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### An Evaluation of Bethel High School's Business Program

Julia J. Younger

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**AN EVALUATION OF BETHEL HIGH SCHOOL'S  
BUSINESS PROGRAM**

A Study Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Department of Occupational and Technical Studies  
Old Dominion University

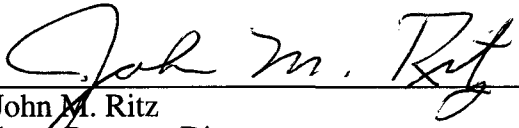
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Degree of Master of Science in Education

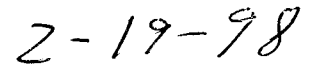
by  
Julia J. Younger  
February, 1998

## SIGNATURE PAGE

This research paper was prepared by Julia J. Younger under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Vocational Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Master of Science in Education degree.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Evaluation of our educational system is essential to our nation's well being. It is a tremendous task but must be ongoing. A skilled, educated workforce is the main ingredient for a business' success. ". . . at the moment when the quality of our intellectual capital is paramount to the success of American business and our economy, we stare with alarm into a widening chasm that separates work force capability from workplace requirements" (Becker, 1993, p. 29).

Students must acquire the knowledge and skills in high school that will make it possible for them to pursue further education and/or be placed in the workforce at a level that will provide them with the essentials of a decent living. Programs are needed that connect students with the world of work and an understanding of themselves (William T. Grant Foundation, 1998a). The changing student and workforce demographics, the recognized need for more productive and competitive workforce, and the concern for the economic well-being of our youth have brought attention to the need for effective transition from school-to-work and/or further education (Smith & Rojewski, 1993, p. 222).

It has been emphasized by the National Governors' Association that, "in the past, it was possible to tolerate . . . a haphazard approach to school-to-work transition . . . but today the waste in human potential that results no longer can be afforded" (Imel, 1991, p. 1). Our educational system must recognize its weaknesses and take immediate steps to effect improvement. ". . . a skill-deficient young



workforce hampers our nation's economic growth, productivity, and ability to compete in a global economic marketplace. Projections for slow labor force growth and increasing demands for technologically literate workers will exacerbate this problem into the next decade (Smith & Rojewski, 1993).

The transition from school-to-work and continuing education will not be done once and never thought of again. It is an extended process and maybe repeated several times throughout a person's life. Due to inadequate preparation for employment and little-to-no help with transitioning skills many young people struggle in the job market, are unemployed, or have dead-end positions (Smith & Rojewski, 1993, p. 222). "Every community and every school faces its own set of challenges in educating students. That is why any attempts to improve education must be made at the local level and must involve everyone in the community" (Becker, 1993, p. 29).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational education business program of Bethel High School in preparing students to successfully transition from their secondary education to employment and/or further education.

## **RESEARCH GOALS**

The following goals were used to direct this study:

1. Determine the current employment status, use of skills learned in the business program, length of employment, current wage/salary, and if unemployed, the reason for unemployment.

2. Determine the level of business program skills learned in high school relative to the level needed in the workplace and/or further education.
3. Determine the quality of the business program facilities, equipment/tools, courses offered, teachers, and Future Business Leaders of America student organization.
4. Determine the current educational status of the business program completers.

## **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

Hampton City Schools was invited by Neils W. Brooks, Director of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education Services for the state of Virginia, to voluntarily participate in the 1997 Vocational Education Student Follow-Up Survey. Hampton was not scheduled for a mandatory 1996 follow-up. Only sixteen percent of the school divisions and Jointly Operated Vocational Technical Centers are required to follow-up vocational completers, within one year of graduation, once every six years.

The System of Core Standards and Measures of Performance for Secondary Programs specifies among other requirements that school divisions measure successful transition of vocational completers from school to employment and/or further education. The follow-up process responds to this measurement while serving two primary functions. First, it provides the school division with valuable information on program effectiveness. If the business curriculum is not kept abreast of the employment needs in industry, there exists the danger of maintaining a nonessential curriculum that may be

eliminated. Second, it provides the Department of Education with certain follow-up data needed for statewide planning and federal reporting. Evaluating the success rate of educating students in the vocational business program for transition to the workplace and/or further education is important to maintaining and receiving further funding for the program.

Anderson (1994, p. 76) believes that business educators know where they are going as they prepare students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for adult life in the 21st century. It cannot be "business as usual" to effectively ready our students for the technologically advanced workplace. Educators must stay tuned to the workplace that their students will be going into and change curriculum as needed.

## **LIMITATIONS**

By virtue of guidelines of the Vocational Education Student Follow-up in Virginia, this study was limited to:

1. Surveying only the business education program completers who graduated in 1996 from Bethel High School.
2. Business teachers surveying his/her former students.
3. The students with current telephone numbers or other information about ways to contact them.

## **ASSUMPTIONS**

When conducting research, certain information must be assumed. The following assumptions were made in this research paper:

1. The business teachers would be able to determine who the 1996 graduate program completers were.
2. The business teachers would put forth their best effort to contact their former students.
3. The former students contacted would be willing to answer the questions about their current employment and educational status.
4. A seventy-two percent (72%) response rate would be attainable to ensure reliable, valid information, and to avoid a non-response bias.

## **PROCEDURES**

The data for this study was collected by the business education teachers of Bethel High School. They conducted a telephone survey of the business program completers who graduated in 1996. Each teacher compiled a list of the program completers that they had taught last year. Following the suggested telephone interview script provided with the survey forms, the teachers tried to contact each of their former students.

The completed survey forms were returned to the Applied Academics office in the City of Hampton to be tallied and then forwarded to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education Services, Richmond, Virginia.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following terms were used frequently in the report and the list of definitions will clarify their significance to this study.

- **Business program completer**--a student who has successfully completed two years of business courses in any combination.
- **Business program**--a course of study in high school that consists of business related classes.
- **Secondary education**--education on the high school level.
- **Further education**--any education pursued after high school.
- **Certificate or licensure**--completing a course of study fulfilling the requirements to earn the certificate or license.
- **FBLA**--Future Business Leaders of America student organization which many business program completers belong.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS**

Preparing business students for a successful transition to the workplace and/or further education is the main function of the business program curriculum. The focus of this study will be the success rate determined by the study or the lack thereof. These results will be substantiated by the responses which will include many subjective responses by the program completers about the education they received while in high school. Chapter II presents a review of the literature available relevant to this study. Chapter III reviews the methods and procedures followed to answer the research problem. Chapter IV presents the findings of the survey conducted on the 1996 Bethel High School business program completers. In Chapter V are found the Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations of this study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter will present the following topics: business expectations of education and reform, the needs of the global workplace, employer expectations of vocational education, school-to-work transition, work-education partnerships, vocational education and entrepreneurship, cooperative education, and summary.

#### **BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS OF EDUCATION AND REFORM**

As students transition from school to the world of work, they need to take with them the desire to keep learning throughout their lives. It is recognized by human resource experts that the United States needs to make much better use of its human capital in order to continue economic prosperity in the future. Education and learning cannot stop at age 18, 21, or even 40. Everyone must continue developing their skill rates to maintain their position among the employed. Our workers are competing against the global labor market and those who do not constantly improve their skills will fall far behind and become the unskilled, poor laborers (Kotter, 1995, p. 27). Walter Licht, in his book, Getting Work: Philadelphia, 1840-1950, provides a wealth of information regarding workers obtaining jobs. Most importantly, it was a "seemingly perpetual activity" because of seasonal employment, frequent business failures, and underemployment. He observed that a high school diploma did little to help one become employed unless it consisted of vocational courses (DeSlippe, 1994, p. 97). Smith and Rojewski (1993, p. 222)

combine these realities by noting that the "transition from school to work is not a single event in the lives of American youth but, rather, an extended process with several milestones." That first job may be cutting grass or baby-sitting and usually advances to part-time work before actually landing the first real job which depends greatly on the age, school level completed, and most importantly the youth's connections in the job market (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988, pp. 25-26).

## **NEEDS OF THE GLOBAL WORKPLACE**

Hedrick Smith summarizes what needs to be rethought (about America) by reviewing how the

competitive advantage in the global economy changed in the late 1970s and became apparent in the 1980s. This forced industry to change from the traditional advantage of capital, natural resources and mass production to an economy in which money, technology, and resources can move anywhere in the globe. So what became most important for the competitive advantage was human skills and organization for highly flexible production. America must train, educate, and motivate people differently. This is a real revolution that will take a long time to play through an economy or society. It can't be done with a snap of a finger. It takes a generation or more to change the mindset of leaders, companies, communities, schools and colleges to understand the nature of the new world we are living in and then revamp their institution (1996, pp. 32-33).

