self-image enhanced by attachment to peers.

APPENDIX B

THEMES AND LABELS IN LITERATURE REVIEW RESULTS

Parent Involvement	Student Engagement	Peer Relationships
Parenting Styles, Involvement affect student achievement	Enthusiastic, active learning leads to engagement	Peers can distract students
Parent expectations affect student perceptions	Student attitudes affect their engagement	Non-classroom experiences are significant peer factors
Education of Parents is a factor	Family educational culture is related to student engagement	Peer groups are not directed by adults
Parental communication with children have a positive impact on child/parent relationships	Communication is a bridge to engagement	Peer relationships are not independent of family relationships
Students social ability is linked to attachment to parents	Student outcomes linked to outside influences	Peer relationships and parent attachment are correlated
	Caring environment leads to student engagement	Peers identify school as a place to live
Parents respond to school that involve them	Participation in school leads to engagement	Ability is valued more than hard work

APPENDIX C

CONCEPTUAL MATRIX

		PEER RELATIONSHIPS DOMAINS					
		Peer influences (Distractions to students; support networks; active learning)	Peer self-direction (Lack of adult direction)	Peer reliance (Correlation to individual parent attachment)	Peer values (cumulative experience; effort)	Peer perceptions (perception of importance to family and school attachments)	Peer environments (perception of mission of school; focus of schools efforts)
PARENT INVOLVEMENT DOMAINS	Parenting Style and Involvement (effects on student achievement; type of involvement/style)						
	Parent Educational Culture (educational experiences of family)						
	Parental Communication (communication with children, peers, and school)						
	Parent Attachment (correlation to peer relationships and child's social ability; attachment to peer's parents)						
	Parent Expectations (standards placed on child; child perception of expectation)						
		Student Enthusiasm for Learning (own learning; expectations, tracking)	Student Attitude (perceptions of school, friends, family and own abilities; self-image; image of race/ethnicity)	Student Perceptions of family support (+/-; necessary/unnecessary)	Student Communication (with school , friends, family; bureaucratic lack of information)	Student Outcomes (academic achievement, social /peer network standing; negative expectations	Student Participation (cocurricular activities, community involvement, etc.)
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT DOMAINS							

APPENDIX D

LITERATURE REVIEW MATRICES

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Deslandes, R., Royer, E., Turcotte, D., Bertrand, R. (1997). School achievement at the secondary level: Influence of parenting style and parent involvement in schooling. *McGill Journal of Education, 32 (3*), 191-207.	Using Epstein's overlapping spheres model, authors modify the model to examine the influences o of parenting styles and parental involvement in secondary schools using a quantitative method. Student final grade point averages were used as a determinate of student achievement. Various authors (Steinberg, Baker, Epstein) are cited as support for the conduct of this research and the outcomes noted.	Results: Three factors of parenting styles were shown to have a relationship to student achievement: 1) Behavioral control was the best predictor of school grades ($\beta = .15$ $p<.001$). 2) Psychological autonomy granting ($\beta = .13$, $p<.01$) and 3) Warmth acceptance ($\beta = .10$, $p< .05$). Two of the original five factors contributed significantly: 1) Affective support ($\beta = .33$ $p<.001$) 2) Communication with teachers showed a ***negative*** relationship with school grades. (see implications) ($\beta = .23$ $p<.001$)	Limitations: • Family variables based on youth perception through classroom questionnaire. • Sampling characteristics narrow, i.e., same grade level (9^{th}), SES, ethnicity. • Assumes grades are the best measure of achievement. • Assumes positive grades equate to student engagement in school. Implications: • Parents retain substantial influence over their adolescents' school performance. • Three factors of parenting style and two factors of parent involvement show high correlation with student grades. • The negative correlation of communication with teachers assumes interaction when the student is experiencing academic trouble, hence the negative correlation. • Parental involvement in supporting their child's activities presupposes that students are involved in co-curricular activities. Future Research • Determination of other types and variances of communication with teachers outside of those motivated by school problems. • Perspectives of parental involvement importance by students who are not involved in activities. • A perspective of students regarding school success factors other than grades.

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Keith, T. Z., Keith, P.B., Quirk, K.J., Sperduto, J., Santillo, S. and Killings, S. (1998). Longitudinal effects of parent involvement on high school grades: Similarities and differences across gender and ethnic groups. *Journal of School Psychology, 36 (3),* 335-363.	The authors, using NELS :88 and follow up data, test whether or not parent involvement has the same effects for different groups of children and youth. Specifically, gender and ethnicity. Authors choose to define parent involvement as parent expectations and aspirations and parent-child communication. The longitudinal nature of the research stems from reports of parent involvement when selected students were in eighth grade and a comparison to the same students' grade point averages in tenth grade. Authors used a cross-validation approach to test and modify the model on different data.	-The coefficient of .25 on the model path from parent involvement to grades suggests that each standard deviation change in parent involvement will result in .25 of a standard deviation change in GPA. Suggests that parent involvement can have a powerful effect on students' subsequent high school grade point averages. -The effects of parent involvement on grades between boys and girls are indistinguishable. -The influences of the variables in the model were the same across the five ethnic groups studied. Parent involvement was an important influence on GPA across all groups.	<u>Limitations</u> • The research used a narrow definition of parent involvement and did not address home-school communication and its impact on student achievement as measured by GPA. • Grades are more sensitive to motivation and effort than are test scores. • Focus of the research does not analyze the factors (variables) of motivation, homework, peers, and attitudes. <u>Implications</u> • Parent involvement has continuing and powerful effects on high school learning. • Parent involvement begun in the earlier years continues to be important in high school. • Suggests programs to increase home-school collaboration and parent involvement in high schools is important <u>Future Research</u> • An investigation which includes high school student perceptions about the types and definitions of parent involvement that they see beneficial or under what conditions is the involvement of parents acceptable to adolescents. • An investigation of the effects of motivation and peer relationships on school engagement. • An investigation of the effects of peer relationships and family involvement on the motivation of individual students to be engaged in their own learning.

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Patrikakou, E.N. (1997). A model of parental attitudes and the academic achievement of adolescents. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 31 (1),* 7-26.	The study investigates parental attitudes and their effects on adolescents and on the academic achievement of such students, using a theoretical model or "micro system" of influence over adolescents. NELS: 88 data is used as baseline data to test the model theory. It is hypothesized that the student's perception of parental involvement, parental communication, and parental expectations will lead to higher student expectations of achievement.	Results Four sections: direct effects, indirect effects; total effects, and a comparison of the four groups under investigation. Direct effects: prior achievement had the strongest direct effect over the four groups. • PI had no significant direct effects on the academic achievement for any of the four groups. Indirect Effects: viewed as paths of significance through which a certain variable causes sufficient change to a subsequent one. • The perception of parental expectations emerged as having the strongest indirect effect. • Prior achievement had the second strongest indirect effect Total effects: student academic expectations emerged as the most important mediator for all groups.	Limitations • Use of secondary data; no control over research design • PI discovered to have no direct effect, but a strong indirect effect • Prior achievement is denoted as the highest direct effect, but authors interest focuses more on how the remaining variables work in the model to explain academic achievement. • Reader assumes academic achievement to be NELS:88 data. Not mentioned as to what constitutes academic achievement. • Possible discrepancies among parental expectations, their perception by the students, and the students' own aspirations. Implications • "The strongest form of parental behavior emerges to be parental expectations and their perception by the adolescent." P. 20 • The more clearly high expectations are conveyed, the more accurate the student's perceptions of them will be. • Importance of student expectations. Future Research • The effect of the power of parental expectations on student's own expectations. • Expectations and the way they are communicated as a factor in student engagement in school. • Reverse of the model, allowing for peer and school culture to predominate over parental influences.

