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A STUDY COMPARING STUDENTS' ATTITUDES  
TOWARD SCHOOL IN 2000 AND IN 1979.

By

Rachel C. Hayes

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Science in Teaching Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
2000

Approved

MST advisor

Date Approved

June 27, 2000

## ABSTRACT

Rachel C. Hayes

A Study Comparing Students' Attitudes  
Toward School in 1979 and 2000

Dr. Randall Robinson  
Master of Science in Teaching  
Rowan University

The purpose of this study was to compare students' attitudes toward school in grade 4 and grade 10 in 1979 and 2000. The researcher analyzed the data gathered from the surveys of 47 students in grade 4 and 47 students in grade 10. The students surveyed attended a private elementary school (grade 4) and a public high school (grade 10), both located in southern New Jersey. The instrument used, the Student Sentiment Index, was analyzed by means of independent t-tests. The results of the 2000 implementation of the survey were then compared to the 1979 administration of the same survey. Results indicated students in grade 4 in 2000 have become significantly more positive toward school than students in grade 4 in 1979. Students in grade 10, however, were found not to have made any significant changes in attitude toward school. The researcher also noted that students in grade 4 and students in grade 10 in the year 2000 yielded significantly different survey results; students in grade 4 portrayed a more positive

attitude toward school than students in grade 10. On the other hand, in 1979, there were no significant differences between students in grade 4 and students in grade 10.

## MINI-ABSTRACT

Rachel C. Hayes

A Study Comparing Students' Attitudes  
Toward School in 1979 and 2000  
Dr. Randall Robinson  
Master of Science in Teaching  
Rowan University

This study compared students' attitudes in grades 4 and 10 in 1979 and 2000. The research concluded that students in grade 4 (2000) were significantly more positive than students in grade 4 (1979). There were no significant differences in grade 10. A significant difference was noted in grade 4 compared to 10 in 2000, but not in 1979.

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Administrators of the schools surveyed:

Sister Justina, Principal

Dr. Hicks, Superintendent

Mr. Charles Fleischman, Principal

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Chapter I  
SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

"Concern is continuously being voiced about the increasing alienation of pupils from their schools and a search is being made for the sorts of changes to the education system which will make schools more relevant and satisfying to the needs of the current generation of school children." Thompson (1975).

The above passage, written over twenty-five years ago, voiced a concern over the need for change in our public school system. Years later, in 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education declared the United States a nation at risk. Almost two decades later, the risk posed by inadequate education has changed. Our nation today does not face imminent danger of economic decline or technological inferiority. Much about America is flourishing, at least for a lot of people today. Yet the state of our children's education is still very far from what it ought to be. Unfortunately, the recent economic boom has made many Americans indifferent to poor educational achievement. Is it premature to think we are no longer at risk? Aside from academic achievement, are students enjoying school? Students' attitudes toward school, after all, have been linked to their achievement (Neale, 1970).

The above concerns led the researcher to discover a study on students' attitudes toward school conducted by Keith MacKenzie in 1979. MacKenzie measured students' attitudes toward school in grades 4, 6, 8, and 10. MacKenzie found students' attitudes

toward school to become progressively worse as students progressed through the grades. Therefore, the researcher chose to conduct a similar study by measuring students' attitudes in grades 4 and 10 in the year 2000. This study compared students' attitudes toward school in grades 4 and 10 in the year 2000 to the attitudes of students in grades 4 and 10 in 1979.

#### Purpose of the Study

The central purpose of this study is to compare children's attitudes in grades 4 and 10 in 1979 and 2000. In addition, this study will also seek to ascertain if a significant difference in attitude between pupils in grades 4 and 10 exists in 1979 and/or 2000.

#### Statement of the Problem

Are students' attitudes toward school in the year 2000 different or similar to students' attitudes toward school in 1979? Is there a significant difference in attitude toward school between students in grade 4 and students in grade 10?

#### Statement of the Hypothesis

Children's attitudes are constantly under scrutiny from parents, teachers, and society. Each generation claims that these attitudes are growing consistently worse over time. However, the researcher believes that attitudes have remained consistent over time. The researcher feels that there will be a high correlation between the results of the 1979 administration of the Student Sentiment Index and the 2000 administration of the same. It is believed that the students in grades 4 and 10 will yield similar results in both administrations of the Student Sentiment Index. It is believed that attitudes will reflect

the most positive outcomes in grade 4 and most negative in grade 10. In addition, the researcher believes that a significant difference in attitude exists between students in grade 4 and students in grade 10 in both 1979 and 2000.

### Limitations of the Study

As true for most research, this study had certain limitations. For instance, ideally this study would have been conducted in the same school district as studied in 1979. However, due to demographics, the researcher was unable to return to the same school district. The study was also limited to 2 schools within only one school district. The elementary school students in grade 4 were surveyed, and the high school students in grade 10 were surveyed. Therefore, the results are limited to the schools surveyed. Consequently, this hindered the ability to generalize the results.

Another limitation of this study was the measurement of student attitude. The task of isolating a single attitude, such as one's attitude toward school, is difficult. There are many variables that contribute to a child's attitude toward school. In addition, the instrument used also had certain limitations. The questions in the Student Sentiment Index focus primarily on a student's attitude toward their teachers. Therefore, if a child dislikes their teacher, they may answer these questions negatively. Consequently, the student's survey results may be interpreted as the child having a negative attitude toward school.

Although these limitations clearly confine the study to two area school districts, the results are interesting and open avenues to further research on the topic.

## Definition of Terms

To better understand the scope and purpose of this study, it is important that one be familiar with the following terms, which will be used throughout:

- A. Student Attitude – How students feel about their school and their personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction in being there.
- B. Dropout – Any person who has not graduated and who is not currently enrolled in regular school.
- C. Southern New Jersey School District (1979) - two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.
- D- Southern New Jersey School District (2000)– One elementary school, one middle school, and one high school.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Children between the ages of five and eighteen attend school 180 days per year. During these thirteen years, one-half of a child's life is spent in school. However, at age 16, a child can legally choose to drop out of school. It is this choice that worries parents, educators, and society. What can we do to keep children in school? Better yet, what can we do to ensure school satisfaction? In order to discover how to improve school satisfaction, we must uncover the areas of dissatisfaction. According to Beelick (1973), an increase in school satisfaction will probably increase school performance. A study conducted by Wright (1962), uncovered an area of dissatisfaction to be secondary school teachers and their lack in human qualities of warmth, kindness, and happiness. Other areas of dissatisfaction, discovered by Wright, were school policy and the administration and interpersonal relationship with peers.

According to Barbara Thompson (1975), students' attitudes toward school and their teachers deteriorate as the pupils progress through their academic years. In an Education Manifesto, written by Allen, et al. (1988), the authors state, "Academically, we fall off a cliff somewhere in the middle and upper grades. Internationally, U.S. youngsters hold their own at the elementary level, but falter in the middle years and drop far behind in high school."

Students' attitudes have been correlated with academic achievement (Neale, 1970). Therefore, this change in academic achievement between the elementary level and the high school level should draw concern over whether or not students' attitudes also change between those grade levels. A study conducted by Wood (1973) noted that sixth graders entering a middle school displayed a higher incidence of negative attitudes toward school.

#### Literature Reviewed Prior to 1978

The literature search revealed several articles relating students' attitudes to subject matter, achievement, relationships with peers and educators, and absenteeism. According to Fishbein (1967), attitude is defined as an emotional response to a specific stimulus.

Much of the research discovered prior to 1978 revealed that the majority of the studies conducted on students' attitudes toward school related attitude to achievement. Jackson (1968), states that common sense dictates a high positive correlation between attitude and achievement. However, his studies conducted in 1967 with H. M. Lahaderne found that "time and again the statistical manipulation of the data reveal the disquieting fact of no significant relationship." After reviewing several other similar studies, it seemed imminent that most researchers agreed with Jackson and Lahaderne's conclusions, "correlation between students' satisfaction scores and scholastic scores were negligible." Therefore, Jackson and Lahaderne's study on whether or not a general attitude toward school correlates with achievement revealed that no such correlation exists.