There were employer-employee contracts which encouraged dependency while promoting an idea that the employees had a right to their jobs. Workers expected lifetime employment regardless of productivity and promotions based on seniority. As we are forced to recognize the change in the global economy, the employees must take

responsibility for their careers (Feller, 1996, pp. 24-27). Feller (1996, pp. 24-27) agrees with Hedrick Smith (1996, pp. 32-33) and Bocchino (1995, p. 47) that a more competitive workforce must be prepared and that this effort will require much more cooperation between public education and business involvement in the community as well as personal career management. Educators need to take the lead role.

## **EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

The American Society for Training and Development and the U.S. Department of Labor suggested in a joint study that educators change their basic strategies to:

- Work with employers to strengthen the link between learning in school and learning on the job.
- Hire better teachers, pay them what they are worth, and measure learning outcomes.
- Link teaching of academic subjects to real-world applications.
- Teach future employees how to make decisions, solve problems, learn to think a job through from start to finish and work with people to get the job done (Bocchino, 1995, p. 47).

At the same time, Paul Osterman, professor of human resources and management at Sloan School, MIT, believes that schools are to provide a trained labor force. It should be a resulting by-product of a well functioning school system, not the sole objective (Across the Board, 1995, pp. 16-24).



Ann Heald, Executive Director, Center for Learning and Competitiveness at the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland, adds by pointing out the traditional mind set that separates vocational training from academic education. She envisions, "bringing the best of the workplace into the learning environment, and marrying together high academic qualifications with styles of operating and cooperating that all of us need--the top MIT graduate as well as the machine toolist. It is a fundamentally different kind of secondary school for everybody (Across the Board, 1995, pp. 16-24).

Low-skilled workers have a very hard time finding living-wage entry-level jobs. Between 1979 and 1994, average real hourly earnings dropped 28 percent for male high school dropouts, 16 percent for high school graduates, and 11 percent for those with some college (Feller, 1996, pp. 24-27). Bocchino (1995, p. 47) reports that about two million workers are displaced each year as we encounter more global shifts in technology, trade, and competitive positions. Even assembly line jobs require the worker to function in teams, improve the design of their job, and have the ultimate responsibility of stopping production when a problem arises. An agile, new breed of worker is needed. They must be able to communicate well, know more science, and have problem solving skills and critical thinking capabilities which demands a more complex high school education to prepare them. ". . . It's a huge paradigm shift that has to be matched in education," as expressed by Hedrick Smith (1996, pp. 32-33).

John Tobin, Director of Vocational and Technical Training at Siemens Corporation, agrees with Smith about the necessity for the U.S. employee's need to be skill ready to compete in the global market place. He feels that workers should--

See themselves in competition with somebody from Sri Lanka. What we're talking about is the competition between high-productivity, high-tech, low-cost countries vs. high-productivity, high-tech, high-cost countries. The only protection the individual has is to have salable skills (Across the Board, 1995, pp. 16-24).

Reality today is that the workplace demands much more of the majority of the workers such as continuous improvement, international quality standards, self-management, teamwork, and high skill expectations. New technology has introduced time-compressed distribution, product development, and process innovation which have redefined jobs. The low-skilled, high-wage job simply does not exist in today's fast-paced, competitive, technological environment (Feller, 1996, pp. 32-33).

## **SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION**

The need for a smooth school-to-work transition is more important today than ever before. Employers and society in general are being challenged to succeed in a very competitive world market. Businesses must become more efficient and productive and are therefore restructuring their management, operating, and production processes. This, in many cases, has resulted in downsizing and the introduction of new technologies to help them reach these goals. The

implications for the present and future work force are unmistakable (Lankard, 1994).

Goals 2000 emerged from the education summit held in 1990 establishing a comprehensive set of national educational goals. The fifth goal concerned itself with achieving universal literacy in the United States. As stated, ". . . by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the skills necessary to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (Imel, 1991). And to reach this goal five objectives were agreed upon, the first of which is that, "every major U.S. business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work" (Imel, 1991). From this legislation came the School-to-Work Opportunities Act which is meant to help to build a system for managing students' transition out of school and into the work force (Lewis, 1994, pp. 740-741). It was recognized that up to this time our education system had been doing a very poor job of transitioning students from school to the work place and adult life (Grubb, 1992, pp. 36-37; Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991; Stone, 1992; William T. Grant Foundation, 1988). Ours is a "do it yourself" system affecting approximately 20 million youth who do not go immediately into college (Byrne, Constant, and Moore, 1992, pp. 23-26). The desired outcomes of a school-to-work model include:

- Connecting theory with practice.
- Developing personal and career maturity.
- Gaining personal awareness.

- Attaining personal insight (Smith and Rojewski, 1993, pp. 222-251).

By encouraging more business involvement the connection between school and the work place is strengthened and therefore relates the literacy of the adult population with its prior education. Earlier educational reform had always focused only on the college bound student. But changing demographics, the imperative need for a more productive and competitive work force, and concern for the economic well-being of our young citizens has brought a renewed emphasis on the school-to-work transition (Imel, 1991). 'The Forgotten Half' (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988) and 'America's Choice' (National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990) reports emphasize the need to "overcome the disconnection between education and work." And Mikulecky (1990, pp. 304-309) observes that business involvement with schools has increased over the past decade resulting in progress toward strengthening the connection between school and work. Wiedernann (Across the Board, 1995) explains that in Germany students are given training up to their capabilities and that means that they have a ticket to a job. If no jobs are available, it is an unhappy situation, but it is much better than not having a ticket at all. Heald (Across the Board, 1995) agrees with this philosophy citing experiences of having uninvolved students in the classroom suddenly checking into the learning when concrete, adult interaction, hands-on activities are introduced. It has been proven that "when students learn contextually, they learn better, and that is a quality issue . . ." (Tobin, 1995).

## **WORK-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS**

Work-education partnerships are a new form of collaboration that focuses on building the links between school and the work place as well as on educational reform for the economically disadvantaged youth. These partnerships are much more in depth than the typical school-business partnership such as Adopt-a-School. They are restructuring the existing system to facilitate substantive change into much more complex and sophisticated partnerships (Lacey and Kingsley, 1988).

These work-education partnerships can and will vary greatly depending on the many factors affecting them: the community, businesses in the community, educational systems in place, etc. However, Lacey and Kingsley (1988) and the National Alliance of Business (1989) conclude that effective partnerships have several elements in common:

- **Brokering**--an intermediary to smooth out communication and possibly manage the partnership.
- **Involving the Right Players**--inviting the right mix of people from as many different organizations as seems necessary.
- **Ensuring Commitment**--individual players taking ownership of the partnership will ensure commitment.
- **Developing a Formal Plan**--stating goals, measurable objectives, real tasks, and duties of each partner gives everyone a clear picture.
- **Implementing the Plan**--every day management and evaluation of the partnership is essential to its success.

- Maintaining the Partnership--all organizations have to be cultivated and maintained to continue their existence.

As jobs have become more scarce the competition for them has increased which in turn has lengthened the school-to-work transition time for our youth and necessitates that students be skill ready to meet the demands of employers to land a job. Many employers are focusing on retraining and hiring from the qualified workforce which has been laid off because of downsizing. Also, employers are discouraged with the work ethic and skills of young adults (Lankard, 1994). "What I want in a new worker, no high school can supply--a twenty-six-year-old with three previous employers" (Zemsky, 1994, p. 5). The older generation of workers are concerned about the generation that must replace them because of the characteristics currently being displayed: lack of discipline, expectation of being catered to, unwilling to do dirty jobs, lack of respect for authority, not literate, unchangeable, and no understanding of customer service (Zemsky, 1994, p. 5).

A North Carolina study (Vasu and Frazier, 1989) revealed a skills gap between employer needs and worker skills as perceived by 69.4% of those surveyed. A representative from E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Co. shared that their interview rate is 1,500 people interviewed to fill every 10 positions. Generally, most surveys show a higher satisfaction rate among employers with vocationally trained workers than general high school graduates. They rated vocational graduates higher on being prepared for work, handling responsibility, teamwork, quality of products/services, and adaptability (Lankard, 1994).

