COMPARISON OF ON-TRACK AND NOT-ON-TRACK SENIOR HIGH

SCHOOL STUDENTS: AN ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT

NEEDS AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

A Record of Study

by

LLOYD CYRIL VERSTUYFT

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2010

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,   John Hoyle
Committee Members, Virginia Collier
                      Mario Torres
                      Gary Briers
Head of Department,   Fred Nafukho

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ABSTRACT

Comparison of On-Track and Not-on-Track Senior High School Students: An

Assessment of Student Needs and Social Characteristics. (May 2010)

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M.Ed., Texas A&M University-Kingsville

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The student dropout dilemma in the American educational system has remained unchanged for the past 30 years. Dropout figures show more than 6 million high school dropouts living in the United States today. The purpose of this study was to compare and analyze potential dropout variables between two groups of senior students at a local high school.

This study included 228 senior students who were identified within two groups: on-track for graduation and not-on-track for graduation based on state exit exam results. A student questionnaire and student records were used to gather data. The study included descriptive, multivariate, and analysis of variance to determine the relationship of variables between the two groups that may lead to increased probability of students belonging to either group.

Findings from the study suggest the following:

1. Not-on-track students desired more assistance from their school in educational development and planning.

2. On-track students had higher mean averages in academic scores.

3. Not-on-track students had fewer mothers, more children, and more adults living in the family home and were less represented in extracurricular activities.

4. Not-on-track students endorsed more negative responses about themselves.

Research suggests that state exit exam requirements for graduation most likely do not cause additional student dropouts; however, research shows that exit exams may be the tipping factor for many students to ultimately drop out. Thus, exit exams can possibly increase student dropouts. The not-on-track students in this study may be at their tipping point. The results from this study show on-track students have fewer dropout factors within their group and higher academic averages than students in the not-on-track group.

The following recommendations are based on the study:

1. Further research should be conducted that uses a student needs' assessment instrument but includes former students who dropped out.

2. A study that concentrates on students' feelings of their school should be conducted at the middle school grade levels.

3. A study comparing responses of students versus responses of teachers could shine light on the school environment.

DEDICATION

This work and challenging project is dedicated to my family and friends who have stood by me:

- Especially, to my wife, Alex, for the love, understanding, and continual grounding that family comes before all things and the flexibility during the times I forgot about that during this project – a life partner I admire and love.

- To my children, Jordan, Matt, Will, Morgan, Kallie, Travis, Maddie, and Hannah, I love and thank you, and to my dad, Norman Verstuyft, for all your encouragement and support and the memory of my mother, Norma Verstuyft, who always and still encourages me to lead.

They allowed me to be absent from their lives in order to pursue my goal of attaining this doctoral degree.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my committee members for their contribution to my growth in this process. I feel that I have had the best committee any candidate has put together—a real dream team.

- Dr. John Hoyle is simply one of the finest and intelligent human beings I have come to know. His encouragement, guidance, and expertise will always remain with me.

- Dr. Collier and Dr. Torres's insight and expectation for excellence will impact me for many years to come. They have both been instrumental in my preparation and attention to detail during this endeavor.

- Dr. Briers has provided me continual guidance and makes anyone he comes in contact with, want to change the world, one student at a time.

- Additionally, Ms. Joyce Nelson's support and knowledge of the process were tremendous to me. Thank you.

I would like to thank Dr. Dominguez, for the support, guidance, and continual mentoring of this process. She was also instrumental to me during this endeavor.

Thank you to the Southwest Independent School District (SWISD) leadership and Board of Trustees for allowing me the opportunity to conduct this study and for showing me that there is no better place in the world to work. Thank you to the Southwest High School administration and students for your time and support. I appreciate all of you.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Observations and review of data from a high school in south San Antonio, Texas, suggest a phenomenon in which approximately one-fourth of the entering 9th grade students do not graduate four years later. Accordingly, 250 of the approximate 1,000 students currently enrolled in 9th grade in the fall of 2009 will likely not graduate in 2013. A majority of the 250 students will become high school dropouts and live with implications associated with being a student dropout. Thus, one-fourth of the entering freshman class continues to not complete high school four years after starting the 9th grade within the local high school chosen for this research study.