Although a correlation between general attitude toward school and achievement has been difficult to prove, more specific research measuring the relationship between

attitudes toward school subjects and school achievement yielded results indicating a positive correlation. For example, a study conducted by Neale (1970), noted that attitudes toward specific subjects were in fact related to achievement in those subjects. Jackson (1968) stated, "many tests show large percentages 'liking school' but show opposite reactions when questioned in specific topic areas."

When reviewing studies conducted on specific subjects, reading seemed to be the subject that was analyzed most in comparison to all other subject areas. A study conducted by Combs (1977) was discovered that stated, "It appears from this study that reading achievement and attitude toward reading are correlated significantly."

Although studies correlating students' attitudes and their relationship to academic achievement vary greatly, it is still important to analyze students' attitudes toward school. As stated earlier, students spend more time in the classroom than in most other situations. As a result, students are spending most of their time with their teachers. A study conducted by Wright (1962) uncovered that secondary teachers were viewed as a positive influence, but lacked human qualities such as happiness, warmth, and kindness. In a study of teacher effectiveness in student centered and teacher centered situations, conducted by Coats, et al. (1972), it was concluded that student attitude is more related to the teacher's charisma or popularity than the teaching method used. Paula Key (1978) also studied teaching methods and their effect on attitude and achievement. Key placed high school juniors in an innovative, learner-centered class and in a traditional, teacher-centered class. Key concluded that students in the innovative group scored significantly higher in achievement and possessed an overall positive attitude toward their situation.



This correlation of students' views of their teachers relating toward their overall attitudes toward school leads to the question: Do the attitudes teachers portray toward their subject area affect their students' attitudes toward the subject matter? A study on science teachers, conducted by Courtney (1978), revealed that a teacher with a positive attitude toward science usually has a majority of students with a positive attitude. However, Courtney uncovered that the opposite was not necessarily true. Teachers who possess a negative attitude did not necessarily elicit a negative attitude in their students.

Another topic reviewed was whether or not truancy correlates with attitude toward school. In a 1978 study, Bardley stated, "Surprisingly there is no significant difference between truants and non-truants in attitude toward school. Although there is a big difference in self-concept."

This search of the literature prior to 1978 revealed that teachers possess the greatest influence on students' attitudes toward school. Students with positive attitudes rate fair treatment by teachers as highly desirable (Hand, 1958). Hence, the teacher is the chief influence on the attitudes of the students they teach. Iannone (1971) puts the blame on teacher colleges, stating that teachers should be trained to become more of a human being, to be aware of the students' needs. He goes on to emphasize that new skills are not needed, but realness, empathy, warmth, and understanding should be stressed.

Not only do researchers feel that teachers are a great influence on students' attitudes but, as mentioned above, they also feel that subject matter has a great impact on attitude. Hand (1958), reveals that students want school work to be valuable to "real" life. As teachers, we often hear, "Why do I need to know this?" from our students. Hand

also relates students' participation in extracurricular activities to attitude. He states that the dissatisfied are not in extracurricular activities.

#### Literature Reviewed Post 1978

The review of the literature written after 1978 yielded several findings, especially those focusing on concerns about children's changing attitudes toward school. One study conducted by Moore (1984), measured student behavior and achievement in grades K-8 as compared to student behavior and achievement in junior high school. Included in this study was a measurement of student attitude in which the results indicated that the K-8 students reflected a more positive attitude toward school than the junior high students.

In addition to studies measuring and comparing student attitude, studies relating attitude to potential future drop out were also discovered. Poor attitudes toward school have been found to contribute to our nation's alarming dropout rate. Each year approximately 700,000 students drop out of school and another 300,000 become chronic truants (Institute for Educational Leadership, 1986). According to Ekstrom, et al. (1986), reasons for dropping out include a true dislike for school and poor grades and attitude has long been recognized as a precursor to behavior (Kelman, 1974; Klausmeier and Ripple, 1971).

Ruby and Law (1983) stated that a negative attitude toward teachers combined with a negative attitude toward appropriate school behavior encourages the overt negative behavior associated with dropout. Therefore, negative attitudes toward school alarms educators. If negative attitudes are a predictor of our children's future, then it becomes

important to attempt to discover the reasons behind the negativity in an effort to create a positive future for our youth.

In addition to the study by Ruby and Law, several other factors contributing to academic failure and consequential attitude decline toward school were discovered. The National Commission on Children reports:

“Poverty robs children of their childhood...But a child need not be economically poor to be impoverished in America today. A poverty of spirit touches every child, at whatever income level, who does not receive the time, attention and guidance he or she needs and wants from parents or other caring adults. Many of these children are lonely, isolated and insecure. They are often vulnerable to a subculture of alienation, recklessness, and damaging, antisocial behavior. A poverty of hope afflicts every child who feels unwanted and unvalued, whose customary experiences are of rejection and failure. For these children, failure is a vicious cycle that begins early and convinces them that competence and achievement are beyond their reach. A poverty of opportunity affects every child whose education is inadequate to meet the growing demands of a changing work place and whose exposure to cultural enrichment and constructive involvement in his or her community is limited. For all these children, rich and poor alike, the future holds little promise.”

Ruby and Law (1983) believe students’ attitudes toward teachers and school behavior is born in the home. “Verbal and non-verbal attitudes expressed by parents have a great influence upon the child’s own perceptions and attitudes towards obtaining an education” (Dorrell, 1993). Therefore, a child who is exposed to positive adult role models will be more likely to possess a positive attitude toward school. To the contrary, a child who is not supported academically and is surrounded by negativity will be more likely to have a negative self-image and a negative attitude toward school.

Gurainick & Bennett (1987) noted another factor that contributes toward poor attitude and academic failure. Gurainick & Bennett stated that inadequate preschool opportunities pose potential future hazards. Children who participate in quality preschool programs tend to be more motivated to learn and therefore they complete high school in

larger percentages, consequently experiencing greater success. High school completion is important because, according to research conducted by Fine (1985), dropouts are more likely "...to be in prison, to have multiple pregnancies and children, to be on welfare, unemployed, or in dead end jobs than high school graduates."

A study conducted by Smith (1986) examined school related factors influencing a child's attitude toward school and their decision to drop out. The study revealed that students with negative attitudes toward school tend to drop out due to problems with academic success and poor relationships with peers and teachers. Students with neutral attitudes toward school drop out generally due to boredom and difficulty keeping up with schoolwork, whereas those with positive attitudes toward school were least likely to drop out. This study concluded that school related factors such as attitude toward academics, teacher relationships, and peer relationships affect a pupil's decision to drop out. Upon further review, an article written by Lunenburg and Schmidt (1988), supporting these findings, states that, "Students who are positive in their evaluation of life in school may be more likely to experience feelings of general well being." "They may also be more likely to behave in socially acceptable ways..."

In addition to studies conducted on American students, other studies have been done comparing American student's attitudes toward school to student's attitudes in other countries. One study discovered that American student's attitudes toward school are more positive than the attitudes of Korean students (Moon, 1993). Moon also found that American females were more positive than American males, although the opposite was found to be true among Korean students.

The success of today's youth will have a direct impact on the next generation.

An article, published in *Education Week* (1986), discusses the impact today's youth has on our economic future.

In 1983, we passed a demographic watershed. For the first time in our history, the number of Americans over age 65 surpassed the number of American teenagers... Today, about 1 out of 10 Americans is 65 or older; by 2030, 1 out of 5 Americans will be over 65.

As one can see, a child's attitude toward school affects many things. A negative attitude can lead to an increased risk of dropout and failure. If a child drops out of school they will probably be less likely to find gainful employment. Consequently, a lack of employed citizens affects our economy. For example, research indicates we will not have a sufficient number of young adults to support our social security system for the nation's elderly in years to come. Our society cannot afford a large youth population with poor attitudes and increasing dropout rates. Society relies on our youth to become successful, effective, contributing citizens. In 1950, 17 workers contributed toward one Social Security pension. Today, 3.4 workers contribute toward one person's pension. Demographers predict that soon after the turn of the century, the number of workers supporting one retiree will be 1.5 (Lefstein, 1986).