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Sanders, M., Epstein, J.L., & Connors-Tadros, L. (1998). *Family partnerships with high schools: The parents' perspective.* Baltimore, MD: Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning.	The study analyzes survey data from 423 parents at six high schools in Maryland. The authors' focus was to explore the effects of the high schools' programs of partnership on parental attitudes and reports of involvement. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to identify the independent effects of the schools' partnership programs to encourage parental involvement on parents' attitudes about the high schools, and reports of involvement in their teens' education at home and school. Epstein's "Six Types of Parental Involvement" model was used as a determinate of the results.	Results -The majority of parent respondents (60%) reported that their children were getting Bs and Cs in school; 14% reported their children were getting As; 20% reported their children receiving Ds and Fs. -There is a significant positive correlation between how well students are doing and their parents' attitudes toward the school. -Significant correlation between families' reports of their involvement at school and practices that encourage volunteering. -Significant correlation between parents' level of education and involvement with their teens' learning at home. -Parent education and student academic performance are significant predictors of family involvement at school. -Parents respond favorably to schools that promote their involvement.	Limitations • Small, localized sample • Majority of respondents report that their children are achieving at an average level or below average level • Survey instrument validity is not reported. Developed by the author (Epstein) Implications • Schools that incorporate family involvement programs will bring about more positive attitudes of parents • Differing programs bring about differing types of family involvement. Future Study • An investigation of student perceptions of parental attitudes toward their school as mitigated by the schools' efforts to promote family involvement. • Expansion of six types research and overlapping model to include perceptions and attitudes of adolescents.

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Brown, B.B. & Theobald, W. (1998). Learning contexts beyond the classroom: Extracurricular activities, community organizations, and peer groups. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 97th, (1)*, 109-141.	The author focuses on extracurricular activities, peer groups, and community organizations as facets of the secondary school classroom and in which adolescents are profoundly affected. The positives and negatives of these issues are dealt with in an extensive literature review on the subject and results from studies conducted by the author. A qualitative theme is prevalent with regard to an ongoing summary of two high school friends and their experiences in a typical high school day.	Results Numerous ideas, opinions, and research results are presented. (O) Signifies opinion and (R) signifies research-based results. (LR) signifies research born from the literature review. -The school day encompasses more than just classroom experiences (O). -Often, students respond that the best experiences of school are related to social situations rather than academic experiences (R) -Peer group dynamics are a source of stress that can easily distract students from the learning process. (O) -Unresolved issues exist concerning the major objectives that should underlie an extracurricular program and the degree of connection that should exist between extra-curricular participation and classroom learning. (O) -70% of students report being involved in an extracurricular activity; 42% report involvement in more than one (R) -Peer culture prescribes school as a place to live more so than a place to learn. (LR) -Orientation to school is influenced by peer groups (R) -Peer groups exist apart from adult direction; the peer system cannot be a legitimate proving ground for seeking autonomy if it appears to be controlled by adults. (O) - Peers who are perceived as achieving through hard work in school are not admired as much as those whose success is attributable to ability. (LR)	Limitations • Unclear as to the scope of research conducted by the authors. More of a "book chapter" approach with a mixture of apparent opinion peppered with ideas from previous research. • Unclear as to whether recommendations are born from authors' research or review of research. • No connection to the influence and role of families as they relate to these issues. Implications Five recommendations that strengthen connections amongst learning contexts (curricular vs. extracurricular, etc.) 1. Eliminate duplication of effort among learning contexts 2. Reconnect community or extracurricular and academic activities 3. Broaden participation in community and extracurricular activities 4. Use extracurricular activities to promote school bonding among members of all peer groups 5. Increase communication across adolescents' learning contexts Future Research • Incorporate the perceptions of students and their parents with the five recommendations to strengthen learning contexts. • Provide new principles of learning context through the perception of students

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Cothran, D.J., & Ennis, C.D. (2000). Building bridges to student engagement: Communicating respect and care for students in urban high schools. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 33 (2),* 106-117	Via the qualitative method of constant comparison, the authors set out to garner student and teacher opinions on barriers to engagement in school. Four teachers and 51 students were observed and interviewed. A model, first proposed by Wehlage, et al. (1989) served as the basis for the study.	Results Discussions supported the notion of barriers to student engagement in school. Barriers to engagement: student attitudes; responsibility for engagement; school violence; Bridges to engagement: communication; care; enthusiastic, active learning; Teachers as bridges to engagement	<u>Limitations</u> Ideas presented limited to urban students and teachers. <u>Implications</u> Understanding the student perspective is important if educators are to conceptualize reform efforts that students will find meaningful, thereby increasing the likelihood of their engagement. Teachers in this study did not feel responsibility for filling the role of primary motivator and engager of students. A key factor in student's willingness to engage in class was their perception of the teacher's willingness to communicate with them. Teachers can act as primary bridge builders to student engagement <u>Future Research</u> How do we garner student perceptions to enact effective reform in our high schools? Can a combination of peers and families' act as primary motivators in the engagement of individual students? Under what conditions can students be engaged in their school if a classroom teacher exhibits non-engaging practices?

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999). The relative effects of principal and teacher sources of leadership on student engagement with school. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35,* 679-706.	The authors are focused on a quantitative analysis of the effects on students of principal and teacher leadership as well as similarities and differences in the school conditions through which teacher and principal leadership influence is exercised. 1,762 teachers and 9,941 students were surveyed as to their opinions on this subject. A previous study by these authors found that the influence of principal and teacher leadership on student engagement with school is mediated by both school and classroom conditions. Five school conditions are: principal leadership, teacher leadership, school conditions, family educational culture, identification, and participation.	<u>Results</u> School conditions is the only variable significantly related to all the other variables in the model (.66, .52) Family educational culture is strongly related to student engagement (.32) Student engagement is an outcome not so obviously tied to teacher classroom practices as are more conventional outcome measures, and those potentially more susceptible to influence by those outside of the classroom. Results of teacher leadership are statistically insignificant, whereas, principal leadership effects, although not strong, do reach statistical significance. Results involving family educational culture are significant. Family educational culture replaces SES.	<u>Limitations</u> Data was not collected which linked responses of individual students with their teachers. (lack of linear modeling) Data was combined from both elementary and junior high schools. Surveys through grade 9 only. (Canadian schools) <u>Implications</u> Principals can positively effect the engagement of students, even if only slightly significant, statistically. The role of family educational culture is predominant. Student engagement is more strongly correlated to influences outside of the classroom. <u>Future Research</u> Can school and leadership effects studies conceptualize family variables through student perceptions? How do schools and families co produce the full array of outcomes for which schools are responsible? Can incorporating family involvement initiatives enhance principal leadership?

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Schneider, B.H. & Younger, A.J. (1996). Adolescent-parent attachment and adolescents' relations with their peers. *Youth & Society, 28 (1),* 95-108.	The authors hypothesized that adolescents who reported secure attachments with their parents would display higher levels of interpersonal relational competence. 63 tenth grade students (30 male, 33 female) completed the Inventory of Parent Attachment and the Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire.	<u>Results</u> Correlation between scales measuring trust of a parent and communication with the same parent was fairly large. Confirm the existence of links between parent adolescent attachment and adolescent social competence. Alienation from parents seems to have a stronger effect on adolescents' peer relations than the positive aspects of attachment. Adolescents may become involved in outside peer activity as a compensation for unsatisfactory relationships at home.	<u>Limitations</u> Sampling was not random and participation was limited to families in which the parents had agreed to participate in an accompanying longitudinal survey. Peers involved in relationships with the subjects went untapped. <u>Implications</u> There is a relationship between families and peers with regard to student alignments. Peers and parents can be viewed as competing for influence <u>Future Research</u> Can schools mediate the influences of peers and families on individual students? Does a school's promotion of family engagement practices alter an individual students peer group affiliation?