## **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The increasing need for service oriented businesses in our society and employee downsizing make self-employment and business ownership more appealing and really viable options for today's graduates. School needs to include in the curriculum teaching techniques of developing entrepreneurial skills so that recent graduates will not be among the 45% of businesses that fail within the first year (Chambers, 1989, p. 33). Vocational educators accept entrepreneurship as a natural outgrowth of vocational training. Students are taught job-specific and employability skills and are usually given a chance to practice these skills through a work release program. Through these experiences students learn about the function and operation of a business and become comfortable and familiar with the business atmosphere. These are basic elements of entrepreneurship (Ashmore, 1990, pp. 28-29).

Vocational education must reach beyond the normal occupational knowledge, job skills, and work experience to effectively prepare the students for the changing workplace and society. Teaching the students to think creatively about industry and the possible career opportunities available is a new charge of education (Lankard, 1991).

Dan Richardson is doing what he can to help educate our youth. He is a co-owner of a nursing home business and set a goal of helping the high schools in his area teach economic principles and support entrepreneurship. To do this he created a special program. Many employers are encouraging this type of development by becoming volunteers in Junior Achievement or Distributive Education Clubs of

America. These student learning organizations offer the students hands-on experiences as well as practical insight into the free enterprise system. This positive response by business owners really helps to make a difference now and in the future (Faris, 1996, p. 9).

## **COOPERATIVE EDUCATION**

Cooperative education is one of the most frequently used programs of work experience which is supervised by the school. The methodology coordinates school-based learning with on-the-job experiences related to the student's career goals. Vocational education is not the only field that uses cooperative education; it is also used in general education. In both programs, "the intent of cooperative education is to provide students with opportunities to alternative academic studies with relevant work experiences, allowing them to apply what they have learned in the classroom to the job" (Stone & Wosner, 1990, p. 27). The U.S. General Accounting office (1991, p. 26) reported that "high quality cooperative education employs a structure that shows strong potential for improving work-force preparation and aiding youth in the transition from school to work". Although cooperative education is commonplace in many school systems, only approximately three percent (3%) of high school students participate in cooperative education (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988). Stone, Stern, Hopkins, and McMillion (1989) cited many student benefits of cooperative education: provides the opportunity to perform a variety of tasks, to handle complex responsibilities, to develop social and career maturity; encourages increased academic achievement; provides positive work



environments; helps cognitive learning; and helps make successful job transitions.

The schools in America are educating more children than ever and the measurable outcomes basically remain the same. Even though employers indicate that they are not getting the trained work force that they want and need, our education and training system is providing more complex academic skills to more citizens than it has in the past. The gap between the employer's expectations and what the workers have to offer really seems to be caused by a combination of factors: increased competition (domestic and international), massive changes in technology, and reorganization of the work place. In just nine years the number of workers using computers in their jobs doubled from 25% to 50% in 1993. And this translated into higher earnings for the workers on computers, earning 10 to 15 percent more (Joyce and Voytek, 1996, pp. 31-32).

The 1995 reports of the National Center for Education Statistics reveal that approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of all students graduate from high school which is almost twice as much as other industrialized countries. Also, fifteen percent (15%) of our students complete a four year college degree (Joyce and Voytek, 1996, pp. 31-32). Berliner and Biddle conclude from current information that the American public school system is doing a good job despite the challenges of educating this generation (1996, pp. 36-38).

The Superintendent of Public Instruction for Virginia, Richard T. LaPointe, recently presented the proposed revisions to the Standards of Accreditation for public schools. These revisions aim to accomplish an emphasis on higher expectations and higher

proficiency standards for students. They will focus on higher academic attainment by students and schools in English, history, mathematics, and science, therefore encouraging a better education for Virginia's students. Testing will provide student achievement data to hold students and schools accountable. The attainment of higher education goals hope to be reached through three major changes to the Standards of Accreditation including: higher academic performance requirements, stronger graduation requirements, and accreditation for schools based on performance tests. The stronger graduation requirements include additional credits in mathematics, laboratory science, and history raising the total number of credits required for a standard diploma to twenty-three (23) (LaPointe, 1997).

While there is agreement and support for the effort to raise expectations and standards, the increase in the number of core academic requirements leaves little room to work with business/industry to design specialized programs for specific growth industry needs or for specialized courses such as fine arts, vocational education, or electives in academic areas. The proposed revisions appear to set up a "tracking" system that gives the impressions that students with a strong interest in taking vocational courses are second class citizens. Vocational education helps students explore and formulate personal career goals, frequently motivating students to focus on the academics that their career interests will require. They start out thinking they will opt for an after high school job but end up raising their self expectations to include post-secondary education. The proposed regulations do not allow for any hesitation

or "late blooming" student development in their course selection. Students need to have as many options available to them as possible. Encouraging the student to be a "vocational major" in high school gives greater flexibility to students and their parents. Students have options other than the completion of a four-year degree as well as the option of working their way through college. This is a vital consideration for bright students whose parents cannot fund their college costs or for parents with more than one child attending college at a time.

If implemented, these proposed revisions to the Standards of Accreditation will do much to slow the progress towards institutionalization of the school-to-work initiatives under way in Virginia. Business and industry have spoken but has the State Board of Education in Virginia listened carefully? This review of literature shows the wide base support and immediate need for school-to-work programs.

## **SUMMARY**

Continuous learning for a life-time is the most important skill for students to attain while in school. If skill levels are not constantly up-graded, jobs will not be available for them and the United States will not be able to compete in the global economy. Employers expect vocational education to prepare students to enter the workplace ready to go to work. Therefore, employers and education need to work more closely together to ensure a smooth school-to-work transition.

Work-education partnerships are doing much to build links between school and the work place and to reform education. The role of vocational education will continue to develop as the needs of our society and economy change.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

Chapter III reviews the methods and procedures followed to answer the research problem. A survey was conducted to gather data. The population, instrument design, methods of data collection, and statistical analysis will be described in this chapter.

#### **POPULATION**

The students surveyed had completed at least two years of any of the business courses offered at Bethel High School by June, 1996, with Keyobarding or Keyboarding Applications as a prerequisite. These eighty-five (85) students were then designated as 'program completers'.

#### **INSTRUMENT DESIGN**

The survey developed included questions which would facilitate gathering data about the value of the student's secondary education, work experience, and future plans. The instrument was designed at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for the Virginia Department of Education to collect many kinds of data statewide (see Appendix A). Not all of the data was pertinent to this study. Therefore, only responses to the relevant questions were reported. The areas of interest included in this study were: the determination of the current employment status, use of skills learned in the business program, length of employment, current wage/salary, and if unemployed, the reason for unemployment. Also reported are

the quality of the business program facilities, equipment/tools, courses offered, teachers and Future Business Leaders of America student organization. Additional questions helped to determine the level of business program skills learned in high school relative to the level needed in the workplace and/or further education as well as the current educational status of the business program completers.

### **METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The business teachers at Bethel High School each compiled a list of 1996 program completers that he/she had taught in the student's last business course completed. They located telephone numbers for each, or when possible, a number of the parent/guardian, a relative, or other person likely to know where to contact the former student.

Before calling the former students, the teachers completed all possible information at the top of the survey form following the instructions and information provided in the Teacher's Guide to Implementation for Vocational Education Student Follow-Up. This included name, address, student identification number (provided by the administration), division code, school code, program completed code, ethnicity, and gender. The teachers followed a script (Appendix B) while telephone interviewing to ensure uniform procedures. The script started with the caller asking for the former student, then identifying himself/herself, the school, and the program he/she represented. The caller then explained the purpose of the call and the nature of the study. The caller was to maintain a cordial and polite tone and not force the respondent to answer any questions unwillingly.

The teachers started with local calls first, noting disconnected or wrong numbers, and then filed the completed survey forms for processing. This telephone interview process continued until all possible telephone numbers had been tried. Records were kept of those students who were not contacted, with notes of what actions were taken before discontinuing survey efforts.

The completed survey forms were compiled to prepare for scanning to obtain the results of each question. The survey administrator was responsible for completing block eight (8) of the survey form which indicated students who were academically disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged, disabled, or with limited English proficiency. Block eight (8) also included matching current job titles of the former students with the program they completed in high school as well as an indicator if the former students were deceased.

Before forwarding the forms to the Vocational Education Student Follow-Up Office at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, responses to the pertinent questions for this study were recorded. The results of the 1997 Vocational Education Student Follow-Up Survey became part of the total compilation of data for the entire state. Valuable information on the business program's effectiveness and how it met the needs of industry employment as well as how it prepared students for further education were gained from this survey.