Our children's attitudes toward school are very important as these attitudes lead to success or failure. It is important that we discover whether or not our children's attitudes have improved over the last twenty-one years, or if they have remained the same. Once we discover this, we can begin to address our nation's future.

## Chapter III

### PROCEDURE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

This study was a descriptive study comparing data gathered from a study conducted by MacKenzie in 1979 with data gathered in the year 2000. No treatment of the subjects was involved. The goal of the researcher was to compare the results of the study conducted by MacKenzie in 1979 with the results ascertained by using the same instrument in 2000. Due to MacKenzie's findings, which indicated that students in grade 4 were more positive toward school than students in grade 10, the researcher designed the study to measure students' attitudes toward school in those two grade levels for comparison.

#### Population and Sample

Prior to beginning the study, the researcher secured permission from the southern New Jersey schools where the surveys were to be implemented. The students in grade 4 were taken from one private elementary school. The school had four sections of students in grade 4 totaling approximately seventy-five students. Due to the anonymous and voluntary design of the study, the researcher was unable to ascertain any personal information about the subjects (i.e. gender, race, socioeconomic status, etc.). The surveys

were delivered to the principal who then delivered the surveys to each teacher in grade 4 to be implemented on a voluntary basis.

The students in grade 10 were gathered from one public high school. Approximately 100 surveys were sent to the area high school. Again, participation was voluntary and anonymous. Therefore, no personal information about the subjects was made available.

### Research Design and Procedure Used

This study was designed based on a descriptive study conducted by Keith MacKenzie in 1979. The study provided descriptive statistics on students' attitudes toward school. No treatment was implemented to the subjects.

The first step in the procedure was to secure permission for the study from the chosen districts. This was initiated through telephone calls to the school districts in an effort to gather basic information regarding whom to contact for permission, etc. Letters describing the study in more detail (see appendix A and B), as per the districts' request, then followed up the phone calls.

Once permission for the study was secured, the researcher sent a brief memo with the surveys attached to the principal of each school. The principal then delivered the memo and surveys to each teacher in grades 4 and 10. The memo described the study and requested each teacher's participation. The surveys were administered at each teacher's convenience.

Upon completion of the survey, the data was collected and analyzed. The researcher analyzed the data, calculating each student's response to each question based

on a Likert scale. These responses were tabulated and percentages were calculated. Mean scores for elementary and secondary students were computed for both the 1979 and 2000 administration of the survey. Results were compared for significant differences by use of an independent t- test.

### Description of the Instrument

The instrument used in the study was called the Student Sentiment Index. This instrument was chosen in order to compare its 1979 results to its 2000 results. This instrument was discovered in Keith MacKenzie's thesis conducted in 1979. MacKenzie stated in his thesis that the instrument was developed for the Fairfield-Suisson School District in California. However, MacKenzie's reference of this instrument was unclear. He mentioned in the literature review section of his thesis (p. 8) that he located the instrument in the "Education Information Center South... in their cumulative file." Unfortunately, no documentation followed as to what year, what location, etc. The researcher made several attempts to contact the Fairfield-Suisson School District via email in an effort to gather further information. However, no further information was made available. Therefore, the instrument could not be located and validity and reliability could not be tested. However, because this study was designed to compare the 1979 results of the Student Sentiment Index to the 2000 results of the same, the use of this instrument was imperative.

The Student Sentiment Index consists of two parts: 1) a set of 20 questions for elementary students (see appendix C) and 2) a set of 25 questions for secondary students



(see appendix D). Part one was administered to the students in the grade 4. Part two was administered to the students in the grade 10.

### Statistical Treatment

The data from the surveys was collected and analyzed. The researcher analyzed the data calculating each student's response to each question. The responses were weighted based on a Likert scale as follows: a response of "agree" was worth 3 points, "unsure" was worth 2 points, and "disagree" was valued at one point. The responses were tabulated and recorded. Both raw scores and percentages were calculated. Mean scores, using the above Likert scale, were computed for both the 1979 and 2000 (grades four and ten) administration of the survey. The researcher compared the following by means of independent t-tests: mean scores of grade 4, 1979 compared to mean scores of grade 4, 2000; mean scores of grade 10, 1979 compared to mean scores of grade 10, 2000; mean scores of grade 4 as compared to mean scores of grade 10, 1979; mean scores of grade 4 as compared to mean scores of grade 10, 2000. In order to compare the grade 4 surveys to the grade 10 surveys, the researcher conducted an independent t-test on the similar questions only. The only difference in the questions was the more mature wording on the grade 10 surveys. Once all t-tests were conducted, the resulting t-values were then analyzed at the  $p = .05$  confidence level to determine whether or not any significant difference existed.

## Chapter IV

### ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

#### Introduction

It appears from the data that as students progress through the academic years their attitude toward school becomes less and less positive. Students in grade 4 were more positive toward school than students in grade 10 in the year 2000. Students in grade 4 in the year 2000 were significantly more positive toward school than students in grade 4 in 1979. To the contrary, students in grade 10 in 1979 and 2000 were not significantly different. In addition, the data collected indicated that a significant difference exists between students' attitudes in grade 4 and students in grade 10 in the year 2000, but not in 1979.

#### Tabulation of Raw Scores - Grade 4

The classroom teachers administered the Student Sentiment Index to the students in grade 4. The researcher sent approximately seventy-five surveys to the elementary school of which forty-seven were returned completed. The data in appendix E show the specific questions in the Elementary Student Sentiment Index and the number of students who responded "agree", "disagree", or "unsure" to each question. The data in appendix F show the above responses in percentages. It is interesting to note that in 1979 MacKenzie stated that the mean score for "unsure" answers reported by students in grade 4 was 23%.

However, the students in grade 4 in the year 2000 responded "unsure" an average of only 7% of the time. Perhaps, students in the year 2000 are more confident and able to take an affirmative stand in response to the questions.

Most of the children in grade 4 in the year 2000 responded positively to the questions. It was interesting to note that the mean score for positive responses was above 80% for the following questions: 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16. On the other hand, when asked about whether or not the students felt they could talk to their principal and whether they felt the principal was interested in them, the mean scores were only 43% and 62% respectively. Many students, 36% and 30% respectively, were "unsure" how to respond to those two questions.

The data indicated that 98% of the students in grade 4 cared how well they did on their school work, 92% felt their teachers were friendly, 94% felt their teacher tried to make school interesting, and 98% felt their teachers tried to help them understand their school work. These above questions resulted in positive mean scores regarding students' feelings toward their teachers. It is evident that the students in grade 4 highly respect their teachers.

The results regarding the 1979 implementation of the Student Sentiment Index (see appendix G and H) reported for grade 4 yielded overall more positive results than those results of the students in grade 10. Students in grade 4 in 1979 also indicated being more than 50% positive in regards to the following questions: caring about their school work (86%), thinking their teachers were friendly (72%), and feeling their teachers tried to help them understand their school work (72%). However, it is evident that the students in grade 4 in the year 2000 indicated a higher positive mean result to the above questions.

It is important to note, however, that the students in grade 4 in 1979 yielded a higher "unsure" mean score. Therefore, they did not necessarily respond negatively, but they may have been "unsure" of how to answer many of the questions. The data comparing mean scores of the students in grade 4 in 1979 and the year 2000 is available for review in appendix M.

table 1

Independent t-test for Grade 4, 1979 compared to 2000

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Values</u>
No. of Scores in 1979	20
Sum of Scores in 1979	47.5100
Mean of 1979	2.38
Sum of Squared Scores in 1979	113.99
SS of 1979	1.13
No. of Scores in 2000	20
Sum of Scores in 2000	53.1300
Mean of 2000	2.66
Sum of Squared Scores in 2000	142.19
SS of 2000	1.05
t-Value	-3.71
Degrees of freedom	38

Looking at the above differences between the 1979 and the 2000 administration of the Student Sentiment Index (grade 4), the researcher conducted an independent t-test to determine whether a significant difference truly existed between the two groups. The t-test was conducted and the t-value was determined to be equal to -3.71. It is concluded

$p < .05$ . Therefore, the scores are significantly different. Students in grade 4 in the year 2000 are significantly more positive than students in grade 4 in 1979.