The high school in this study is not alone in the numbers and percentages of high school dropouts. State dropout data from the 2008-2009 school year show that 79.1% or approximately 260,000 of the 1.3 million high school students, 9th through 12th grades, completed high school within the four-year expectation after entering 9th grade in the 2004-2005 school year (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2008). High school graduation in American and state high schools occurs less for more students and has remained that way for many decades. Maria Montecel (2002) of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) testified to the Texas State Board of Education on September 12, 2002:

> Since 1986, Texas has lost almost 2 million students from high schools. This is like losing Austin and Dallas over the course of a decade and a half. These 2 million young people did not do anything to deserve to disappear. Our schools,

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This study follows the style of *The Journal of Educational Research*.

rather, are not holding on to them through graduation. And our state is looking the other way. (p. 1)

Hoyle and Collier (2006) in their study, *Urban CEO Superintendents' Alternative Strategies in Reducing School Dropouts*, ask the question, "Will the high school graduation rate increase to 90% by 2010?" The researchers were referring to the high school graduation expectation outlined in Public Law 107-110 better known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, more commonly referred to as NCLB. The NCLB act was considered the largest U.S. Department of Education's (USDE) reform effort since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. NCLB mandates higher accountability for all children, specifically student groups based on poverty, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficient students (LEP). The intent of the act was to close the achievement gaps between disadvantaged and minority student groups to White students (USDE, 2003). Many accountability standards evolved from the act and the responsibility of student success, including increased graduation rates became the responsibility of each state, district, and local high school.

The reform brought much attention to the length of time students were staying in high school. Research (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Burke-Morison, 2006) shows promoting power of a school is highly correlated to high school completion. In other words, the longer a student is retained in a school system, the higher probability he or she will not graduate. In an ideal school environment all students would transition from 9th through 12th grade within the expected four-year period (Bridgeland et al., 2006). The idea that all students successfully transition each year and graduate on time sounds plausible; however, the reality is quite different. Unfortunately, our system of education has become

a black hole where many students disappear and do not graduate from high school. Thus, the term "student dropout" is not new to educational leaders, nor is it a new phenomenon in the American education system.

In 1779, Jefferson introduced the "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge." The legislation created the means whereby all children would receive, free of cost, three years of educational preparation (Perkinson, 1976; Steele, 1992). Since that time, the doors of education attainment opened for many children, leading to more years of instruction and testing for knowledge attainment. However, historically in the United States, many children did not continue their pursuit of a high school diploma. In essence, many children became and still become high school dropouts. Successful completion of the educational process (high school graduation) is the threshold for millions of young Americans living a lifestyle above the poverty line. A high school dropout comes at an extreme cost to the individual and to our society. For every dropout student, everyone in society pays the price. Confirming the evidence on dropping out of school and the cost to our nation, President Barack Obama in *Renewing America's Promise* (USDE, 2009) stated:

> The path to jobs and growth begins in America's classrooms. The decisions we make about how to educate our children will shape our future for generations to come. They will determine not just whether our children have the chance to fulfill their God-given potential, or whether our workers have the chance to build a better life for their families, but whether we, as a nation, will remain, in the 21st Century, the kind of global economic leader that we were in the Twentieth. If we want to out-compete the world tomorrow, we must out-educate the world today. (p. 3)

Scope of the Problem

The USDE reports more than 500,000 young people drop out of high school annually and the rate at which they drop out has remained somewhat consistent for many years. A study conducted by the Alliance for Excellence in Education suggests that the dropout dilemma is far more serious than what the USDE reports (Pinkus, 2006). According to Alliance research, over 1.2 million students fail to graduate from American high schools annually. That number equates to over 7,000 students dropping out of American schools each day (Pinkus, 2006). The number of dropouts is staggering and the cost to each individual dropout and society is stunning.

A student dropout today earns less money proportionately than a student dropout three decades ago (America's Promise Alliance, 2008). The USDE shows the estimated average earned income difference between a dropout and a high school graduate as $9,000 per year and $260,000.00 over the course of a lifetime. A high school dropout will earn about $1 million less over a lifetime than a college graduate and is more inclined to live a far less healthy lifestyle, have an increased chance of incarceration and will most likely participate within the welfare system (Bridgeland et al., 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Peng and Takai (1983) suggest that our nation's literacy rate, our sense of greater community, and our economic strength are negatively impacted with increased student dropout numbers and percentages. Thirty years ago, a student dropout had an avenue of hope through acclimation and advancement into the industrial workforce. Over the past decades, the face of the economy has changed and the work avenues that once proposed opportunity for high school dropouts has been replaced with technical and problem-

solving requirements within the workforce. Ninety percent of the fastest growing jobs of the future will require some type of post-secondary education (Pinkus, 2006). Thus, the implications of future workforce requirements will have an especially profound effect on certain ethnic groups in the United States.