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Strouse, D.L. (1996). *Profiles and linkages of adolescent peer groups: A descriptive, relational, and developmental analysis.* Unpublished dissertation, Catholic University, Washington DC	The author had four goals when setting out to do this research: a) to replicate and expand typology of another researcher (McLellan, 1992), b) to explore the relationship characteristics of adolescents' peer groups by examining linkages between peer group memberships and the quality of relationships with parents and friends; c) to examine functional characteristics of adolescent crowds by evaluating the effect membership has on developmental outcomes such as self-esteem, behavior problems, and academic achievement; and d) to explore stability and change in adolescent crowd orientations as students move from tenth grade to twelfth grade. Quantitative analysis of NELS 88 was used.	<u>Results</u> Direct relationship between adolescents' relationships with their parents and their crowd orientations. Healthy, supportive family relationships are related to normative crowd orientations. Peer relationships do not arise independently of adolescents' family relationships.	<u>Limitations</u> Limited to white, public high school students. <u>Implications</u> The study of the connection between peer group orientation and family relations is relatively new and need of empirical support. Extends the knowledge of connections between crowd affiliations and developmental outcomes such as self-concept, deviance, and academic achievement. <u>Future Research</u> Can family involvement positively effect the school environment that in turn can positively effect adolescent peer group orientations? What is the connection between peer group orientation and family relations on individual student engagement?

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Cooper, H., Valentine, J.C., Nye, B., & Lindsay, J.J. (1999). Relationships between five after-school activities and academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 91 (2),* 369-378.	Four hundred twenty-four students in grades 6 – 12 and 1 parent of each student completed a questionnaire concerning student participation in five types of after-school activities: homework; television viewing, extracurricular activities, other types of structured after-school groups; and jobs. The authors were interested in the correlation of these variables to the achievement of students.	<u>Results</u> Student and parent differences concerning the average time students pent in each after-school activity are clearly one source of disagreement. After school activities contributed to the prediction of achievement. Students who completed more homework earned higher grades Students engaged in a high amount of television watching were associated with poorer school performance. Participation in extracurricular activities was positively associated with residualized grades, indicating that the relationship between extracurricular activities and teacher-assigned grades cannot be explained solely by the differential selection of high-achieving students into extracurricular activities	<u>Limitations</u> Low response rate (31%) Not a random sample <u>Implications</u> Overall findings are consistent with the theory that forming a positive identification with school through extracurricular activities can positively influence school performance. <u>Future Research</u> Do all high school activities programs promote student achievement? What is the relationship of peer affiliations and after-school activities? What affects do family involvement initiatives have on student participation in after-school activities? Can family engagement programs positively affect informal interactions with peers, neighborhood associates and solitary activities? What motivates students to become involved with after-school activities programs?

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Fletcher, A.C., Darling, N.E., Dornbusch, S.M. & Steinberg, L. (1995). The company they keep: Relation of adolescents' adjustment and behavior to their friends' perceptions of authoritative parenting in the social network. *Developmental Psychology, 31, (2),* 300-310.	The author's focus was to determine the impact of network authoritativeness, or, the effect of their peers' authoritative parents, to determine whether or not their friends' parents can influence adolescents. This quantitative analysis used 4,431 14 to 18 year olds. 43% of participants were male and 57% female. The sample was 19% seniors, 23% juniors, 28% sophomores, and 30 % freshmen. Ethnic representation was as follows: 65% white non-Hispanic, 14% Asian American, 9% African American, 10% Hispanic American, and less than 1% each Native American, Middle Eastern, or Pacific Islander. This research suggests that membership in a community of peers and adults who encourage adjustment and good behavior on the parts of other adolescents within the community is beneficial above and beyond the presence of such positive influences within the immediate family.	Significant correlations between parental authoritativeness in the peer network and most outcome variables for both boys and girls. Authoritative parenting in the adolescent's peer network is positively related to his or her performance in school. Having friends who describe their parents as authoritative is associated with greater academic competence and less problem behavior. The relations between parenting in the peer network and adolescent academic competence are indeed mediated by the behavior of the adolescent's peers. Most of the relations between perceived network authoritativeness and adolescent problem behavior also are mediated by the behavior of the adolescent's peers.	<u>Limitations</u> Less economically disadvantaged students were reluctant to participate in the study or provide names of their friends. Sample is predominantly middle class and professional families. <u>Implications</u> Demonstrates that the prevalence of parental authoritativeness in an adolescent's network of peers is also associated with a variety of indicators of healthy adjustment, above and beyond the contribution of perceived authoritativeness in the adolescent's family of origin. The influence of the authoritativeness among the adolescent's friends' parents is not direct, but indirect. Authoritative parenting is associated with adolescent competence, and competent youngsters are attracted to, and influence each other. Well-adjusted adolescents select and are selected by well-adjusted peers, all coming from authoritative homes. <u>Future Study</u> What are the effects of authoritativeness in the peer networks of different levels of socio-economic status?

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
O'Koon, J. (1997). Attachment to parents and peers in late adolescence and their relationship with self-image. *Adolescence, 32* (126), 471-482.	The authors focus was to determine the relationship with adolescent attachment to family and peers and what effects, if any, those attachments had on the adolescent's self image. Four high schools were identified. Three were located in the suburb of a large Midwestern city; the fourth school was located in the downtown area of a medium-sized southern city. 167 questionnaires were distributed to student's aged 16-18. The schools were predominantly Caucasian.	Attachment to parents and peers had a significant positive relationship with emotional tone. A sense of security with parents and peers during adolescence seems to be related to adolescent self-image.	<u>Limitations</u> The homogeneity of the sample in terms of race and socioeconomic status limits what these findings say about older adolescents. <u>Implications</u> Perhaps if peer attachment can be enhanced, self-image in a variety of areas can be improved. <u>Future Research</u> How does attachment to peers and improved self-image develop?

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Hickman, C.W., Greenwood, G. & Miller, M.D. (1995). High school parent involvement: Relationships with achievement, grade level, SES, and gender. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 28 (3),* 125-133.	Authors set out to determine the relationship between the achievement of high school students and the total amount and types of parent involvement in which the primary care-giving parent was engaged. Student gender, SES, and grade level were also investigated. The population studied consisted of all parents who had students in grades 9-12 attending one of six public high schools during the 1990-1991 school year in Alachua County, Florida. A random sample of 60 parents was drawn from a pool of 6,704 students. 47 parents agreed to participate (78%). The PPI, (Parent Participation Interview was administered. PI identified as: home-based; communicator; supporter; learner; advocate; decision maker; volunteer;	The PPI score was statistically significant in their relationship to student GPA. Determined that the higher the GPA, the higher the level of parent involvement. The only type of PI that was positively related to achievement (GPA) was the home-based type. Parent-as-learner and parent-as-supporter was found to be significantly related to SES. The parent as support type was significantly related to the grade level of the student. (more 9-10, less 11-12) Parent-as-decision-maker and parent-as-volunteer were not statistically related to GPA, SES, gender, or grade level.	<u>Limitations</u> Small sample. Not random due to refusal of some parents to participate Not longitudinal <u>Implications</u> Home-based PI has a positive effect on GPA. How will schools deliver the information necessary to provide parents with the information they need? <u>Future Research</u> What effects do certain types of PI have on the dropout rate of at-risk high school students?

STUDY	FOCUS	RESULTS	LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS/FURTHER STUDY IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Davidson, A.L. (1996). *Making and molding identity in schools: Student narratives on race, gender, and academic engagement*. Albany: State University of New York Press.	The focus of this book is the journey of the author/researcher through a qualitative process of interviewing 55 students in four desegregated high schools in California. The chapter pertinent to my study is entitled "Youths' Frames on Engagement" and solicits the opinions of these students on their own engagement in school.	From interviews, five factors which youth suggest contribute to manifestations of disengagement and alienation: • Patterns that emanate from academic tracking • Negative expectations • Differential treatment of varied ethnic and racial groups • Bureaucratized relationships and practices • Barriers to Information Author notes: Barriers of tracking, the tenor of adult/student relationships and barriers to information are manipulable.	<u>Limitations</u> • Heavily focused on minority students in desegregated urban schools <u>Implications</u> Can lead to understanding a school environment that incorporates students and their ideas. Allows for ideas to be connected with family involvement research. <u>Future Research</u> Of those areas the author has identified as manipulable, how can they be linked to families and peers?