#### Tabulation of Raw Scores - Grade 10

The students in grade 10 were administered the Student Sentiment Index by their homeroom teachers. Approximately 100 surveys were sent to the area high school. Of the 100 surveys sent, 47 were returned. The responses to the grade 10 administration of the survey clearly indicated a less positive overall feeling toward school as compared to the grade 4 administration of the same. The responses to the 2000, grade 10, Student Sentiment Index can be found in appendix I and the responses to the 1979, grade 10, Student Sentiment Index can be found in appendix J for comparison.

Students in grade 10 indicated an above 80% positive mean response to none of the questions; 11 questions were responded to with a mean score of above 80% in grade 4. However, it is important to note the increase in the mean score of "unsure" responses. Students in grade 10 responded "unsure" at a rate of 16%. In grade 4 the "unsure" response rate was only 7%. When the 2000 administration of the Student Sentiment Index for grade 10 was compared with the 1979 administration of the same, the data yielded similar results (see appendix K and L). In 1979, only one question, number 16, was answered more than 80% positively. In the year 2000 the following questions were responded to positively less than 50% of the time: questions 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 19, 34, 18, 20, and 24. In 1979, the following questions were responded to positively less than 50% of the time: questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25. As one can see, during both implementations of the survey to students in grade 10, many questions were

responded to with either "disagree" or "unsure". The results appear to be highly correlated.

table 2

Independent t-test for Grade 10, 1979 compared to 2000

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Values</u>
No. of Scores in 1979	25
Sum of Scores in 1979	53.68
Mean of 1979	2.15
Sum of Squared Scores in 1979	117.86
SS of 1979	2.59
No. of Scores in 2000	25
Sum of Scores in 2000	53.71
Mean of 2000	2.15
Sum of Squared Scores in 2000	117.99
SS of 2000	2.60
t-Value	-0.01
Degrees of freedom	48

The researcher conducted an independent t-test on the above results, comparing the students in grade 10 in the year 2000 to the students in grade 10 in 1979. The results indicated a t-value of -0.01, indicating  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the results were not significantly different. The results of the t-test indicate, as stated above, that students in grade 10 in the year 2000 and students in grade 10 in 1979 have similar feelings toward

school. Unlike the progress made in grade 4 over the past twenty-one years, no progress has been made in regards to improving students' attitudes toward school in grade 10.

Tabulation of Raw Scores Grade 4 Compared to Grade 10 - 2000

table 3

Independent t-test for Grade 4 Compared to Grade 10, 2000

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Values</u>
No. of Scores in 1979	10
Sum of Scores in 1979	25.27
Mean of 1979	2.53
Sum of Squared Scores in 1979	64.44
SS of 1979	0.58
No. of Scores in 2000	10
Sum of Scores in 2000	21.67
Mean of 2000	2.17
Sum of Squared Scores in 2000	47.82
SS of 2000	0.86
t-Value	2.84
Degrees of freedom	18

The surveys for grade 4 and grade 10 were different. Consequently, the researcher compared only the similar items in order to run a comparative t-test. The only difference between the similar questions was in the wording as the grade 10 survey was worded more maturely. The following questions, listed as grade 4 question followed by grade 10 question, were found to be similar and were compared in an independent t-test:

1 and 2; 2 and 19; 8 and 18; 12 and 10; 13 and 4; 14 and 3; 16 and 13; 18 and 24; 19 and 17; 20 and 25. The results of the t-test indicated a t-value of 2.84, or  $p < .05$ . This shows a significant difference between student's attitudes in grade 4 and student's attitudes in grade 10 in the year 2000. Students in grade 4 were significantly more positive than students in grade 10.

Tabulation of Raw Scores Grade 4 Compared to Grade 10 - 1979

table 4

Independent t-test for Grade 4 Compared to Grade 10, 1979

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Values</u>
No. of Scores in 1979	10
Sum of Scores in 1979	22.53
Mean of 1979	2.25
Sum of Squared Scores in 1979	51.14
SS of 1979	0.38
No. of Scores in 2000	10
Sum of Scores in 2000	21.06
Mean of 2000	2.11
Sum of Squared Scores in 2000	45.06
SS of 2000	0.71
t-Value	1.34
Degrees of freedom	18

As true in the 2000 implementation of the grade 4 and grade 10 surveys, the surveys for grade 4 and grade 10 in 1979 were different. Consequently, the researcher



also compared only the similar items in order to run a comparative t-test. The only difference between the similar questions was in the wording as the grade 10 survey was worded more maturely. The following questions, listed as grade 4 question followed by grade 10 question, were found to be similar and were compared in an independent t-test: 1 and 2; 2 and 19; 8 and 18; 12 and 10; 13 and 4; 14 and 3; 16 and 13; 18 and 24; 19 and 17; 20 and 25. The results of the t-test showed  $p > .05$ , indicating no significant difference between students' attitudes in grade 4 and grade 10 in 1979.

#### Analysis Related to Particular Purpose of Hypothesis

The research supported the hypothesis by indicating that students in grade 4, when compared to students in grade 10, reflect a more positive attitude toward school. The hypothesis did not support the assumption that the 1979 implementation of the survey and the year 2000 implementation of the survey would yield similar findings when comparing grades 4 and 10. To the contrary, the difference between students' attitudes in grade 4 and 10 was significantly different in the year 2000, but there was no significant difference between student's attitudes in grade 4 and 10 in 1979.

The statistical evidence supported the researcher's hypothesis that no significant difference would be evident when comparing students' attitudes in grade 10 in 1979 and the year 2000 (see appendix M). However, when comparing students' attitudes in grade 4 in 1979 and students' attitudes in grade 4 in the year 2000 (see appendix N), the hypothesis was not supported. Students in grade 4 in the year 2000 yielded more positive results than their predecessors.

## Chapter V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The results of the research concur with MacKenzie's findings in 1979 that students in grade 4 are more positive toward school than students in grade 10. The statistical analysis conducted on both the 1979 and 2000 administrations of the Student Sentiment Index reported that students in grade 4 in the year 2000 are more positive toward school than students in the same grade in 1979. On the other hand, students in grade 10 in the year 2000 and 1979 showed no significant difference in attitude. When a t-test was conducted to compare students in grade 4 and 10 in 1979 and 2000, the results indicated a significant difference in the year 2000, but not in 1979.

#### Summary of the Problem

A study conducted by Keith MacKenzie reported that students' attitudes toward school became progressively less and less positive as children progressed through grades 4 through 10. Although the following statement did not indicate a significant difference, MacKenzie reported students in grade 4 to be overall, more positive toward school than students in grade 10. The researcher designed this study to discover if students' attitudes toward school in the year 2000 were different or similar to students' attitudes toward

school in 1979. The research also sought to discover if a significant difference in attitude existed between students in grade 4 and students in grade 10 in either 1979 and/or 2000.

### Summary of the Hypothesis

The researcher hypothesized that students in the year 2000 would possess similar attitudes toward school as reflected by the students in 1979. The researcher believed that there would be no significant difference between students' attitudes toward school in 1979 and 2000 in grade 4. The researcher also believed that no significant difference would be found among students in grade 10 in 1979 and 2000. Finally, the researcher believed that there would be a significant difference between students' attitudes in grade 4 and grade 10 in both 1979 and 2000.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions were based on the results of the independent t-tests conducted on the mean scores (see appendix O-R) of the Student Sentiment Index. The results indicated that we have made some progress in students' attitudes toward school among students in grade 4. Students in grade 4 in the year 2000 reported a significantly different attitude (more positive) than students in grade 4 in 1979. However, the research indicated that there was no significant difference in attitude among the students in grade 10 as surveyed in the years 2000 and 1979. The research also indicated a significant difference in attitude between grades 4 and 10 in the year 2000, but no significant difference existed between students' attitudes in grades 4 and 10 in 1979.