## **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The responses to the survey were tabulated. Numbers and percentages were calculated for each question included in this study. When appropriate, charts and tables were created to better illustrate the results of the calculations.

Upon completion of the tabulation and calculation of the data collected, a determination of the effectiveness of the business vocational program at Bethel High School will be made. The conclusions drawn can be implied to all business programs in Hampton City Schools because all of the business programs use the same curriculum for instruction and evaluate with the same exams.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter reviewed the methods and procedures followed to answer the research problem. It presented the survey used to gather data. The population, instrument design, methods of data collection, and statistical analysis were explained in this chapter.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

The problem of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational education business program of Bethel High School in preparing students to successfully transition from their secondary education to employment or further education. This chapter reports the findings of the survey conducted on the 1996 Bethel High School business program completers. Only questions relevant to this study were evaluated from the Vocational Education Student Follow-Up survey.

Of the eighty-five 1996 Bethel High School business program completers, sixty-one were contacted and responded to the survey, this was a seventy-two percent response rate in this study. Twenty-four former students were labeled as non-respondents because they proved to be unreachable. The teachers conducting the survey reported disconnected phone lines, wrong numbers, and students had moved leaving with no forwarding addresses.

### **EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

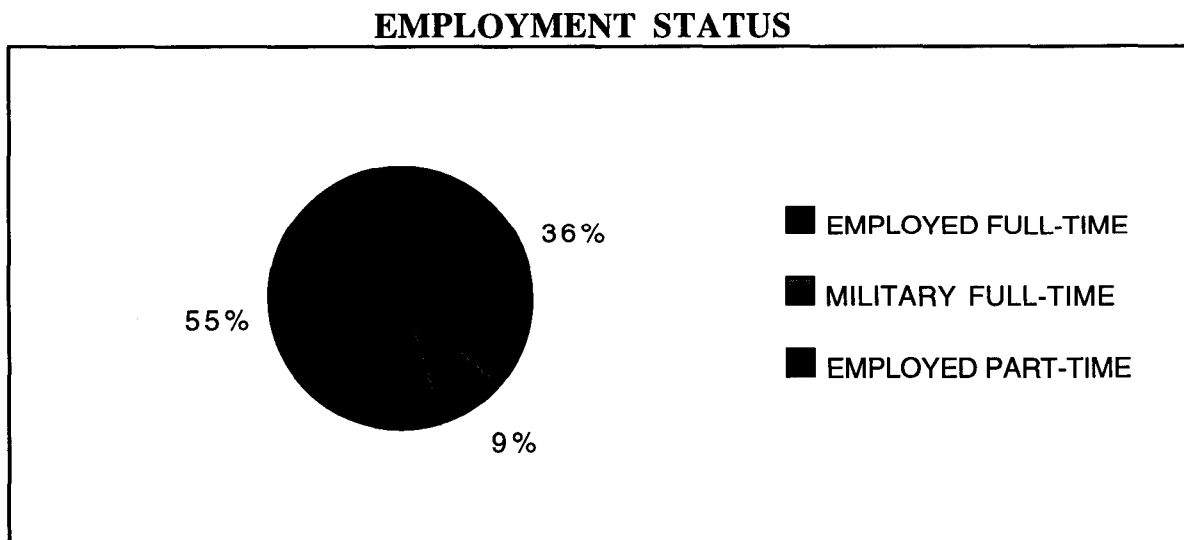
In order to determine employment status, the respondents were instructed to answer the questions following these instructions: "There are eight sections related to employment status. If currently employed, respond to Sections 1 through 5 and Section 8. Read the instructions for each section and respond if the section applies to you. If currently unemployed, go to Sections 6, 7, and 8. Everyone

should complete the applicable sections on the reverse side of this form.”

Question 1 stated, at the present I am: A. Employed full-time. B. Self-employed full-time. C. In military service full-time. D. In volunteer service full-time. E. A homemaker.

Question 2 stated, at the present I am: A. Employed part-time. B. Self-employed part-time. C. In military service part-time. D. In volunteer service part-time.

Of the sixty-one program completers surveyed, thirty-three reported that they were employed representing fifty-four percent of the population. Of those employed, twelve or thirty-six percent reported themselves to be employed full-time, three or nine percent reported themselves to be in military service full-time, and eighteen or fifty-five percent responded that they were employed part-time. This is illustrated in Figure I.

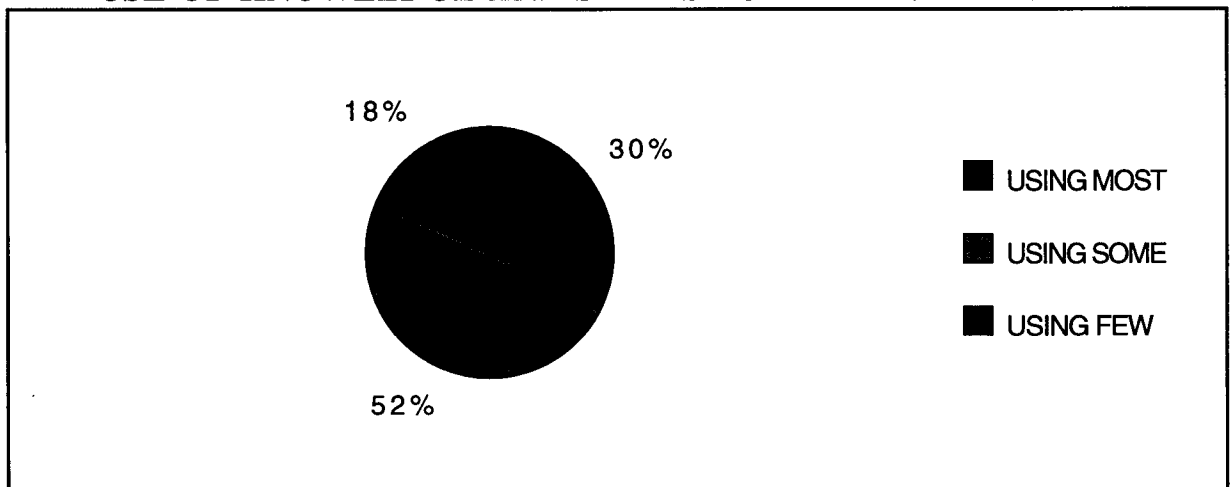


**FIGURE I**

Question 3 stated, in my employment status, of the knowledge and skills I learned in my vocational program, I am: A. Using most of the knowledge and skills. B. Using some of the knowledge and skills. C. Using few, if any, of the knowledge and skills.

Of the thirty-three program completers who were employed, ten or thirty percent responded that they were using most of the knowledge and skills in their employment that they learned in the business vocational program. Seventeen or fifty-two percent surveyed were using some of the knowledge and skills obtained and six or eighteen percent were using few, if any, of the knowledge and skills obtained in the business program in their current employment status. This is illustrated in Figure II.

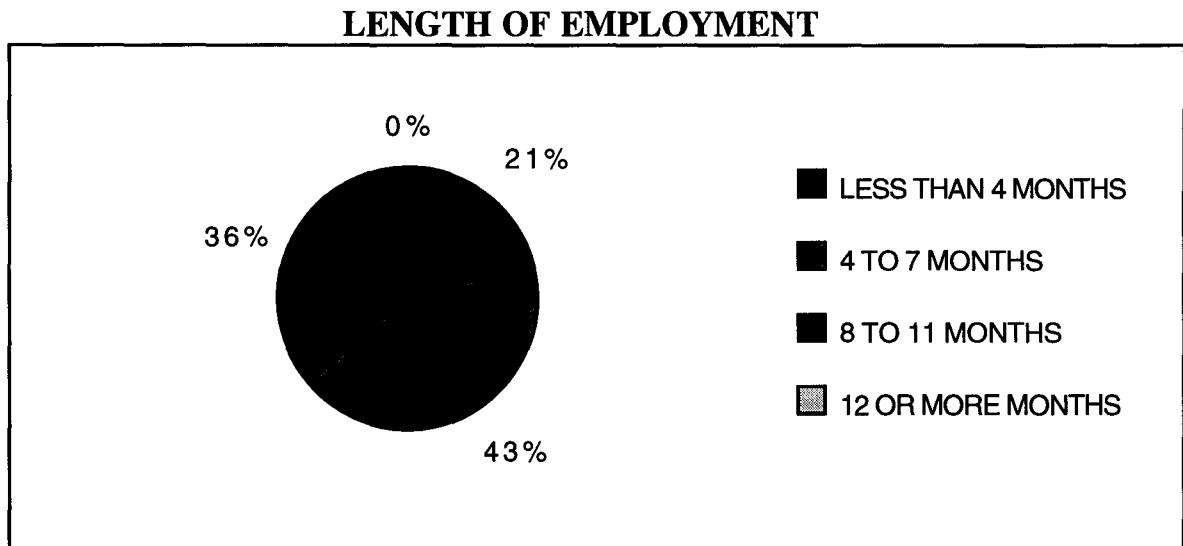
#### USE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT



**FIGURE II**

Question 4 asked, how long have you been in your current job? A. Less than 4 months. B. 4 to 7 months. C. 8 to 11 months. D. 12 or more months.