APPENDIX E

STUDY SAMPLE OF STUDENTS

Grade	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	Total
9	Females	0	2	24	20	64	110
	Males	1	5	30	21	91	148
	Total	1	7	54	41	155	258
10	Females	1	3	16	14	23	57
	Males	2	1	15	13	40	71
	Total	3	4	31	27	63	128
11	Females	0	4	11	14	36	65
	Males	0	6	19	4	37	66
	Total	0	10	30	18	73	131
12	Females	0	1	15	5	48	69
	Males	1	2	10	6	51	70
	Total	1	3	25	11	99	139
Total	Females	1	10	66	53	171	301
	Males	4	14	74	44	219	355
	Total	5	24	140	97	390	656

1 = Indian
2 = Asian/Pacific Islander
3 = Black
4 = Hispanic
5 = White/Non Hispanic

APPENDIX F

LETTER SENT TO SUPERINTENDENT FOR PERMISSION

Stonewall Jackson High School
8820 Rixlew Lane, Manassas, Virginia 20109
(703) 365-2900
Steven Mark Constantino

13080 Brookmead Drive
Manassas, Virginia 20112
(703) 794-0803
E-mail: constnos@pwcs.edu

September 10, 2001

Dr. Edward L. Kelly, Superintendent
Prince William County Schools
P.O. Box 389
Manassas, Virginia 20108

Dear Dr. Kelly,

I am seeking your permission to conduct research for my doctoral study entitled *High School Student Perspectives on the Interaction Between Family Involvement and Peer Relationships on Their Own School Engagement Practices.* I appreciate your willingness to consider this request.

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and, along with my advisor Dr. Steve R. Parson, I am seeking the preliminary approval of Prince William County Schools to conduct my research. The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Institutional Review Board requires preliminary school division approval prior to their consent. I am requesting your approval to conduct a pilot study at Hylton High School and a complete study at Stonewall Jackson High School. If you will approve, I will submit your letter to Dr. David Moore, IRB Research Division as evidence of your support. At the point when the University approves my study, I will forward that paperwork to your office

The pilot study will encompass the interviewing of two to three Hylton students and 15 to 20 Stonewall Jackson students. The interviewers will be myself, Ms. Rebekah Wight, and Mrs. Maureen Ellis.

I have attached a copy of the Informed Consent that we would use with students and their parents at both high schools. If after your review of the document this project meets with your approval, I would appreciate a letter on your school stationary authorizing the study to be completed.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact myself at (703)365-2900 or Dr. Parson at (703) 538-8478. Thank you for any consideration you can give to my request.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Constantino

APPENDIX G

SELECTION LETTER SENT TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Stonewall Jackson High School
8820 Rixlew Lane, Manassas, Virginia 20109
(703) 365-2900

Office of the Principal

Date

Parent Name
Student Name
Address 1
Address 2

Dear, [Parent Name], and [Student Name],

I am in the process of doing a doctoral research study regarding the effects of family involvement and peer relationships on individual student involvement in school and school-related activities. I have received permission from Virginia Tech University and Prince William County Schools to conduct this research at Stonewall Jackson High School. Angelica has been randomly selected as one of 20 participants in this research study.

If you and Angelica agree to participate, Angelica will be asked to participate in an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. I will not conduct the interview. Stonewall staff members Mrs. Maureen Ellis, anthropology teacher, and Ms. Rebekah Wight, Director of guidance will conduct the interview. Each interview will be tape recorded and transcribed. All information shared in the interviews is confidential and no real names will ever be used in the final research report. The interview will be conducted at a time other than scheduled classes if that is more convenient.

Attached to this letter you will find two consent forms. The first consent form explains the process in more detail. The second consent form gives permission to audiotape record the interview. You will also find copies of the college and school division permission letters to conduct the research study. I would appreciate if you and Angelica read it carefully, sign it and return it to me at my office tomorrow. If you would like to discuss any part of this proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me at my office, (703) 365-2900.

I hope that by listening to students, like Angelica and getting their opinions about these important topics we can help to make school experiences more positive for both students and families. Whether or not you agree to participate, please know that I appreciate your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Constantino

APPENDIX H

LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT PILOT STUDY

Stonewall Jackson High School
8820 Rixlew Lane, Manassas, Virginia 20109
(703) 365-2900

September 13, 2001

Mr. Robert B. Benson, Principal
Hylton High School
14051 Spriggs Road
Woodbridge, Virginia 22193

Dear Mr. Benson,

I am seeking your permission to conduct a pilot study at Hylton High School for my research study entitled *High School Student Perspectives on the Interaction Between Family Involvement and Peer Relationships on Their Own School Engagement Practices.* I appreciate your willingness to consider this request.

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and, along with my advisor Dr. Stephen Parson, I am seeking the preliminary approval of Prince William County Schools to conduct my research. The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Institutional Review Board requires preliminary school division approval prior to their consent. I am requesting your approval to conduct a pilot study at your school. If you will approve, I will submit your letter to Dr. Edward Kelly when seeking approval from the school division to undertake the entire pilot and study.

The pilot study will encompass the interviewing of two to three Hylton students, based on descriptive criteria set forth in the study. The interviewers will be myself, Ms. Rebekah Wight, and Mrs. Maureen Ellis. In addition to validating the content of the interview questions, I will be training Ms. Wight and Mrs. Ellis on the interview protocol and process. The criteria that apply to the formal study apply to the pilot study.

I have attached a copy of the Informed Consent that we would use with students and their parents at Hylton High School. If after your review of the document the pilot project meets with your approval, I would appreciate a letter on your school stationary authorizing the pilot study to be completed.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact myself at (703)365-2900 or Dr. Parson at (703) 538-8478. Thank you for any consideration you can give to my request.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Constantino

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. **Tell me about your family. (Family Involvement)**
   _____ *Size of family (who lives in home…be specific. If not parents, why)*
   _____ *Parent(s) work outside the home (what do they do)*
   _____ *Likes and dislikes about your family (size, structure, etc.)*
   _____ *Satisfaction with where subject lives (describe home and neighborhood)*

Goals: To understand the subjects family, how the subject relates to the family; issues within the family that have the potential to motivate or direct student involvement; Dynamics within the family either positive or negative. The degree to which family structure that promotes/deters involvement.

2. **Tell me about how you feel about school. (School Involvement)**
   _____ **School encouragement/discouragement of subject**
   - *What about Stonewall encourages you to do well in classes and participate in activities?*
   - *How have the school's efforts to promote your families' involvement, like Parentlink helped to encourage you?*
   - *Did you participate in the One of Us program? Why or Why not?*
   - *What did you think of the program?*
   - *How can the school do anything to influence your family or friends to become more involved? Can you give me an example?*

   _____ **After school activities (Level of involvement)**
   _____ **Important non-school related activities**
   (Important activities outside of school)
   _____ **Information about job**
   - *Why do you have a job?*
   - *How do you handle your job and school?*
   - *What types of strategies do you employ to make sure you get everything done?*

   _____ **Peer involvement with school activity**

   - *Are your close friends involved in the same activities you are? If yes, why is it important to you or your friends that you be involved in the same things?*
   - *What kinds of differences in activities are there between you and your friends?*
   -

Goal: To determine the level of involvement in school, thoughts about the schools efforts to encourage involvement and non-school activities that may have an effect on student engagement. This information can be used in follow up questions which appears below.

3. **Tell me about how your family is involved with you, your friends, and your school.** (Parenting Style)
   _____ **Family expectation of/involvement in school**
   - *How does your family know that you have your work completed?*
   - *Who do you go to for help and why?*

- *What kinds of school events are your family members involved in?*

_____ **Family expectation of grades**

- *How are your grades?*
- *Why are your grades the way they are?*
- *What do your parents think and discuss with you about your grades?*
- *Why is it important to you and/or your parents to do well in school?*
- *How does your family involve your friends as a reason for good/bad grades?*
- *Does your family ever use a friend who does better than you as an example for you to follow? Give an example.*

_____ **Consequences for poor performance**

- *What happens when things do not go well in school?*
- *What do your friends think of your schoolwork?*
- *What do you think the reason is for poor grades when they happen? Does it bother you?*

_____ **Family monitoring of school activities** Determine how closely family monitors school work, classes, etc. Just report cards, weekly, daily, parentlink, conferences, e-mail, telephone. Get as many specifics as you can.