## Recommendations

The research indicated a need for improvement in students' attitudes in grade 10. When students' attitudes in grade 10 were compared to students' attitudes in grade 4, the differences were disheartening. MacKenzie reported this progressive change in attitude over twenty-one years ago. However, in 1979 the differences were not significant. Unfortunately, in the year 2000 the differences in students' attitudes in grade 4 and students' attitudes in grade 10 were significant. It was fortunate, on the other hand, to see an improvement in attitude among the students in grade 4 in the year 2000 as compared to students in grade 4 in 1979. Because there was a significant difference in attitude among students in grade 4 in 1979 and students in grade 4 in 2000, but there was no significant difference in grade 10 in 1979 compared to 2000, this indicated that the significant difference between grade 4 and 10 in the year 2000 appears because students in grade 4 have become more positive, while students in grade 10 have remained the same. As educators, it should concern us that this significant difference appeared, showing us that our students in grade 10 were not as positive toward school as our students in grade 4. This study showed that there is an implication for further research on this topic.

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Appendix A  
Letter to Elementary School for Permission to Survey Students in Grade 4



830 Woodchuck Drive  
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054  
March 3, 2000

Dear Sister Justina,

I am currently a graduate student enrolled in the Masters of Science in Teaching program at Rowan University. I recently spoke with your secretary in regards to securing permission to survey the students in the fourth grade at your school for my thesis. Your secretary suggested I contact you and explain my intentions for the study.

I have decided to conduct my thesis on the change in children's attitudes between fourth and tenth grade. During my initial research, I discovered a study conducted in 1979 measuring the same change in attitude at the above grade levels. The study reported that students in the fourth grade had the most positive attitude toward school. On the other hand, students in the tenth grade had the least positive attitude toward school.

I would like to replicate this study by measuring students' attitudes in the fourth grade in your school. My intention is to discover if there has been a change in attitude over the past twenty years. The students surveyed will remain anonymous and the results will only be used for statistical purposes in my thesis. I plan to analyze the results of the survey and compare them to the results gathered in 1979. The instrument I would like to use, the Student Sentiment Index, is attached for your approval.

I would appreciate your consideration for this study. If you have any further questions don't hesitate to contact me at (856) 787-1668. I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hayes

Enclosure

Appendix B  
Letter to High School for Permission to Survey Students in Grade 10

830 Woodchuck  
Drive  
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054  
March 3, 2000

Dear Dr. Hicks,

I am currently a graduate student enrolled in the Masters of Science in Teaching program at Rowan University. I recently spoke with your secretary in regards to securing permission to survey the students in the tenth grade in your district for my thesis. Your secretary suggested I contact you and explain my intentions for the study.

I have decided to conduct my thesis on the change in children's attitudes between fourth and tenth grade. During my initial research, I discovered a study conducted in 1979 measuring the same change in attitude at the above grade levels. The study reported that students in the fourth grade had the most positive attitude toward school. On the other hand, students in the tenth grade had the least positive attitude toward school.

I would like to replicate this study by measuring students' attitudes in the tenth grade in your school. My intention is to discover if there has been a change in attitude over the past twenty years. The students surveyed will remain anonymous and the results will only be used for statistical purposes in my thesis. I plan to analyze the results of the survey and compare them to the results gathered in 1979. The instrument I would like to use, the Student Sentiment Index, is attached for your approval.

I would appreciate your consideration for this study. If you have any further questions don't hesitate to contact me at (856) 787-1668. I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hayes

cc: Mr. Fleischman  
Enclosure

Appendix C  
Elementary Student Sentiment Index

## STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX

### Grade Four

Read and think about each question. Circle 1 if your answer is yes, number 2 if your answer is no, or number 3 if you are not sure.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Do you look forward to going to school?	1	2	3
2. When you do something wrong at school, do you think you are treated fairly?	1	2	3
3. Do you think that the teachers at your school are friendly?	1	2	3
4. Are you afraid to tell the teachers at school when you don't understand something?	1	2	3
5. Do you feel good when you are at school?	1	2	3
6. When you have a problem on the playground at recess, do you feel you can find someone to help you?	1	2	3
7. Do you feel the reason you come to school is to learn?	1	2	3
8. If you had a problem outside of school, do you feel you could go to the adults at school for help?	1	2	3
9. Do you care how well you do your school work?	1	2	3
10. Do you feel you learn something everyday?	1	2	3
11. Does the teacher try to tell you when he/she is pleased with your work?	1	2	3
12. In your class, does the teacher allow you to make many decisions together?	1	2	3
13. Do you feel your teacher listens to what you have to say?	1	2	3
14. Do you feel your teacher tries to make school interesting for you?	1	2	3

STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX

PAGE 2

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
15. Do you feel your teacher tries hard to help you understand your school work?	1	2	3
16. Do you feel your teacher treats you fairly?	1	2	3
17. Do you feel your teacher is understanding when things go wrong?	1	2	3
18. Do you feel you can talk to your principal if you want to?	1	2	3
19. Do you feel the principal is interested in you?	1	2	3
20. Do you enjoy using the school library?	1	2	3

Appendix D  
Secondary Student Sentiment Index

## SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX

Grade Ten

Read and think carefully about each statement. Circle 1 if you agree, 2 if you disagree, or circle 3 if you are not sure.

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Most of my teachers will try to explain why I deserve the grades I earn on my assignments.	1	2	3
2. I look forward to coming to school.	1	2	3
3. Most of my teachers try to make their subjects interesting.	1	2	3
4. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.	1	2	3
5. Most of my teachers give assignments that are meaningful.	1	2	3
6. Most of my teachers seem personally concerned about me.	1	2	3
7. Cutting school whenever I can doesn't really bother me.	1	2	3
8. I am very interested in extra-curricular activities in school.	1	2	3
9. There are important subjects not taught in school now which I would be interested taking if they were offered.	1	2	3
10. Students have a voice in determining how the schools' run.	1	2	3
11. Counselors are interested in me as an individual.	1	2	3
12. Most of my teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.	1	2	3
13. I think most of my teachers are fair to me.	1	2	3
14. I generally try to get involved in school activities.	1	2	3
15. I enjoy talking to many of my teachers out of school.	1	2	3



SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
PAGE 2

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
16. Most of my teachers usually come prepared to teach my class.	1	2	3
17. I feel the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors in my school are interested in students.	1	2	3
18. Many of my teachers could be trusted if I discussed a personal problem with them.	1	2	3
19. Many of my teachers are still fair with me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.	1	2	3
20. I often see an administrator or counselor around school or at school activities.	1	2	3
21. Most of my teachers like working with young people.	1	2	3
22. Most of my teachers care about students regardless of the student's ability.	1	2	3
23. Some of the teachers at my school cannot control their classes.	1	2	3
24. I feel comfortable talking to the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors at our school.	1	2	3
25. I enjoy using the school library.	1	2	3

Appendix E  
Student Sentiment Index - Tabulation of Raw Scores  
Grade Four  
2000

STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
2000  
Grade Four

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Do you look forward to going to school?	33	4	10
2. When you do something wrong at school, do you think you are treated fairly?	28	7	12
3. Do you think the teachers at your school are friendly?	43	1	2
4. Are you afraid to tell the teachers at your school when you don't understand something?	7	38	2
5. Do you feel good when you are at school?	35	4	8
6. When you have a problem on the playground at recess, do you feel you can find someone to help you?	38	5	4
7. Do you feel the reason you come to school is to learn?	41	3	3
8. If you had a problem outside of school, do you feel you could go to the adults at school for help?	24	10	13
9. Do you care how well you do on your school work?	46	1	0
10. Do you feel you learn something everyday?	41	5	1
11. Does the teacher try to tell you when he/she is pleased with your work?	39	1	7
12. In your class, does the teacher allow you to make any decisions together?	15	8	24