Of the thirty-three program completers that were employed, seven or twenty-one percent reported that they have been employed less than four months, fourteen or forty-two percent had been employed four to seven months, twelve or thirty-seven percent had been employed eight to eleven months, and none of the respondents had been employed more than twelve months. This is illustrated in Figure III.

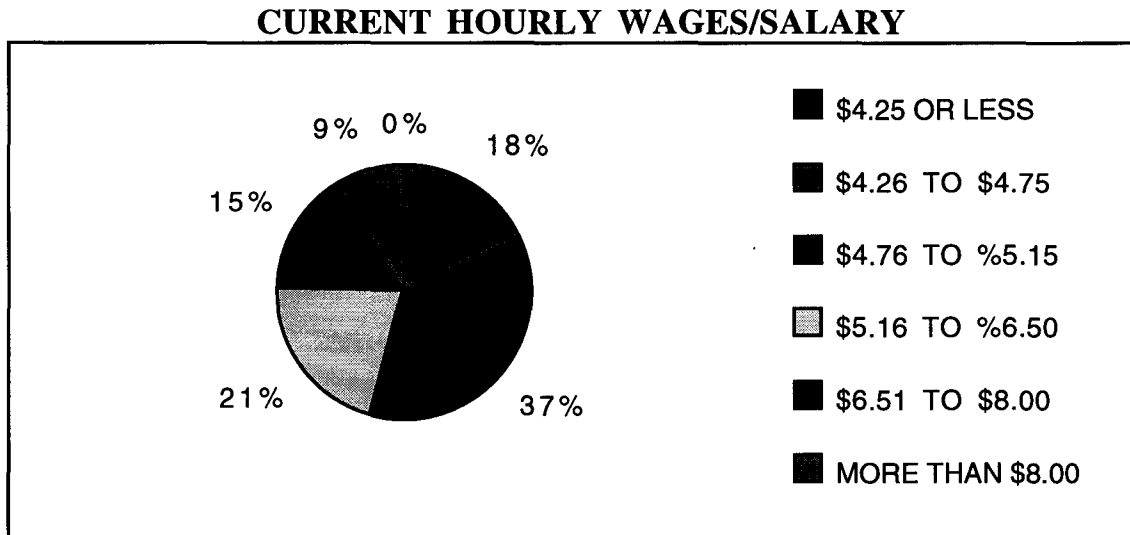


**FIGURE III**

Question 5 asked, if employed full- or part-time, or self-employed, mark the one wage/salary range that includes your current hourly wage/salary. If employed in more than one job, report the wage rate for your most important job. A. \$4.25 or less B. \$4.26 to \$4.75 C. \$4.76 to \$5.15 D. \$5.16 to \$6.50 E. \$6.51 to \$8.00 F. More than \$8.00.

Of the thirty-three program completers that were employed none reported to be earning \$4.25 or less per hour, six or eighteen percent were earning \$4.26 to \$4.75 per hour, twelve or thirty-seven

percent were earning \$4.76 to \$5.15 per hour, seven or twenty-one percent were earning \$5.16 to \$6.50 per hour, five or fifteen percent were earning \$6.51 to \$8.00 per hour, and three or nine percent were earning more than \$8.00 per hour. This is illustrated in Figure IV.

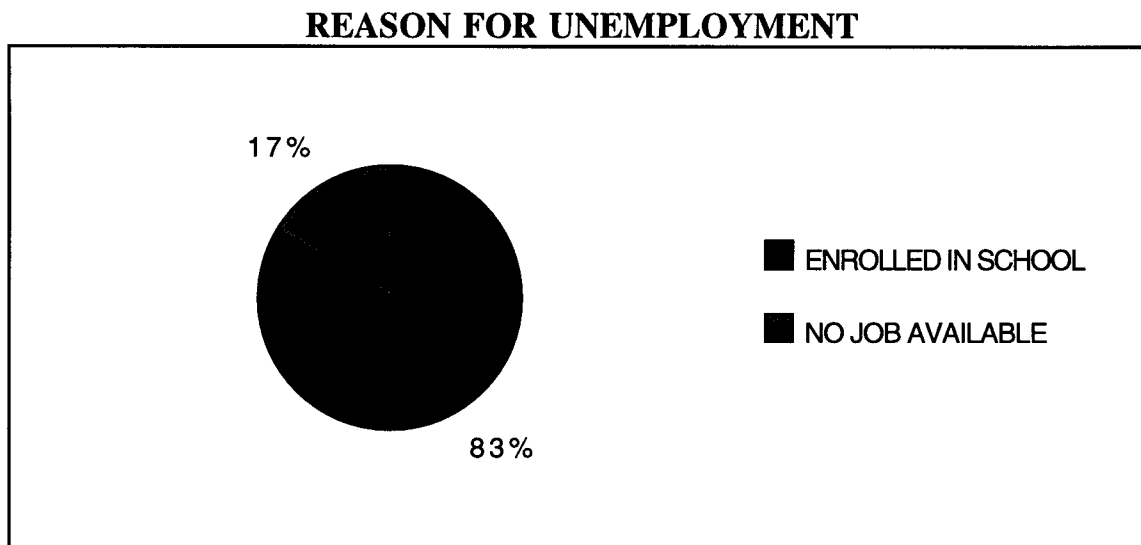


**FIGURE IV**

Question 6 asked the respondents to mark the bubble that best describes themselves and then complete Sections 7 & 8. A. Unemployed since graduation. B. Currently unemployed, but have been employed since graduation.

Question 7 stated, if you are not currently employed, mark the one response that most accurately describes the reason why. A. Enrolled in school or training program. B. Lack necessary academic skills to secure job. C. Lack necessary technical skills to secure job. D. Waiting to enter military or other service. E. No job available in my community. F. No job available related to my vocational training. G. Do not desire employment.

Of the sixty-one program completers surveyed, six or ten percent reported themselves to be unemployed since graduation. Of the six unemployed, five or eighty-three percent reported that the reason for their unemployment was enrollment in a school or training program, while one or seventeen percent reported that there was no job available related to their vocational training. This is illustrated in Figure V.



**FIGURE V**

### **SKILLS ATTAINMENT**

This section asked the respondents to please rate how your high school academic and vocational courses prepared you for work or further education in the following: E. Technical knowledge and skills. F. Computer skills. I. Ability to solve problems. J. Ability to make decisions. K. Appropriate work attitudes/skills. L. Ability to plan and organize. M. Ability to work as a team member. N. Skills needed for applying for a job.

The sixty-one business program completers rated their high school vocational courses on how well they prepared the respondents for work or further education in the following manner:

<b>SKILLS ATTAINED IN HIGH SCHOOL</b>				
<b>SKILLS ATTAINED</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>POOR</b>
	# / %	# / %	# / %	# / %
Technical Knowledge and Skills	20/33%	27/44%	11/18%	3/5%
Computer Skills	23/37%	29/48%	6/10%	3/5%
Ability to Solve Problems	24/39%	30/49%	7/12%	0/0%
Ability to Make Decisions	30/49%	24/39%	7/12%	0/0%
Appropriate Work Attitudes/Skills	27/44%	27/44%	7/12%	0/0%
Ability to Plan and Organize	24/39%	28/46%	9/15%	0/0%
Ability to Work as a Team Member	36/59%	21/34%	4/7%	0/0%
Skills Needed for Applying for a Job	32/52%	20/33%	9/15%	0/0%

**TABLE I**

Twenty respondents or thirty-three percent rated their technical knowledge and skills excellent, while twenty-seven or forty-four percent rated them good, with eleven or eighteen percent rated them fair and three or five percent rated them poor. Twenty-three respondents or thirty-seven percent rated their computer skills excellent, while twenty-nine or forty-eight percent rated them good, with six or ten percent rated them fair, and three or five percent rated them poor. Twenty-four respondents or thirty-nine percent rated their ability to solve problems excellent, while thirty or forty-nine percent rated it good, with seven or twelve percent rated it fair, and zero rated it poor. Thirty respondents or forty-nine percent rated their ability to make decisions excellent, while twenty-four or thirty-nine percent rated it good, with seven or twelve percent rated it fair, and zero rated it poor. Twenty-seven respondents or forty-four percent rated their appropriate work attitudes/skills excellent, while twenty-seven or forty-four percent

rated them good, with seven or twelve percent rated them fair, and zero rated them poor. Twenty-four respondents or thirty-nine percent rated their ability to plan and organize excellent, while twenty-eight or forty-six percent rated it good, with nine or fifteen percent rated it fair, and zero rated it poor. Thirty-six or fifty-nine percent rated their ability to work as a team member excellent, while twenty-one or thirty-four percent rated it good, with four or seven percent rated it fair, and zero rated it poor. Thirty-two or fifty-two percent rated their skills needed for applying for a job excellent, while twenty or thirty-three percent rated them good, with nine or fifteen percent rated them fair, and zero rated them poor.