- *How do you feel when your family contacts your teachers?*
- *What kinds of things do you and your family discuss about school and school activities?*
- *How does your family feel about contacting the school? Do they avoid it? Why or why not?*

_____ **Family impression of/relationship with subject's friends**

- *Does your family know all your friends? Why do they or don't they know…*
- *Why do you think they need to know whom you associate with?*
- *Does your family like all of your friends? Yes, why, no why?*
- *How does your family encourage/discourage particular friends, kinds of friends?*
- *Are all of your friends welcome at your house? Why or why not?*
- *If you have friends that are not welcome or those you choose not to bring to your house…explain why?*
- *What kind of advice about friends do your parents give you when it comes to school and school activities?*
- *In what situations do your parents make comparisons to you and your friends? Looking to establish the connection between the subject's family and friends and how this interconnectedness might impact the subjects involvement with school*

_____ **Differences between family and friends perception of school**

- *What are the differences between what your family thinks about school and what your friends think about school?*

Goal: The main strand of the study is to determine if or how families and friends interact and how that interaction influences students with school decisions about academics and co-curricular activities. This is an important section.

4. **Tell me about your friends and acquaintances. (Peer Relationships)**

_____ **Description of close friends** (What characteristics determine these close friendships.

- *What kinds of things do you talk about with your close friends that you would not with people who are not close friends, or perhaps your family?*
- *How are you and your friend's attitudes about school the same or different?*

_____ **Description of acquaintances**

- *What is the difference between a close friend and an acquaintance*
- *Why are these types of friendships important?*

_____ **Subjects relationship with friends' families**

- *Describe the kind of relationship you have with your friends' parents.*
- *How does your friend's families help you with your school decisions?*
- *Describe a time when a friend's family influenced you about something school related?*

_____ **Friend's Influence on School**

- *Describe a time when your friend's influence about a school-related issue had more influence over you than that of your parents or teachers.*

Goal: To continue with the idea of interconnectedness between friends and family by establishing friends, acquaintances and then relationships to friends' families.

Ask if there is anything else they would like to add or say.
Thank the subject for agreeing to the interview.
Remind them that they will review their transcript soon to make any changes, additions or corrections before it is forwarded to Mr. Constantino.

APPENDIX J

HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH CONSENT FORMS

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

Project Title: *High School Student Perspectives on the Interaction Between Family Involvement and Peer Relationships on Their Own School Engagement Practices*

Investigators: Steven M. Constantino Steve R. Parson (faculty advisor)

Purpose of This Research/Project

The purpose of this research project is to understand how the involvement of your family and friends with school affect your involvement in school and co-curricular activities. This project will involve the interviewing of 20 high school students at Stonewall Jackson High School. Ms. Rebekah Wight and Mrs. Maureen Ellis will interview you. I will not participate in the interview process.

Procedures

The procedures for this study include individual interviews with 20 students. Interviews will be scheduled with students at Stonewall Jackson High School. Interviews will take place at school during a time acceptable to the student and parent(s). Interviews will last from 30 to 60 minutes and will be audiotape recorded, then transcribed at a later point in time. I will not be involved in the interviews nor will I be involved in the transcriptions of the interviews. You will be given the opportunity to read the transcript of your interview and change it any way you like. When you are satisfied with your interview transcript, you will submit it to the interviewers. I will not be able to identify who you are from the tape or the transcript. A variable speed tape recorder will alter the sound of your voice to keep your comments anonymous.

Risks

There are no risks to you as a subject in this study. One potential discomfort to you might be discussing your personal feelings or experiences related to your friends, families, and school. Anything you say to the interviewers will be held in the strictest of confidence. At no time will I be able to determine your identity. The interviewers will never share your identity with anyone. Only the interviewers will know who you are. Your name will never be used in the report of this study.

Benefits of this Project

The benefits of this study will help us understand how the relationship of family involvement and peer relationships together affect how you choose to be involved in school and

co-curricular activities (clubs, sports, etc.). Further, hearing from you allows the study to hear directly from students for whom policies and programs are developed. At the conclusion of the study, you may contact Mr. Constantino for a summary of the research results.

Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Your identity as a subject in this study will be held confidential. A made-up name will replace your name. Only the interviewers will be able to identify you individually with data collected. Your identity will never be revealed to me. Audiotapes of interviews will be made. A variable speed tape recorder will be used to disguise your voice. The tapes will remain in Mr. Constantino's possession except when being transcribed by a professional transcriber. At all other times the tapes will be locked away in a secure location. Nothing you say in the interview will be used or held against you nor will anything you say ever be shared with anyone outside of this study. I am taking significant steps to protect you, your comments, and your anonymity throughout this project.

Compensation

No monetary compensation is connected to participation in this study.

Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions during interviews.

Research Approval

This research has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and by the Prince William County School Division.

Your Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

To participate in a tape-recorded interview lasting between 30 and 60 minutes
To review a transcript of my interview and make any changes I see fit
To be available for a potential follow-up interview

Student and Parent(s) Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary assent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project

Signature Date

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give consent for my child to participate in this project.
If my child participates, he/she may withdraw at any time without penalty. My child agrees to abide by the rules of this project

Parent Signature Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Steven M. Constantino, Investigator	(703) 365-2900
Stephen R. Parson, Faculty Advisor	(703) 538-8478
David B. Moore, IRB Research Division	(540) 231-5281

Subjects and parents must be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed Informed Consent.

Certification of Primary Investigator

This informed consent has been created to ensure that the students and parents involved in the project understand the purpose of the research, procedures, of the research, risks to the subjects, and benefits of the research. I agree to allow any student the opportunity to remove themselves from this study at any time of their choosing. I certify that Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University as well as the Prince William County Public Schools have approved the research proposal.

_____, 2001

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
\Informed Consent for Audio Tape Recording of Interviews

Project Title: *High School Student Perspectives on the Interaction Between Family Involvement and Peer Relationships on Their Own School Engagement Practices*

Investigators: Steven M. Constantino Steve R. Parson (faculty advisor)

In order to fulfill the requirements of human subject research at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, you and your parent(s) are required to provide a separate signature of consent for audio-taping. The procedures for audiotaping are as follows:

1. You will not be identified on the tape. You will be referred to as "subject 1, subject 2, etc."
2. Mr. Constantino will not conduct the interview. Mr. Constantino will not listen to or transcribe the tapes. Mr. Constantino will not know who you are. Only the interviewers will know who you are. They will not reveal your identity to anyone, including Mr. Constantino
3. You will have the opportunity to review the written transcript of your interview and make any changes, corrections, additions, or deletions you deem appropriate. You are free to change your mind about your answers when you view the transcript.
4. You will have the right to listen to the tape of your interview if you wish.
5. A variable speed tape recorder will be used to disguise your voice.
6. The tape of your interview will be located in a secure location that no one will have access to. No information on the tape will ever be revealed to anyone.
7. You have the right to not answer any question that is asked of you.
8. You can remove yourself from the interview process at any time.
9. Nothing said in your interview will ever be levied against you for any reason nor will anything you say be shared with anyone outside of this study.

I agree to abide by the procedures above in the audio tape recording and transcription of the interviews used in this research study.

, 2001

_____

I agree to the audio tape recording of my interview for this research project

_____

Students Name Date

I agree to allow my child to participate in an audiotape-recorded interview for this research project

_____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name(s) Date

APPENDIX K

ORIGINAL DISCOVERY THEMES

Homes and Neighborhoods

Problem Solving

Dreams and Future Goals

Parents Knowing Grades

Working

Hanging Out

School as Motivation

Involvement with School

My Friends Influence

Family Involvement with School

Close Friends/Common Interests

Acquaintances

Classes

Teachers

Outside Activities

Homework

Self Image

Parent Link

My Friends' Family

Grades

Environment

APPENDIX L

CODED CATEGORIES AND RULES FOR INCLUSION

Category Name and Code: **Family Expectations (FE)**

Rule for Inclusion: Families to students communicate the value of education by setting expectations for school performance and discussing goals for post-high school life.