13. Do you feel your teacher listens to what you have to say?	40	2	5
14. Do you feel your teacher tries to make school interesting for you?	44	1	2
15. Do you feel your teacher tries hard to help you understand your school work?	46	0	1
16. Do you feel your teacher treats you fairly?	39	4	4
17. Do you feel your teacher is understanding when things go wrong?	34	3	10
18. Do you feel you can talk to your principal if you want to?	20	10	17
19. Do you feel the principal is interested in you?	29	4	14
20. Do you enjoy using the school library?	32	6	9

Appendix F  
Student Sentiment Index - Scores in Percentages  
Grade Four  
2000

STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
2000  
Grade Four

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Do you look forward to going to school?	70%	9%	21%
2. When you do something wrong at school, do you think you are treated fairly?	60%	15%	25%
3. Do you think the teachers at your school are friendly?	92%	2%	5%
4. Are you afraid to tell the teachers at your school when you don't understand something?	15%	81%	4%
5. Do you feel good when you are at school?	74%	9%	17%
6. When you have a problem on the playground at recess, do you feel you can find someone to help you?	81%	10%	9%
7. Do you feel the reason you come to school is to learn?	87%	6%	6%
8. If you had a problem outside of school, do you feel you could go to the adults at school for help?	51%	21%	28%
9. Do you care how well you do on your school work?	98%	2%	0%
10. Do you feel you learn something everyday?	87%	11%	2%
11. Does the teacher try to tell you when he/she is pleased with your work?	83%	2%	15%
12. In your class, does the teacher allow you to make any decisions together?	32%	17%	51%

13. Do you feel your teacher listens to what you have to say?	85%	4%	11%
14. Do you feel your teacher tries to make school interesting for you?	94%	2%	4%
15. Do you feel your teacher tries hard to help you understand your school work?	98%	0%	2%
16. Do you feel your teacher treats you fairly?	82%	9%	9%
17. Do you feel your teacher is understanding when things go wrong?	72%	6%	21%
18. Do you feel you can talk to your principal if you want to?	43%	21%	36%
19. Do you feel the principal is interested in you?	62%	9%	30%
20. Do you enjoy using the school library?	68%	13%	19%

Appendix G  
Student Sentiment Index - Tabulation of Raw Scores  
Grade Four  
1979



STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
1979  
Grade Four

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Do you look forward to going to school?	48	27	25
2. When you do something wrong at school, do you think you are treated fairly?	44	25	31
3. Do you think the teachers at your school are friendly?	72	2	26
4. Are you afraid to tell the teachers at your school when you don't understand something?	17	77	6
5. Do you feel good when you are at school?	36	21	43
6. When you have a problem on the playground at recess, do you feel you can find someone to help you?	55	28	17
7. Do you feel the reason you come to school is to learn?	81	8	11
8. If you had a problem outside of school, do you feel you could go to the adults at school for help?	53	26	21
9. Do you care how well you do on your school work?	86	8	6
10. Do you feel you learn something everyday?	67	17	16
11. Does the teacher try to tell you when he/she is pleased with your work?	62	21	17
12. In your class, does the teacher allow you to make any decisions together?	28	38	34

13. Do you feel your teacher listens to what you have to say?	58	19	23
14. Do you feel your teacher tries to make school interesting for you?	67	19	14
15. Do you feel your teacher tries hard to help you understand your school work?	72	11	17
16. Do you feel your teacher treats you fairly?	54	17	29
17. Do you feel your teacher is understanding when things go wrong?	44	21	35
18. Do you feel you can talk to your principal if you want to?	41	37	22
19. Do you feel the principal is interested in you?	35	24	41
20. Do you enjoy using the school library?	72	15	13

Appendix H  
Student Sentiment Index - Scores in Percentages  
Grade Four  
1979

STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
1979  
Grade Four

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Do you look forward to going to school?	48%	27%	25%
2. When you do something wrong at school, do you think you are treated fairly?	44%	25%	31%
3. Do you think the teachers at your school are friendly?	72%	2%	26%
4. Are you afraid to tell the teachers at your school when you don't understand something?	17%	77%	6%
5. Do you feel good when you are at school?	36%	21%	43%
6. When you have a problem on the playground at recess, do you feel you can find someone to help you?	55%	28%	17%
7. Do you feel the reason you come to school is to learn?	81%	8%	11%
8. If you had a problem outside of school, do you feel you could go to the adults at school for help?	53%	26%	21%
9. Do you care how well you do on your school work?	86%	8%	6%
10. Do you feel you learn something everyday?	67%	17%	16%
11. Does the teacher try to tell you when he/she is pleased with your work?	62%	21%	17%
12. In your class, does the teacher allow you to make any decisions together?	28%	38%	34%

13. Do you feel your teacher listens to what you have to say?	58%	19%	23%
14. Do you feel your teacher tries to make school interesting for you?	67%	19%	14%
15. Do you feel your teacher tries hard to help you understand your school work?	72%	11%	17%
16. Do you feel your teacher treats you fairly?	54%	17%	29%
17. Do you feel your teacher is understanding when things go wrong?	44%	21%	35%
18. Do you feel you can talk to your principal if you want to?	41%	37%	22%
19. Do you feel the principal is interested in you?	35%	24%	41%
20. Do you enjoy using the school library?	72%	15%	13%

Appendix I  
Student Sentiment Index - Tabulations of Raw Scores  
Grade Ten  
2000

SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
2000  
Grade Ten

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Most of my teachers will try to explain why I deserve the grades I earn on my assignments.	18	25	4
2. I look forward to coming to school.	12	20	15
3. Most of my teachers try to make their subjects interesting.	28	16	3
4. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.	30	11	6
5. Most of my teachers give assignments that are meaningful.	18	23	6
6. Most of my teachers seem personally concerned about me.	20	19	8
7. Cutting school whenever I can doesn't bother me.	6	34	7
8. I am very interested in extracurricular activities in school.	25	12	10
9. There are important subjects not taught in school now which I would be interested in taking if they were offered.	28	9	10
10. Students have a voice in determining how the school's run.	14	26	7
11. Counselors are interested in me as an individual.	28	13	6
12. Most of my teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.	27	14	6

13. I think most of my teachers are fair.	37	8	2
14. I generally try to get involved in school activities.	29	13	5
15. I enjoy talking to many of my teachers out of school.	9	24	14
16. Most of my teachers usually come prepared for class.	37	6	4
17. I feel the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors in my school are interested in students.	16	23	8
18. Many of my teachers could be trusted if I discussed a personal problem with them.	22	11	14
19. Most of my teachers are still fair with me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.	32	10	5
20. I often see an administrator or counselor around school or at school activities.	22	19	6
21. Most of my teachers like working with young people.	28	5	14
22. Most of my teachers care about students regardless of the student's ability.	25	14	8
23. Some of my teachers at my school cannot control their classes.	35	7	5
24. I feel comfortable talking to the principal, vice principal and/or counselors at our school.	17	21	9
25. I enjoy using the school library.	28	11	8



Appendix J  
Student Sentiment Index - Tabulation of Raw Scores  
Grade Ten  
1979

SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
1979  
Grade Ten

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Most of my teachers will try to explain why I deserve the grades I earn on my assignments.	57	24	19
2. I look forward to coming to school.	43	29	28
3. Most of my teachers try to make their subjects interesting.	38	44	29
4. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.	48	29	23
5. Most of my teachers give assignments that are meaningful.	23	57	19
6. Most of my teachers seem personally concerned about me.	23	48	29
7. Cutting school whenever I can doesn't bother me.	29	52	19
8. I am very interested in extracurricular activities in school.	33	38	29
9. There are important subjects not taught in school now which I would be interested in taking if they were offered.	62	23	15
10. Students have a voice in determining how the school's run.	38	43	19
11. Counselors are interested in me as an individual.	48	43	9
12. Most of my teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.	67	19	14