### **QUALITY OF HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION**

The question in Part III stated, please rate each of the following items that were a part of your high school education: A. Vocational facilities. B. Vocational equipment/tools. D. Vocational courses. H. Vocational teachers.

The sixty-one business program completers rated the quality of their high school vocational education in the following manner:

<b>QUALITY OF HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION</b>				
<b>QUALITY OF HS EDUCATION</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>POOR</b>
	# / %	# / %	# / %	# / %
Vocational Facilities	7 / 12%	33 / 54%	21 / 43%	0 / 0%
Vocational Equipment/Tools	4 / 7%	40 / 65%	15 / 25%	2 / 3%
Vocational Courses	15 / 25%	46 / 75%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%
Vocational Teachers	23 / 37%	38 / 63%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%
Vocational Student Organizations	8 / 13%	53 / 87%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%

**TABLE II**



Seven respondents or twelve percent rated the vocational facilities excellent, while thirty-three or fifty-four percent rated them good, with twenty-one or forty-three percent rated them fair, and zero rated them poor. Four respondents or seven percent rated the vocational equipment/tools excellent, while forty or sixty-five percent rated them good, with fifteen or twenty-five percent rated them fair, and two or three percent rated them poor. Fifteen respondents or twenty-five percent rated the vocational courses excellent, while forty-six or seventy-five percent rated them good, with zero rated fair, and zero rated poor. Twenty-three respondents or thirty-seven percent rated the vocational teachers excellent, while thirty-eight or sixty-three percent rated them good, with zero rated fair, and zero rated poor. Eight respondents or thirteen percent rated the vocational student organizations excellent, while fifty-three or eighty-seven percent rated them good, with zero rated fair, and zero rated poor.

## **JOB SATISFACTION**

The question in Part IV stated, please rate your satisfaction with various aspects of your job (or most recent job). If working more than one job, consider your most important job only.

A. Salary. B. Potential for advancement. F. Working conditions. H. Level of responsibility expected. J. Job security.

Of the thirty-three program completers working they rated their job satisfaction in the following manner:

JOB SATISFACTION	JOB SATISFACTION			
	VERY SAT. # / %	SATISFIED # / %	DISSAT. # / %	V DISSAT. # / %
Salary	7/21%	20/61%	6/18%	0/0%
Potential for advancement	7/21%	21/64%	3/9%	2/6%
Working Conditions	7/21%	23/70%	3/9%	0/0%
Level of Responsibility Expected	7/21%	26/79%	0/0%	0/0%
Job Security	13/39%	18/55%	2/6%	0/0%

**TABLE III**

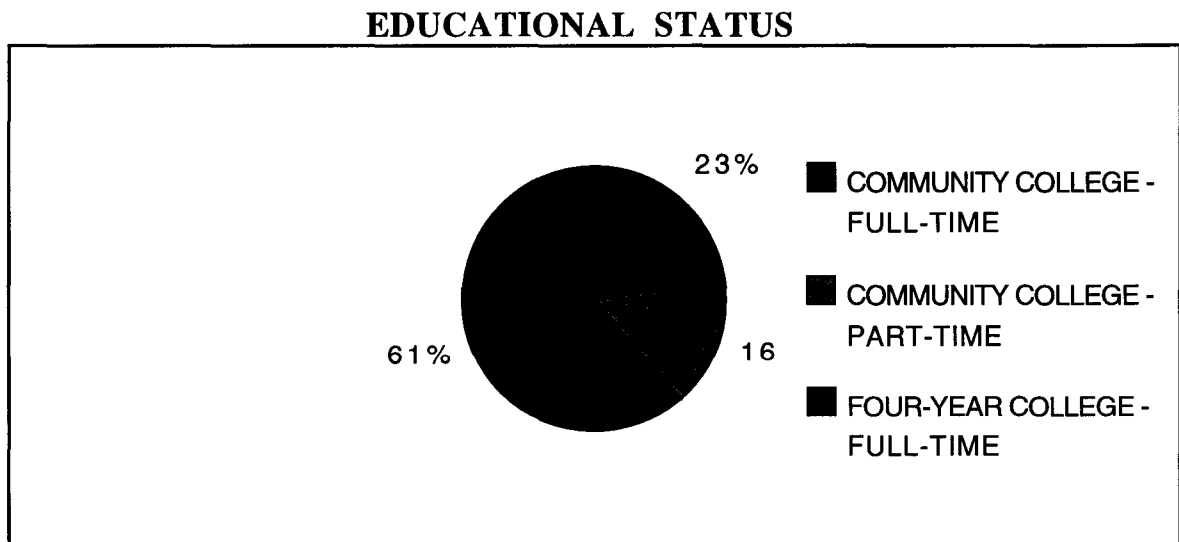
Seven respondents or twenty-one percent were very satisfied with their salary, while twenty or sixty-one percent were satisfied, with six or eighteen percent dissatisfied, and zero very dissatisfied. Seven respondents or twenty-one percent were very satisfied with their potential for advancement, while twenty-one or sixty-four percent were satisfied, with three or nine percent dissatisfied, and two or six percent very dissatisfied. Seven respondents or twenty-one percent were very satisfied with their working conditions, while twenty-three or seventy percent were satisfied, with three or nine percent dissatisfied, and zero very dissatisfied. Seven respondents or twenty-one percent were very satisfied with their level of responsibility expected, while twenty-six or seventy-nine percent were satisfied, with zero dissatisfied, and zero very dissatisfied. Thirteen respondents or thirty-nine percent were very satisfied with their job security, while eighteen or fifty-five percent were satisfied, with two or six percent dissatisfied, and zero very dissatisfied.

### **EDUCATIONAL STATUS**

The first question in Part V stated, select the item(s) that accurately describes your previous and current educational status.

2b. Current enrollment: A. Community college - full-time. B. Community college - part-time. C. Four-year college - full-time. D. Four-year college - part-time. E. Private technical college - full-time. F. Private technical college - part-time. G. Adult vocational program. H. Registered apprenticeship. I. Technical training in military. J. Local or state sponsored training program. K. Federal training program (JTPA, JOBS, etc.).

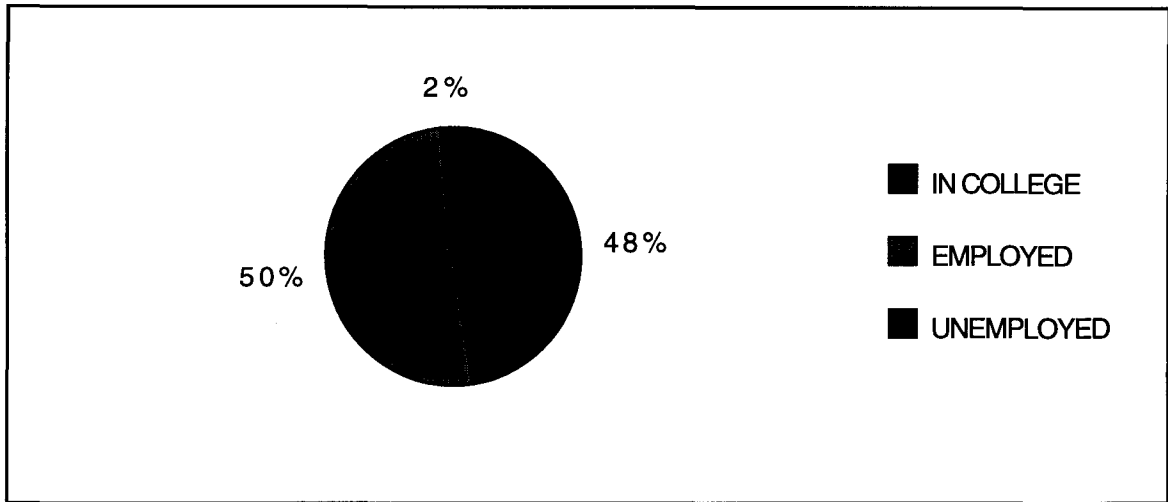
Thirty-one program completers responded that they were currently enrolled in college. Seven or twenty-three percent of the respondents were attending community college full-time, five or sixteen percent were attending community college part-time, and nineteen or sixty-one percent were attending four-year colleges full-time. This is shown in Figure VI.