Category Name and Code: **Dreams and Goals (DG)**

Rule for Inclusion: Individual students can articulate their dreams, goals, and plans for their future beyond high school

Category Name and Code: **Interacting with Peers in School Activities (IP/SA)**

Rule for Inclusion: Individual students are involved in certain school activity programs because their friends are involved as well.

Category Name and Code: **Student Jobs Alter the Interaction with School (SJ/IS)**

Rule for Inclusion: Students who work vary their engagement with both their academic programs and school activities.

Category Name and Code: **Outside Activities Mirror School Activities (OA/SA)**

Rule for Inclusion: Students are involved in activities not associated with the school that are extensions of their school activities involvement.

Category Name and Code: **Hanging Out (HO)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students enjoy unstructured outside social activities that can include friends and acquaintances.

Category Name and Code: **Religious Activities (RA)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students outside activities center on church-related activities.

Category Name and Code: **"School Doesn't Do It" Non-School Outside Activ. (NSA)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students outside interests and activities are a result of the school not providing exact or similar activities.

Category Name and Code: **Driving and Cars as Motivation (DCM)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students use driving and purchasing or attaining their own car as an outside activity or motivator.

Category Name and Code: **Interacting with Friends' Parents About School (IFP/S)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students interact with their friends parents and discuss or seek help with school-related problems and issues.

Category Name and Code: **Interacting with Friends' Parents to Solve Problems (IFP/P)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students discuss different problems and issues not necessarily related to school to garner advice and direction.

Category Name and Code: **Knowing Friends Parents (KP)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students have a relationship with the parents of their close friends and feel comfortable in their presence.

Category Name and Code: **No Relationship With Friends Parents (NRP)**

Rules for Inclusion: The student has no real relationship with his or her friends parents outside of maybe knowing who they are.

Category Name and Code: **Friends Parents Influences (FPI)**

Rules for Inclusion: Friends parents influence or encourage subject.

Category Name and Code: **Friends Parents Negative Toward Subject (FPN)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents of friends believe that the subject is a negative influence.

Category Name and Code: **No Involvement of Subject in School Activities (NA)**
Rules for Inclusion: Student is not involved in any school activities.

Category Name and Code: **Involvement with Sports (IS)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports being involved with school sports teams.

Category Name and Code: **Involvement with Clubs/Non-Athletic Orgs. (IC)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports being involved with school clubs and non-athletic organizations

Category Name and Code: **Satisfaction with Grades (SG)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student is pleased with his or her own academic achievement.

Category Name and Code: **Effort and Grades (EG)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student indicates that grades could be better with more effort

Category Name and Code: **Issues with Grades (IG)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student indicates that there are reasons for poor grades such as struggles with certain classes, absences, or other unique events.

Category Name and Code: **Academic Motivation by Friends (AMF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Peers and friends encourage the subject to do well in school and meet his or her academic responsibilities.

Category Name and Code: **Specific Class Motivation by Friends (SCMF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Peers and friends encourage the subject to select certain classes based on their previous interests or in the best interests of their friend (sub).

Category Name and Code: **No Motivation From Friends (NMF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Peers and friends provide no motivation for school or school related activities.

Category Name and Code: **Activities Involvement Motivation by Friends (ACTMF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Peers and friends provide motivation for subject to become involved in school related activities

Category Name and Code: **Similar Future Plans of Friends Provides Motivation (FPM)**

Rules for Inclusion: Friends provide motivation by having similar future plans

Category Name and Code: **Friends Providing Positive School Environment (PSE)**

Rules for Inclusion: Friends provide a school environment in which the subject feels welcome and belonging.

Category Name and Code: **Teachers as Motivators (TM)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students define school encouragement as teachers who are caring and willing to work with students to attain success.

Category Name and Code: **School Environment as Motivation (SEM)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report that the school, its environment, and inhabitants are motivators to do well or to be encouraged.

Category Name and Code: **"Best Option" Attitude (BOA)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports that compared to other options, school is the best option, or that school is required and there is no motivation in requirements.

Category Name and Code: **School Does Not Motivation (SNM)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports that the school does nothing to motivate their own engagement with school or school programs.

Category Name and Code: **School Programs Provide Encouragement (SPE)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports that the school its programs and activities are motivating factors in their engagement with school.

Category Name and Code: **Safe School as Encouragement (SSE)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports that the school environment feels safe and that provides encouragement.

Category Name and Code: **Parents Use Grades as Motivator (PGM)**

Rules for Inclusion: In discussions with their children, parents discuss the importance of grades, set expectations with regards to grades, or react or respond to either poor or good grades

Category Name and Code: **Parent Interest as Encouragement (PIE)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parent general interest in their child's school life provides encouragement to the child

Category Name and Code: **Other Family Members as Motivation (OFM)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports that family members other than parents provide motivation or encouragement to do well in school.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Encourages Activity Participation (PEA)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports that parent encourages school activities involvement

Category Name and Code: **Self-Motivation as Encouragement (SME)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report various reasons why they are self motivated or that their motivation to do well is intrinsic and not the result of an outside force.

Category Name and Code: **Future as Motivation (FM)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report that doing well in school is motivated by being able to meet their future goals.

Category Name and Code: **Inspiration as Legacy (IL)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report that reason to do well is for a deceased parent or to be the first to graduate.

Category Name and Code: **Interaction as After School Tutoring (IAST)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports attendance to school sponsored after school tutoring program with teachers, as a form of interaction with their academic program.

Category Name and Code: **Interaction with ParentLink (SIPL)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student reports using the technology system to catch up on assignments or to check what is due in class.

Category Name and Code: **Interaction with Classes (SIC)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report various interactions with classes as a means of connecting with school.

Category Name and Code: **Activities helps academics (AHA)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students feel that being involved in activities helps with academic achievement.

Category Name and Code: **Easier Route Behavior (ERB)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students admit taking easier courses or avoiding the degree to which they challenge themselves in school as helping to encourage.

Category Name and Code: **The Phenomenon of Not Handed In (NHI)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students discuss their habits and practice of not handing in work to teachers.

Category Name and Code: **Homework and Tests (HAT)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report their interactions with homework and tests.

Category Name and Code: **Friends with similar attitudes and Interests (FAI)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report that they tend to be attracted to other friends who have similar attitudes and interests (common interests), and find these friendships to be also based on support and trust.

Category Name and Code: **Friends Helping Friends (FHF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Friends report that they help each other with school issues such as homework, classwork, or support for doing well in school, or other emotional or social issues..

Category Name and Code: **Close friends and Family (CFF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report that discussions about personal issues such as family would occur with close friends as opposed to acquaintances. Students report that close friends can be trusted to help with difficult situations.

Category Name and Code: **Close friends, Connected Families (CFC)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report that close friendships involve families being close

Category Name and Code: **Friends as slackers and achievers (FSA)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students have friends who are both motivated about doing well in school and also friends who are not motivated or uncaring about their school performance

Category Name and Code: **Friends as Acquaintances (FAA)**

Rules for inclusion: Students differentiate between close friends and acquaintances and the importance of having friends from both categories

Category Name and Code: **Each other Houses (EOA)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students discuss going to each other's houses or relating friendships in terms of being involved within the home of a friend

Category Name and Code: **Friends Across Peer Group (FPG)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report friends in several different identified peer groups.

Category Name and Code: **Unsupportive Friends USF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report friends who are unsupportive of their decision to do well in school.

Category Name and Code: **One of Us Program (OUP)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students discuss their experiences with the school's orientation program.

Category Name and Code: **Discussing School with Friends (DSF)**

Rules for Inclusion: The degree to which student discuss school related things like grades is minimal compared with other types of interaction.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Involvement with Homework (PIH)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students describe the interactions between themselves and their parents with regard to homework completion and assistance.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Discussion of Education (PDE)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents discuss with their children the importance of education and doing well in school, and show support for their students successes.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Responses to Poor School Performance (PRP)**

Rules for Inclusion: Various strategies are employed by parents, from discipline to discussions regarding poor school performance or school performance beneath the expectation of the parents.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Discussions of School Problems (PDP)**

Rules for Inclusion: The types of interactions parents exhibit when there is a school-related problem.