13. I think most of my teachers are fair.	67	19	14
14. I generally try to get involved in school activities.	38	52	10
15. I enjoy talking to many of my teachers out of school.	57	29	14
16. Most of my teachers usually come prepared for class.	81	5	14
17. I feel the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors in my school are interested in students.	19	52	29
18. Many of my teachers could be trusted if I discussed a personal problem with them.	57	19	24
19. Most of my teachers are still fair with me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.	67	24	9
20. I often see an administrator or counselor around school or at school activities.	38	48	14
21. Most of my teachers like working with young people.	38	5	57
22. Most of my teachers care about students regardless of the student's ability.	43	24	33
23. Some of my teachers at my school cannot control their classes.	52	24	24
24. I feel comfortable talking to the principal, vice principal and/or counselors at our school.	33	57	10
25. I enjoy using the school library.	33	43	24

Appendix K  
Student Sentiment Index - Scores in Percentages  
Grade Ten  
2000

SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
2000  
Grade Ten

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Most of my teachers will try to explain why I deserve the grades I earn on my assignments.	38%	53%	9%
2. I look forward to coming to school.	26%	43%	32%
3. Most of my teachers try to make their subjects interesting.	60%	34%	6%
4. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.	64%	23%	13%
5. Most of my teachers give assignments that are meaningful.	38%	49%	13%
6. Most of my teachers seem personally concerned about me.	43%	40%	17%
7. Cutting school whenever I can doesn't bother me.	13%	72%	15%
8. I am very interested in extracurricular activities in school.	53%	26%	21%
9. There are important subjects not taught in school now which I would be interested in taking if they were offered.	60%	19%	21%
10. Students have a voice in determining how the school's run.	30%	55%	15%
11. Counselors are interested in me as an individual.	60%	28%	13%
12. Most of my teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.	57%	30%	13%

13. I think most of my teachers are fair.	77%	17%	4%
14. I generally try to get involved in school activities.	62%	28%	11%
15. I enjoy talking to many of my teachers out of school.	19%	51%	30%
16. Most of my teachers usually come prepared for class.	79%	13%	9%
17. I feel the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors in my school are interested in students.	34%	49%	17%
18. Many of my teachers could be trusted if I discussed a personal problem with them.	47%	23%	30%
19. Most of my teachers are still fair with me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.	68%	21%	11%
20. I often see an administrator or counselor around school or at school activities.	47%	40%	13%
21. Most of my teachers like working with young people.	60%	11%	30%
22. Most of my teachers care about students regardless of the student's ability.	53%	30%	17%
23. Some of my teachers at my school cannot control their classes.	74%	15%	11%
24. I feel comfortable talking to the principal, vice principal and/or counselors at our school.	36%	45%	19%
25. I enjoy using the school library.	60%	23%	17%

Appendix L  
Student Sentiment Index - Scores in Percentages  
Grade Ten  
1979

SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
1979  
Grade Ten

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Most of my teachers will try to explain why I deserve the grades I earn on my assignments.	57%	24%	19%
2. I look forward to coming to school.	43%	29%	28%
3. Most of my teachers try to make their subjects interesting.	38%	44%	29%
4. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.	48%	29%	23%
5. Most of my teachers give assignments that are meaningful.	23%	57%	19%
6. Most of my teachers seem personally concerned about me.	23%	48%	29%
7. Cutting school whenever I can doesn't bother me.	29%	52%	19%
8. I am very interested in extracurricular activities in school.	33%	38%	29%
9. There are important subjects not taught in school now which I would be interested in taking if they were offered.	62%	23%	15%
10. Students have a voice in determining how the school's run.	38%	43%	19%
11. Counselors are interested in me as an individual.	48%	43%	9%
12. Most of my teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.	67%	19%	14%



13. I think most of my teachers are fair.	67%	19%	14%
14. I generally try to get involved in school activities.	38%	52%	10%
15. I enjoy talking to many of my teachers out of school.	57%	29%	14%
16. Most of my teachers usually come prepared for class.	81%	5%	14%
17. I feel the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors in my school are interested in students.	19%	52%	29%
18. Many of my teachers could be trusted if I discussed a personal problem with them.	57%	19%	24%
19. Most of my teachers are still fair with me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.	67%	24%	9%
20. I often see an administrator or counselor around school or at school activities.	38%	48%	14%
21. Most of my teachers like working with young people.	38%	5%	57%
22. Most of my teachers care about students regardless of the student's ability.	43%	24%	33%
23. Some of my teachers at my school cannot control their classes.	52%	24%	24%
24. I feel comfortable talking to the principal, vice principal and/or counselors at our school.	33%	57%	10%
25. I enjoy using the school library.	33%	43%	24%

Appendix M  
Student Sentiment Index - Scores in Percentages  
Grade Ten  
1979 compared to 2000

SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
1979 Compared to 2000  
Grade Ten

	Agree 1979	Agree 2000	Disagree 1979	Disagree 2000	Unsure 1979	Unsure 2000
1. Most of my teachers will try to explain why I deserve the grades I earn on my assignments.	57%	38%	24%	53%	19%	9%
2. I look forward to coming to school.	43%	26%	29%	43%	28%	32%
3. Most of my teachers try to make their subjects interesting.	38%	60%	44%	34%	29%	6%
4. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.	48%	64%	29%	23%	23%	13%
5. Most of my teachers give assignments that are meaningful.	23%	38%	57%	49%	19%	13%
6. Most of my teachers seem personally concerned about me.	23%	43%	48%	40%	29%	17%
7. Cutting school whenever I can doesn't bother me.	29%	13%	52%	72%	19%	15%
8. I am very interested in extracurricular activities in school.	33%	53%	38%	26%	29%	21%
9. There are important subjects not taught in school now which I would be interested in taking if they were offered.	62%	60%	23%	19%	15%	21%
10. Students have a voice in determining how the school's run.	38%	30%	43%	55%	19%	15%

11. Counselors are interested in me as an individual.	48%	60%	43%	28%	9%	13%
12. Most of my teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.	67%	57%	19%	30%	14%	13%
13. I think most of my teachers are fair.	67%	77%	19%	17%	14%	4%
14. I generally try to get involved in school activities.	38%	62%	52%	28%	10%	11%
15. I enjoy talking to many of my teachers out of school.	57%	19%	29%	51%	14%	30%
16. Most of my teachers usually come prepared for class.	81%	79%	5%	13%	14%	9%
17. I feel the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors in my school are interested in students.	19%	34%	52%	49%	29%	17%
18. Many of my teachers could be trusted if I discussed a personal problem with them.	57%	47%	19%	23%	24%	30%
19. Most of my teachers are still fair with me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.	67%	68%	24%	21%	9%	11%
20. I often see an administrator or counselor around school or at school activities.	38%	47%	48%	40%	14%	13%
21. Most of my teachers like working with young people.	38%	60%	5%	11%	57%	30%
22. Most of my teachers care about students regardless of the student's ability.	43%	53%	24%	30%	33%	17%

23. Some of my teachers at my school cannot control their classes.	52%	74%	24%	15%	24%	11%
24. I feel comfortable talking to the principal, vice principal and/or counselors at our school.	33%	36%	57%	45%	10%	19%
25. I enjoy using the school library.	33%	60%	43%	23%	24%	17%

Appendix N  
Student Sentiment Index - Scores in Percentages  
Grade Four  
1979 compared to 2000

STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
1979 Compared to 2000  
Grade Four