**FIGURE VI**

The relationship between respondents in college, working, or unemployed is illustrated in Figure VII. Ninety-eight percent of the population is either in college or employed.

### CURRENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

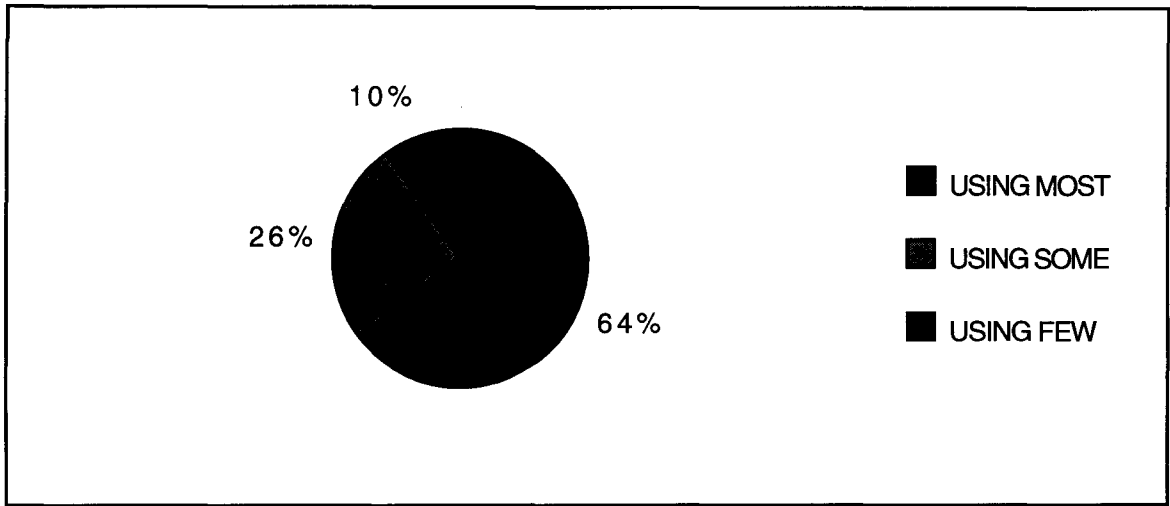


**FIGURE VII**

Question 3 in Part V stated, of the knowledge and skills I learned in my vocational program, I am using or used: A. Most of them in my education after high school. B. Some of them in my education after high school. C. Few of them in my education after high school.

Of the respondents currently in college twenty or sixty-five percent were using or have used most of the knowledge and skills learned in their business courses. Eight or twenty-six percent were using or have used some of the knowledge and skills learned in their business courses, while three or nine percent use or have used few of the knowledge and skills. This is shown in Figure VIII.

## USE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR EDUCATION



**FIGURE VIII**

## SUMMARY

The findings of this study were obtained from the Vocational Education Student Follow-Up Survey. Chapter V will summarize, draw conclusions, and propose recommendations based on the findings.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The problem of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational business education program of Bethel High School in preparing students to successfully transition from their secondary education to employment or further education. In this chapter are found sections on the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of this study.

#### **SUMMARY**

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational education business program was conducted through the 1997 Vocational Education Student Follow-Up Survey. The population used in the survey was the 1996 business program completers at Bethel High School. They were asked to provide information about their current employment and/or educational status, wages, skills learned, quality of education, and job satisfaction.

The literature researched confirmed that both education and industry are gravely concerned with the question of whether high school is adequately preparing its graduates to transition to the workforce and/or higher education. Business program completers were contacted by the business teachers to complete the survey forms.

## CONCLUSIONS

The 1996 business program completers indicated that the majority are employed and/or attending higher education, are well paid, and have learned skills useful in the workplace. They also rated the quality of their high school education as good to excellent. Most rated their job satisfaction from satisfactory to very satisfactory. The current status of respondents shows that almost all of them are in college or employed. The seventy-two percent response rate validates the data and conclusions presented in this study.

Goal 1. Determine the current employment status, use of skills learned in the business program, length of employment, current wage/salary, and if unemployed, the reason for unemployment.

The employment status results of the survey indicated that more than half of the 1997 program completers who were employed were employed part-time. More than a third of them have full-time employment. These percentages start to make more sense when they are compared with the respondents who are in college. Of the thirty-one pursuing further education, over sixty percent indicated that they are enrolled in four year full-time college programs, with almost one-fourth enrolled in full-time community college programs and the remaining in community college part-time. Also, nearly eighty percent of those working have been employed most of the year since completing the business program. This illustrated that the

students were prepared for both the labor market and post-secondary education.

Goal 2. Determine the level of business program skills learned in high school relative to the level needed in the workplace and/or further education.

The business vocational program at Bethel High School taught knowledge and skills that a majority of its respondents were using on the job. This indicated a high level of relevancy of the business curriculum to the 'real world of work'. Furthermore, the skills that the 1996 program completers took to the workplace were current skills. Those employed reported that they were earning above minimum wage with the majority bringing home wages above \$5.00 per hour and a few above \$8.00 per hour.

Only one program completer indicated that unemployment was due to a lack of job availability related to his/her vocational training. The others indicated that unemployment was due to enrollment in a school or training program. Therefore, the business education program was obviously teaching the essential skills that were needed in the workplace. This validated the content included in the curriculum.

Seventy-five percent or more of the respondents rated their workplace skills attained as excellent to good. These skills included: technology knowledge and skills, computer skills, ability to solve problems, ability to make decisions, appropriate work attitudes and skills, ability to plan and organize, ability to work as a team member, and skills needed for applying for a job.



Goal 3. Determine the quality of the business program facilities, equipment/tools, courses offered, teachers, and the Future Business Leaders of America student organization.

When asked about the quality of their high school education, sixty-six percent or more rated it excellent to good. The items rated were: vocational facility, vocational equipment/tools, and vocational student organization. One hundred percent rated their vocational courses excellent to good, with ninety percent responding that their vocational teachers were excellent to good. All of these areas indicated a very strong positive impression of the student's high school vocational experience.

Goal 4. Determine the current educational status of the business program completers.

Thirty-one or forty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they are currently in college either full-time or part-time.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Although the Bethel High School business program is strong in preparing its students for work and/or further education, it can still be improved. Such improvements may include:

1. Create business/education partnerships to strengthen the linkage between learning in school and applying it on the job. This could lead to job shadowing experiences, mentorships, guest speakers for the classroom, and financial support of the business program.

2. Teach life-time continuous learning philosophy and skills because no job is static and workers must continue to learn new skills to keep current. Human resource experts recognized that all workers must continue to develop skills to keep their jobs and advance in the workplace.
3. Teach work ethics and responsibility for personal actions. The literature revealed the older generations' concern over the lack of honesty and ethics among the young workers.
4. The plan of Hampton City Schools' Applied Academics department is to participate in the state Vocational Education Student Follow-Up Survey every spring. This would facilitate obtaining data on local program effectiveness and help with state-wide planning and federal reporting.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: Vocational Education Student Follow-Up**  
**APPENDIX B: Suggested Telephone Interview Guide**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Vocational Education Student Follow-Up**



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENT FOLLOW-UP

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

2. Student Identification Number										3. Div. Code			4. School Code			5. Program		
										A	B	C						
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	

6. Ethnicity  
 Native Am.  
 Asian  
 Black  
 Hispanic  
 White

7. Gender  
 Male  
 Female

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The top portion of this form has been completed for you based on your school records. Please read each item below and on the back of this form. The information collected by this survey will be used for program improvement. Your responses will be kept confidential. No individual responses will be used in reporting the results of this survey. Use a No. 2 pencil to blacken completely the appropriate bubble to the right of the selected response.