Category Name and Code: **Parents as Good Communicators: (PGC)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students and parents enjoy good, positive and open communication.

Category Name and Code: **Parents Role in Course Decisions (PRD)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents discuss course selections with their children or encourage them to participate in specific courses.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Relationship Behaviors (PRB)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report difficult relationships with parents or parents exhibit relationship traits that irritate the student

Category Name and Code: **Parents with Common Interests (PCI)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students appreciate and enjoy those interests that are common between themselves and their parents.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Interventions, Non-School (PINS)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents intercede on behalf of their children in situations that are not related to school but may be threatening or damaging to their children.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Attitude Toward Student Job (PSJ)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents encourage jobs for their children, but are concerned about the impact of the job on their child's school performance.

Category Name and Code: **Parents Contacting School (PCS)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents take the initiative to contact teachers or other school personnel on behalf of their child, to ask questions, or to help resolve problems.

Category Name and Code: **Parents Attend School Activities (PSA)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents support their child's involvement by attending events in which the student participates.

Category Name and Code: **Student Controls Parent Contact (SPC)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student either successfully encourages or discourages their parents from contacting teacher or other school personnel.

Category Name and Code: **Parents Attend General School Events (PAE)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents attend annual back to school nights or other general events, but do so on a limited basis.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Involvement Through Technology (PIT)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents us a voice mail and internet communication system to keep abreast of their child's progress in school and to gain knowledge of what is occurring in classrooms.

Category Name and Code: **Parent Attitude Toward School Contact (PSC)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students report that their parents have a positive view of being able to contact the school.

Category Name and Code: **Parents Volunteer with School (PVS)**

Rules for Inclusion: Parents volunteer their time by participating in school groups such as athletic or music related parent clubs or organizations.

Category Name and Code: **Family Advice about Friends (FAF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Family advice to students about friendships and influences of friends run along a continuum of no discussion to significant influence over the friends of the student.

Category Name and Code: **Families Using Friends As Examples (FFE)**

Rules for Inclusion: Families compare achievement, attitudes, or behaviors of friends to their own student.

Category name and Code: **Family Knowledge of Friends (FKF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Families have varying knowledge of their student's friends from no real knowledge to a great deal of knowledge. Families tend to know close friends much more so than acquaintances.

Category Name and Code: **Whose House to Hang? (WHH)**

Rules for Inclusion: Students spend time at the homes of their friends and have their friends over their house as well.

Category Name and Code: **Family Judgments of Friends (FJF)**

Rules for Inclusion: Families make judgments about student's friends and share those judgments with the student as a way to encourage or discourage friendships

Category Name and Code: **Interacting with Friends about School (FFS)**

Rules for Inclusion: Student's friends are engaged in a dialog with the student's family about school related issues.

APPENDIX M

RESEARCH CATEGORY DATA CODES

1. Family Expectations	(FE)
2. Dreams and Goals	(DG)
3. Interacting with Peers in School Activities	(IP/SA)
4. Student Jobs Alter Interaction with School	(SJ/IS)
5. Outside Activities Mirror School Activities	(OA/SA)
6. Hanging Out	(HO)
7. Religious Activities	(RA)
8. "School Doesn't Do It" Non-School Outside Activities	(NSA)
9. Driving and Cars as Motivation	(DCM)
10. Interacting with Friends' Parents About School	(IFP/S)
11. Interacting with Friends' Parents to Solve Problems	(IFP/P)
12. Knowing Friends Parents	(KP)
13. No Relationship With Friends Parents	(NRP)
14. Friends Parents Influences	(FPI)
15. Friends Parents Negative Toward Subject	(FPN)
16. No Involvement of Subject in School Activities	(NA)
17. Involvement with Sports	(IS)
18. Involvement with Clubs/Non-Athletic Orgs.	(IC)
19. Satisfaction with Grades	(SG)
20. Effort and Grades	(EG)
21. Issues with Grades	(IG)
22. Academic Motivation by Friends	(AMF)
23. Specific Class Motivation by Friends	(SCMF)
24. No Motivation From Friends	(NMF)
25. Activities Involvement Motivation by Friends	(ACTMF)
26. Similar Future Plans of Friends Provides Motivation	(FPM)
27. Friends Providing Positive School Environment	(PSE)

28. Teachers as Motivators	(TM)
29. School Environment as Motivation	(SEM)
30. “Best Option” Attitude	(BOA)
31. School Does Not Motivation	(SNM)
32. School Programs Provide Encouragement	(SPE)
33. Safe School as Encouragement	(SSE)
34. Parents Use Grades as Motivator	(PGM)
35. Parent Interest as Encouragement	(PIE)
36. Other Family Members as Motivation	(OFM)
37. Parent Encourages Activity Participation	(PEA)
38. Self-Motivation as Encouragement	(SME)
39. Future as Motivation	(FM)
40. Inspiration as Legacy	(IL)
41. Interaction as After School Tutoring	(IAST)
42. Interaction with ParentLink	(SIPL)
43. Interaction with Classes	(SIC)
44. Activities help academics	(AHA)
45. Easier Route Behavior	(ERB)
46. The Phenomenon of Not Handed In	(NHI)
47. Homework and Tests	(HAT)
48. Friends with similar attitudes and Interests	(FAI)
49. Friends Helping Friends	(FHF)
50. Close friends and Family	(CFF)
51. Close friends, Connected Families	(CFC)
52. Friends as slackers and achievers	(FSA)
53. Friends as Acquaintances	(FAA)
54. Each other Houses	(EOA)
55. Friends Across Peer Group	(FPG)
56. Unsupportive Friends	(USF)
57. One of Us Program	(OUP)
58. Discussing School with Friends	(DSF)
59. Parent Involvement with Homework	(PIH)
60. Parent Discussion of Education	(PDE)

61. Parent Responses to Poor School Performance	(PRP)
62. Parent Discussions of School Problems	(PDP)
63. Parents as Good Communicators:	(PGC)
64. Parents Role in Course Decisions	(PRD)
65. Parent Relationship Behaviors	(PRB)
66. Parents with Common Interests	(PCI)
67. Parent Interventions, Non-School	(PINS)
68. Parent Attitude Toward Student Job	(PSJ)
69. Parents Contacting School	(PCS)
70. Parents Attend School Activities	(PSA)
71. Student Controls Parent Contact	(SPC)
72. Parents Attend General School Events	(PAE)
73. Parent Involvement Through Technology	(PIT)
74. Parent Attitude Toward School Contact	(PSC)
75. Parents Volunteer with School	(PVS)
76. Family Advice about Friends	(FAF)
77. Families Using Friends As Examples	(FFE)
78. Family Knowledge of Friends	(FKF)
79. Whose House to Hang?	(WHH)
80. Family Judgments of Friends	(FJF)
81. Interacting with Friends about School	(FFS)