	Agree 1979	Agree 2000	Disagree 1979	Disagree 2000	Unsure 1979	Unsure 2000
1. Do you look forward to going to school?	48%	70%	27%	9%	25%	21%
2. When you do something wrong at school, do you think you are treated fairly?	44%	60%	25%	15%	31%	25%
3. Do you think the teachers at your school are friendly?	72%	92%	2%	2%	26%	5%
4. Are you afraid to tell the teachers at your school when you don't understand something?	17%	15%	77%	81%	6%	4%
5. Do you feel good when you are at school?	36%	74%	21%	9%	43%	17%
6. When you have a problem on the playground at recess, do you feel you can find someone to help you?	55%	81%	28%	10%	17%	9%
7. Do you feel the reason you come to school is to learn?	81%	87%	8%	6%	11%	6%
8. If you had a problem outside of school, do you feel you could go to the adults at school for help?	53%	51%	26%	21%	21%	28%
9. Do you care how well you do on your school work?	86%	98%	8%	2%	6%	0%
10. Do you feel you learn something everyday?	67%	87%	17%	11%	16%	2%
11. Does the teacher try to tell you when he/she is pleased with your work?	62%	83%	21%	2%	17%	15%

12. In your class, does the teacher allow you to make any decisions together?	28%	32%	38%	17%	34%	51%
13. Do you feel your teacher listens to what you have to say?	58%	85%	19%	4%	23%	11%
14. Do you feel your teacher tries to make school interesting for you?	67%	94%	19%	2%	14%	4%
15. Do you feel your teacher tries hard to help you understand your school work?	72%	98%	11%	0%	17%	2%
16. Do you feel your teacher treats you fairly?	54%	82%	17%	9%	29%	9%
17. Do you feel your teacher is understanding when things go wrong?	44%	72%	21%	6%	35%	21%
18. Do you feel you can talk to your principal if you want to?	41%	43%	37%	21%	22%	36%
19. Do you feel the principal is interested in you?	35%	62%	24%	9%	41%	30%
20. Do you enjoy using the school library?	72%	68%	15%	13%	13%	19%



Appendix O  
Student Sentiment Index - Mean Scores  
Grade Four  
2000

STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
2000  
Grade Four

	Mean
1. Do you look forward to going to school?	2.62
2. When you do something wrong at school, do you think you are treated fairly?	2.45
3. Do you think the teachers at your school are friendly?	2.85
4. Are you afraid to tell the teachers at your school when you don't understand something?	2.66
5. Do you feel good when you are at school?	2.66
6. When you have a problem on the playground at recess, do you feel you can find someone to help you?	2.70
7. Do you feel the reason you come to school is to learn?	2.81
8. If you had a problem outside of school, do you feel you could go to the adults at school for help?	2.30
9. Do you care how well you do on your school work?	2.96
10. Do you feel you learn something everyday?	2.77
11. Does the teacher try to tell you when he/she is pleased with your work?	2.81
12. In your class, does the teacher allow you to make any decisions together?	2.15

13. Do you feel your teacher listens to what you have to say?	2.81
14. Do you feel your teacher tries to make school interesting for you?	2.91
15. Do you feel your teacher tries hard to help you understand your school work?	2.98
16. Do you feel your teacher treats you fairly?	2.74
17. Do you feel your teacher is understanding when things go wrong?	2.66
18. Do you feel you can talk to your principal if you want to?	2.21
19. Do you feel the principal is interested in you?	2.53
20. Do you enjoy using the school library?	2.55

Appendix P  
Student Sentiment Index - Mean Scores  
Grade Four  
1979

STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
1979  
Grade Four

	Mean
1. Do you look forward to going to school?	2.21
2. When you do something wrong at school, do you think you are treated fairly?	2.19
3. Do you think the teachers at your school are friendly?	2.70
4. Are you afraid to tell the teachers at your school when you don't understand something?	2.60
5. Do you feel good when you are at school?	2.15
6. When you have a problem on the playground at recess, do you feel you can find someone to help you?	2.27
7. Do you feel the reason you come to school is to learn?	2.73
8. If you had a problem outside of school, do you feel you could go to the adults at school for help?	2.27
9. Do you care how well you do on your school work?	2.78
10. Do you feel you learn something everyday?	2.50
11. Does the teacher try to tell you when he/she is pleased with your work?	2.41
12. In your class, does the teacher allow you to make any decisions together?	1.90
13. Do you feel your teacher listens to what you have to say?	2.39

14. Do you feel your teacher tries to make school interesting for you?	2.48
15. Do you feel your teacher tries hard to help you understand your school work?	2.61
16. Do you feel your teacher treats you fairly?	2.37
17. Do you feel your teacher is understanding when things go wrong?	2.23
18. Do you feel you can talk to your principal if you want to?	2.04
19. Do you feel the principal is interested in you?	2.11
20. Do you enjoy using the school library?	2.57

Appendix Q  
Student Sentiment Index - Mean Scores  
Grade Ten  
2000

SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
2000  
Grade Ten

	Mean
1. Most of my teachers will try to explain why I deserve the grades I earn on my assignments.	1.85
2. I look forward to coming to school.	1.83
3. Most of my teachers try to make their subjects interesting.	2.26
4. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.	2.40
5. Most of my teachers give assignments that are meaningful.	1.89
6. Most of my teachers seem personally concerned about me.	2.02
7. Cutting school whenever I can doesn't bother me.	2.60
8. I am very interested in extracurricular activities in school.	2.28
9. There are important subjects not taught in school now which I would be interested in taking if they were offered.	2.40
10. Students have a voice in determining how the school's run.	1.74
11. Counselors are interested in me as an individual.	2.32
12. Most of my teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.	2.28



13. I think most of my teachers are fair.	2.62
14. I generally try to get involved in school activities.	2.34
15. I enjoy talking to many of my teachers out of school.	1.68
16. Most of my teachers usually come prepared for class.	2.66
17. I feel the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors in my school are interested in students.	1.85
18. Many of my teachers could be trusted if I discussed a personal problem with them.	2.23
19. Most of my teachers are still fair with me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.	2.47
20. I often see an administrator or counselor around school or at school activities.	2.06
21. Most of my teachers like working with young people.	2.49
22. Most of my teachers care about students regardless of the student's ability.	2.23
23. Some of my teachers at my school cannot control their classes.	1.40
24. I feel comfortable talking to the principal, vice principal and/or counselors at our school.	1.91
25. I enjoy using the school library.	2.36

Appendix R  
Student Sentiment Index - Mean Scores  
Grade Ten  
1979

SECONDARY STUDENT SENTIMENT INDEX  
1979  
Grade Ten

	Mean
1. Most of my teachers will try to explain why I deserve the grades I earn on my assignments.	2.33
2. I look forward to coming to school.	2.14
3. Most of my teachers try to make their subjects interesting.	2.16
4. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.	2.19
5. Most of my teachers give assignments that are meaningful.	1.64
6. Most of my teachers seem personally concerned about me.	1.75
7. Cutting school whenever I can doesn't bother me.	2.23
8. I am very interested in extracurricular activities in school.	1.95
9. There are important subjects not taught in school now which I would be interested in taking if they were offered.	2.39
10. Students have a voice in determining how the school's run.	1.95
11. Counselors are interested in me as an individual.	2.05
12. Most of my teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.	2.48

13. I think most of my teachers are fair.	2.48
14. I generally try to get involved in school activities.	1.86
15. I enjoy talking to many of my teachers out of school.	2.28
16. Most of my teachers usually come prepared for class.	3.06
17. I feel the principal, vice principal, and/or counselors in my school are interested in students.	1.67
18. Many of my teachers could be trusted if I discussed a personal problem with them.	2.38
19. Most of my teachers are still fair with me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.	2.43
20. I often see an administrator or counselor around school or at school activities.	1.90
21. Most of my teachers like working with young people.	2.33
22. Most of my teachers care about students regardless of the student's ability.	2.19
23. Some of my teachers at my school cannot control their classes.	1.72
24. I feel comfortable talking to the principal, vice principal and/or counselors at our school.	1.76
25. I enjoy using the school library.	1.90

## VITA

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