8. For school use only.  
 A.  B.  C.  D.   
 E.  F.  U.  N.  Dec.

9. Name of vocational program: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part I. Employment Status**

There are eight sections related to employment status. If currently employed, respond to Sections 1 through 5 and Section 8. Read the instructions for each section and respond if the section applies to you. If currently unemployed, go to Sections 6, 7, and 8. Everyone should complete the applicable sections on the reverse side of this form.

**1. FULL-TIME:** If your employment status is full-time, complete this section and sections 3, 4, 5, and 8.

At the present time I am: Mark only one bubble ↓

A. Employed full-time.

B. Self-employed full-time.

C. In military service full-time.

D. In volunteer service full-time.

(Peace Corps, VISTA, community service, etc.)

E. A homemaker.

**2. PART-TIME:** If your employment status is part-time, complete this section and sections 3, 4, 5, and 8.

At the present time I am: Mark only one bubble ↓

A. Employed part-time.

B. Self-employed part-time.

C. In military service part-time. (Reserves, etc.)

D. In volunteer service part-time.

(Peace Corps, VISTA, community service, etc.)

**3. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:** (If working more than one job, consider your most important job only.)

In my employment status, of the knowledge and skills I learned in my vocational program, I am:

Mark only one bubble ↓

A. Using most of the knowledge and skills.

B. Using some of the knowledge and skills.

C. Using few, if any, of the knowledge and skills.

**4. LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT:**  
 How long have you been in your current job?

Mark only one bubble ↓

A. Less than 4 months

B. 4 to 7 months

C. 8 to 11 months

D. 12 or more months



**5. CURRENT HOURLY WAGES/SALARY:**  
 If employed full- or part-time, or self-employed, mark the one wage/salary range that includes your current hourly wage/salary. If employed in more than one job, report the wage rate for your most important job.

Mark only one bubble ↓

A. \$4.25 or less

B. \$4.26 to \$4.75

C. \$4.76 to \$5.15

D. \$5.16 to \$6.50

E. \$6.51 to \$8.00

F. More than \$8.00

**6. UNEMPLOYED:** Mark the bubble that best describes you and then complete Sections 7 and 8.

Mark only one bubble ↓

A. Unemployed since graduation

B. Currently unemployed, but have been employed since graduation.

**7. REASON FOR UNEMPLOYMENT:** If you are not currently employed, mark the one response that most accurately describes the reason why.

Mark only one bubble ↓

A. Enrolled in school or training program

B. Lack necessary academic skills to secure job

C. Lack necessary technical skills to secure job

D. Waiting to enter military or other service

E. No job available in my community

F. No job available related to my vocational training

G. Do not desire employment

**8. CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE:**  
 Did you receive certification or licensure in an occupation as the result of your vocational education program?

Mark only one bubble ↓

A. Yes

B. No

C. Still working toward certification/licensure



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Suggested Telephone Interview Guide**



## Part I: Employment Status

### QUESTIONS 1 & 2:

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**Are you working full-time or part-time?**

*If the completer has both a full-time and a part-time job, ask about the full-time job:*

**I would like for you to answer the questions based only on your full-time job.**

*If the completer has more than one part-time job, ask about the job that he/she feels is most important:*

**Which of your jobs do you feel is the most important? I would like you to keep that job in mind as you answer my questions.**

*If the conversation flows in the direction of being employed in more than one job, you might take advantage of this opportunity and briefly skip to question number 4, below. Then continue where you left off.*

*If the completer is not employed, go to #6.*

*If the completer is working full-time, go to #1 and say:*

**I have 5 options for classifying your employment. Please let me read all 5 options, and then you tell me which option to select.**

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-E).*

*Please mark only one bubble.*

*If the completer is working part-time, go to #2 and say:*

**I have 4 options for classifying your employment. Please let me read the 4 options, and you tell me which option to select.**

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-D).*

*Please mark only one bubble.*

### QUESTION 3:

---

**I now would like for you to think back to your vocational program in high school and the skills you learned. In your present work situation, to what degree are you using the knowledge and skills you learned?**

*Refer to the options in the survey instrument (A-C).*

*If the completer has more than one job, ask him/her to respond by considering only the most important job. Please mark only one bubble.*

QUESTION 4:

---

*Skip if the completer responded as being a homemaker to #1.*

**I have four options to determine how long you have been working at you current job. Which of these fits your situation?**

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-D).*

*Please mark only one bubble.*

QUESTION 5:

---

*Skip if the completer responded as being a homemaker or in the military or in non-military service to #1 or #2, above.*

**Hearing that you are employed, we would like to know about your salary or wages earned. Please tell me which of the following six wage/salary ranges includes your current hourly wage/salary?**

*Allow the student to answer about the job which he/she considers most important.*

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-F).*

*Please mark only one bubble.*

QUESTIONS 6 & 7:

---

*Skip unless the completer is unemployed.*

**If you are not currently employed, we need to know how long you have been unemployed.**

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-B).*

*Please mark only one bubble.*

**We also need to know why you are unemployed.**

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-G). Read the options one at a time to the student. You may have already determined the reason for unemployment through your conversation and can mark the appropriate response without going through all the options.*

*Please mark only one bubble.*

QUESTION 8: *For all respondents*

---

**Many vocational programs prepare students for certification or licensure in an occupation. Did you receive certification or licensure in a occupation as a result of your vocational program?**

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-C).*

*Please mark only one bubble.*

• • • • •

### Part II: Skills Attainment

Now I need to know how well your high school academic and vocational courses have prepared you. For each of the statements I read, I want you to respond with one of four ratings. The ratings are excellent, good, fair, and poor. As I read each statement to you, think about it and then respond.

*Refer to the list in Part II to read statements to student (A-N).*

*Please mark only one bubble for each item.*

• • • • •

### Part III: Quality of High School Education

I'd like to know how you view the quality of your high school education. I am going to read to you some statements about your high school, and I need for you to tell me whether you feel that they were excellent, good, fair, or poor. The first item is "vocational facilities." Were they excellent, good, fair, or poor?

*Refer to list in Part III and go through the first nine items (A-I).*

**There are three more items. They can each be answered by Yes or No.**

*Refer to list in Part III and go through the last three items (J-L).*

*Please mark only one bubble for each item*

• • • • •

### Part IV: Job Satisfaction

*Skip if the completer is unemployed or a homemaker.*

Now I want you to think about how satisfied you are with your most important job. As I read the following statements to you, I need for you to respond with one of these options: I am very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied.

*Refer to the options in part IV to read statements to student (A-J).*

*Please mark only one bubble for each item.*

• • • • •

### Part V: Educational Status

**Now I would like to find out if you are going to school. Have you been enrolled in the past or are you currently enrolled in any type of educational program since graduating from high school?**

**1.** *If student has not been or is not currently in school, mark the bubble in Part V, #1.*

**2a/2b.** *If student has been previously enrolled or is currently enrolled in an educational program, read the list and ask the following:*

**Please indicate if you have been previously enrolled or are currently enrolled in an educational program.**

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-K).*

*Mark the appropriate bubble in either or both columns.*

**3. Once again, I need for you to think back to your vocational program in high school and its relationship to the schooling you were or are involved in now. What portion of the knowledge and skills that you learned in your vocational program are you currently using?**

*Refer to the options on the survey instrument (A-C).*

*Please mark only one bubble.*

**At this time, I'd like to thank you for your patience and cooperation. We are almost finished with the survey. I only have a few more questions to ask you. It will only take a minute or so.**

• • • • •

### Part VI: Job Title and Employer

*Skip if completer is unemployed, self-employed, or a homemaker.*

*If the completer is employed, write his/her responses on the survey.*

**I'd like to know a little bit more about your most important current job, if I may. Please tell me what your job title is.**

*You may have already determined the answer to this question through your conversation without having to ask it directly again.*

*It is important to get the correct spelling for the following items.*

**What is the name of the company you work for?**

**What is your employer's address?...telephone number?**

**What is your supervisor's name?**

**And lastly, we know that employers can provide valuable information on the quality of the education their employees received in school. Would you be willing to give your permission for me to contact your employer regarding his or her opinion of the quality of the high school program?**

**CLOSING**

\_\_\_\_\_it has been great to talk with you and find  
[student's name]

**out what you are doing. I appreciate your time today and your help with our follow-up study. Your responses are very important to the high school's program as well as for statewide vocational offerings. I've enjoyed speaking with you and wish you a lot of success in the future.**