APPENDIX N

CHART OF LARGER RESEARCH THEMES

	Desires	Attitudes	Behaviors	Motivation	Actions
School				Teachers as Motivators (TM) School Environment as Motivation (SEM) School Programs Provide Encouragement (SPE) Safe School as Encouragement (SSE) "One of Us" Program (OUP)	
Family	Family Expectations (FE) Parents with common interests (PCI) Parent Attitude Toward School (PAS) Parent Interest as encouragement (PIE)	Parent Attitude Toward Student Job (PSJ) Contact (PSC) Family Judgement of Friends (FJF) Parents as Good Communicators (PGC)	Parent Encourages Activity Participation (PEA) Parents Involved with Homework (PIH) Parent Responses to Poor School Performance (PRP) Parent Relationship Behaviors (PRB) Family Advice about Friends (FAF) Families Using Friends as examples (FFE) Family Knowledge of Friends (FKF)	Parents Use Grades as Motivator (PGM) Other Family Members as Motivators (OFM) Friends Parents as encouragement (FPI) Friends Parents Negative toward subject (FPN)	Parent Discussions of School Problems (PDP) Parent discussion of education (PDE) Parent Role in Course Decisions (PRD) Parent interventions, non-school (PINS) Parent Contacting School (PCS) Parents Attend School Activities (PAE) Parent Involvement through Technology (PIT) Parents Volunteer with school (PVS)
Student	Dreams and Goals (DG) Future as Motivation (FM) Self motivation as encouragement (SME)	Best Option Attitude (BOA) Activities Helps Academics (AHA) Satisfaction with Grades (SG)	Discussing School with Friends (DSF) Interacting with Friends parents about school (IFP/S) Interacting with Friends Parents to Solve Problems (IFP/P)	Legacy as Inspiration (IL) Driving Cars as Motivation (DCM)	Issues with Grades (IG) Interaction with After School Tutoring (IAST) Interaction with ParentLink (SIPL) Interaction with Classes (SIC) Interacting with peers in school activities (IP/SA)

			Knowing Friends Parents (KP) Effort and Grades (EG)		Student Jobs Alter the Interaction with School (SJ/IS) Outside Activities Mirror School Activities(OA/SA) Religious Activities (RA) Non-school outside activities (NSA) Involved with sports (IS) Involved with Clubs (IC)

APPENDIX O

PORTRAITURE FORM

Subject Number: _____

Demeanor. Describe the subjects demeanor in the interview. Is the subject forthcoming? Do they seem evasive? Are they outgoing? Shy? Quiet? Loud? How are they sitting? Do they seem nervous? Anxious? Are they watching the clock? What is their eye contact with the interviewers? Body language? Are they concerned about any of their answers being shared with anyone? Any other general questions regarding demeanor.
Dress and Appearance: Describe the subjects clothing? (style, etc.) Does the subject try to portray a particular attitude with their clothing? Does the subject try to portray a peer group affiliation with their clothing? Is the subject disheveled? Neat? Long hair? Color(s)? Tall? Short? Heavy? Thin? Glasses? Any outward disabilities (disability, brace, hearing aid, etc.) Does the subject appear to be comfortable with their appearance? (why or why not) What facial expressions should be noted? What other qualities about the subjects appearance or dress might be relevant to their portrait?
Ethnic/Cultural Considerations: If nonnative, how long in US? Why did the family come to the US? What differences with regard to school are difficult or unusual to the family? What rule does ethnicity and culture play in the subjects answers?

Responsiveness to Questions: Are there questions that garner unique reactions? Can you determine if the subject's answers match their body language or facial expressions. Generally speaking, are there any other descriptors for the subject that will benefit the author in creating a portrait of this subject?
Other Pertinent Observations: Please record anything that might be valuable in creating a portrait of this subject

APPENDIX P

STUDY SAMPLE OF INTERVIEWED STUDENTS

Subject Number	Grade	Race Code	Gender	Lunch Status
1 (Karen)	12	5	F	Regular
2	9	5	F	Regular
3 (Jason)	10	5	M	Regular
4 (Mark)	12	5	M	Regular
5	9	5	M	Regular
6	12	5	M	Regular
7	9	4	M	Regular
8	10	3	F	Free
9 (Tyra)	12	3	F	Free
10 (Paula)	11	3	F	Regular
11	11	2	M	Free
12	9	5	M	Regular
13 (Susan)	9	5	F	Regular
14 (James)	9	3	M	Regular
15	11	5	M	Regular
16 (Matt)	10	5	M	Regular
17 (Lisa)	11	5	F	Regular
18 (Marta)	10	4	F	Regular
19	9	5	M	Regular
20 (Dierdra)	9	3	F	Free

RESUME

STEVEN MARK CONSTANTINO

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Education

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Virginia Polytechic Institute and State University, 2002

Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS), Educational Administration, School District Administrator Certification, State University College at Cortland, 1988. Full Administrative Endorsements in New York State
Virginia Endorsements: Elementary, Middle, and High School Principal, Division Superintendent

MM, Music Education, K-12 Permanent Certification (NY); Crane School of Music, State University College at Potsdam, 1985

BM, Music Education, K-12 Certification, Crane School of Music, State University College at Potsdam, 1980

Administrative Experience

High School Principal. Stonewall Jackson High School, 8820 Rixlew Lane, Manassas, Virginia. 3/95 – present. Student population approximately 2400, grades 9-12

Responsible for all instructional, curricular, evaluative, and leadership aspects of the high school within the context of a *school-based managed* school system. Administrative team includes three assistant principals, three administrative assistants, a director of guidance, a director of student activities, and coordinator of International Baccalaureate program.

- Development and management of an annual operating budget of $11,000,000
- Trained in quality management and school-based management
- Developed a successful International Baccalaureate Program: 20th largest in the world
- Responsible for the development and implementation of triennial school plans
- Featured in Newsweek and Time Magazine

Assistant High School Principal. Gar-Field High School, Woodbridge, Virginia 8/92-3/95. Student population approximately 2500, 9-12

- Chairperson, core group for the restructured use of time
- Chairperson, technology advisory committee
- Coordinator, staff development
- Chairperson, public relations committee
- Coordinator, tech-prep program
- Coordinator, mentor program

Assistant High School Principal. Scotia-Glenville Senior High School, Scotia, New York. 8/91-8/92. Student population approximately 1000, 9-12

- Instructional leadership council
- Master scheduling
- Student discipline
- Advisor, pupil study team

District Director of Fine Arts. Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools, Burnt Hills, New York. 7/88-8/91. Student population approximately 3400, K-12

- Direct supervision of music and art teachers in five buildings, K-12
- Direct responsibility in teacher hiring and assessment through annual performance review and goal setting
- Responsible for scheduling and calendar management
- Responsible to the assistant superintendent for instruction in the administration, supervision, and evaluation of district fine arts program

Teaching Experience

Adjunct professor. George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. 7/97 – 12/99
- Instructor, curriculum development and evaluation
- Instructor, school/community relations

Director of Musical Activity. Jordan-Elbridge Central Schools, Jordan, New York. 3/86-6/88
- Department chairperson
- Director of senior concert band, jazz ensemble
- Director of state championship marching band

Instrumental Music Instructor. Horseheads Central Schools, Horseheads, New York. 9/85-3/86

Department Coordinator. New York Mills Union Free School District, New York Mills, New York. 9/80-6/83

Adjunct Professor. Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York. 9/79-6/83

Professional Memberships

- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- American Association of School Administrators

Awards and Related Experiences

- *Featured* in Time Magazine ("Pulling in the Parents" May 21, 2001)
- *Recipien*t, Washington Post *Distinguished Educational Leadership* Award, 2000
- *Recipient*, Prince William County *Principal of the Year*, 2000
- *Recipient, Principal of the Year*, 1997. Virginia State Counselors Association
- *Recipient, Supportive Principal of the Year*, 1997. PWC Regional Counseling Association
- *Presenter,* National Association of Secondary School Principals Conference, 1999, 2000, 2001
- *Presenter,* National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, 1999, 2000, 2001
- *Presenter,* Florida Educational Technology Association, 2001
- *Presenter,* National School Boards Association Conference, 2000
- *Presenter,* Virginia School Board Conference, 2000
- *Keynote Speaker,* National Community Education Association, National Conference, 2000
- *Keynote Speaker,* American Business Collaboration, Annual Meeting, 1999
- *Keynote Speaker,* Washington Metropolitan Work/Life Coalition, 1998
- *Keynote Speaker,* Parlant Technology, Inc. User Group Conference, 1998
- *Keynote Speaker,* Sprint Educational Services Meeting, 1999
- *Presenter,* National School Boards Association Technology and Learning Conference, 1996, 1999
- *Presenter*, American Business Collaboration, Parent Involvement Associates, 1996-present
- *Speaker and presenter* for various school districts in the United States regarding family and community involvement in schools. 1997-present
- *Founder,* Family Friendly Schools, 1999