National research confirms that student dropouts are more profound among ethnic boundaries, and graduation rates for White students are much greater than other race groups. Accordingly, White students' graduation rate (2002-2003) was 78% compared to 56% for African American and 52% for Hispanic students (Barton, 2005; Greene, 2005). For the same year, the Texas graduation rate for White students was 81% compared to 61% for African American and 59% for Hispanic students (Losen, Orfield, & Balfanz, 2006). Additionally, Pinkus (2006) suggests that other disproportional issues related to equitable educational attainment and race exist: (a) historically disadvantaged minority groups have little more than a 50% chance of graduating from high school; (b) if African American and Latino students graduated at the same rate as White students, we would witness an additional 310,000 graduates every year; (c) about 2,000 of the 20,000 high schools in the nation produce 50% of the dropouts; and (d) urban, high racial segregation and high poverty rate high schools lag about 20% behind in graduation rates from predominately White affluent high schools. Many of the confirmed inequities referencing student dropouts have evolved from a sense of not completely understanding the phenomenon of student dropouts. Much of the confusion and continual plight of students dropping out of school derived from inconsistent reporting of numbers and percentages of student dropouts over past decades.

The process of monitoring and dropout data integrity is as complex as the dropout crisis itself. Recent research and higher education institutions are shining new light on data integrity and methodology, articulating the real dropout picture. Thus, the number of student dropouts realized over the past 5 to 10 years is much more than anyone had expected or realized (Pinkus, 2006). Understanding the process of a student dropout's decision to cease attending school has become the focus at the national, state, and local levels. Specifically, understanding the complex interactions of students and their plight of being pulled out or dropping out of school is critical to the focus of this catastrophic phenomenon.

Research shows a dropout is not created through one sudden act or any one particular individual characteristic (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Rumberger & Sun, 2008). Many people believe the decision to drop out of school resides within the individual student for various reasons. However, in reality, many factors exist in the evolution of a student dropout. Dropouts are pushed and pulled out of school. The student dropout phenomenon is a reflection of the failing school system's inability to address student needs based on a variety of individual, family, community, and school factors. Thus, there are many factors leading to a student dropping out of a school system. Some variables revealed by prior research included: race, ethnicity, socio-economic, gender, a student's potential, school engagement, self-efficacy, participation, etc. (Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007). Understanding the potential that a student may drop out is critical. Major correlates revealed by research include the individual's educational performance, retention, engagement, attendance, and many other factors (Hirschman & Pharris-Ciurej, 2006).

Despite the high numbers and percentages of high school dropouts, there are some researchers who believe this trend can be reversed.

Jerald's (2006) research conveys hope to addressing the dropout dilemma. He states, "the dropout problem is not inevitable or an immutable feature of American education, demographics matter, but what happens in schools has a great impact on whether students stay in school and graduate" (p. 3). The more a school is involved in addressing the needs of their students, the higher probability they will successfully engage students leading to increased graduation rates. Efforts are underway at the national, state, and local levels to address the dropout problem and its associated costs (Balfanz, Legters, & Jordan, 2004; Balfanz, McPartland, & Shaw, 2002; Jerald, 2006).

Presently, our nation faces the enormous dilemma of curbing the upward trend of student dropouts locally, statewide, and nationally. The costs are increasingly tremendous and are not only measured in currency attributes but health and the deterioration of the fabric of our society. Studies have looked at various theoretical models to explain the reasons for a student's disengagement and ultimate plight of dropping out of school. The studies have been conducted on a national level for the most part. In one of the more comprehensive studies to date, Rumberger and Sun (2008) conducted a review of the literature on predictors of high school dropout and graduation. The researchers reviewed 25 years (1983-2008) of literature on the subject. There were 306 studies identified at the national level. The researchers suggested what differentiates the various models is the interaction of the processes of gradual withdrawal and the act of eventually dropping out, in addition to the unique individual factors involved in the decision. Many of the studies

differ with respect to the prominent predictive factors. Rumberger and Sun further

suggested the studies also differ in how the factors affect dropout behavior directly, and

they also differed as to whether the effects are mediated by other factors, such as

academic achievement.

However, many of the previous studies on dropout characteristics, as determined

by this researcher, do not clearly indicate the instruments used, whether a survey was

used, or if the survey questions were addressing only certain factors, such as community

involvement, mobility, etc. Ultimately, the previous studies have looked at dropouts after

the fact. There were fewer similar studies that have been conducted at the state level, and

even fewer at the local level (Rumberger & Sun, 2008).

Isolated progress has been made in recent years to deal with the enormous student

dropout crisis. However, the successes demonstrated within many isolated programs

needed to extend outward in order to positively impact and reduce a greater number of

future dropouts. There are many identifiable connections between an engaging school

program and student outcomes. Sound research that studies additional predictors and

influences, as well as dropout intervention and prevention can assist each local, state, and

national high school in reducing the number of potential dropouts.

Statement of the Problem

As previously stated, a multitude of factors and variables exist as to why students

drop out. The word "dropout" infers failure, laziness, refusal to participate, unintelligence,

and other connotations of non-success. Bridgeland et al. (2006) conducted a

quantitative/qualitative study of 467 dropout students from suburban, urban, small, and

large schools. The findings determined that students generally dropped out for five main

reasons: (a) classes were not interesting, (b) students missed too many days of school and

could not catch up, (c) students spent time with people who were not interested in school,

(d) students had too much freedom and not enough rules in their lives, and (e) many

students were failing in school at the time they dropped out. Grossnickle (1986) suggested

students increasingly became disengaged in learning, left school to find work, got

involved in drugs, and hung out with others who had no interest in school or pursued non-

constructive life experiences.

Ultimately, the overwhelming impact of dropping out and the economic

repercussions including lifelong deficits and upward mobility come at a tremendous cost.

Educational institutions from the national to the state and to the local level have

conducted research into studying why students dropped out of school before graduating.

Although many of the correlates were similar, there were variations in the number and

type of dropout correlates from various studies and the interactions of processes between

the correlates were not always clear. Many students transition from 9th grade through

12th grade and graduate within the four-year expectation. Some students do not transition

successfully from grade-to-grade and some students transition successfully but then fail a

state-required exit exam and do not graduate within the four-year expectation.

For purposes of this study, high school students who transition successfully each

year and pass the four exit exams were identified as "on-track" for graduation. Students

who transitioned successfully but failed one or more exit exams were identified as "not-

on-track" for graduation. Not belonging to the on-track group during a student's 12th

grade year increases the probability of becoming a student dropout. Additional studies are needed to compare potential dropout characteristics of on-track and not-on-track seniors in a high school in south San Antonio, Texas.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study in a high school in south San Antonio, Texas, was to compare variable differences of on-track and not-on-track senior students. The on-track group met graduation requirements including credit course attainment and passed all exit-level exams. The not-on-track group met credit attainment but failed one or more of the exit-level exams. A study of the possible variable differences between the two groups may provide essential assistance and intervention earlier in the students' high school experience, before the students' senior year. The literature reveals non-success of exit-level exams may impact student dropouts greatest during the senior grade year.

A student survey was used to identify factors correlated to on-track and not-on-track students in the participating sample student groups from the high school's 2010 class. This study focused on a high school in south San Antonio, Texas. The high school's academic performance determined the district's overall state accountability rating. In short, the high school's academic performance determines the local community perception of the school district. The high school is a traditional public education campus serving over 3000 students in 9th through 12th grades.

A Texas high school graduate in this study is defined as a student who attains course credits in specified core content areas (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) and has met successful completion on the exit level Texas

Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exams in English language arts, math, science, and social studies. A graduating student may receive one of three graduation designations: (a) the Minimum Graduation plan, which includes 22 course credit hours; (b) the Recommended Graduation plan, which includes 26 course credit hours, or (c) the Distinguished Graduation plan, which includes 26 course credit hours and four advanced measures (Texas Education Code, 2007). The high school's graduation rate in 2008 was 76.1%, resulting in 23.9% or 239 students from the freshman class of 2004 not graduating within the traditional four-year expectation.

The cohort groups comprising on-track and not-on-track for graduation in Spring 2010 will be the focus of this study. On-track students were the current senior class members who have attained appropriate class course credits and passed all sections of the state exit level Texas Assessment of Essential Knowledge (TAKS) exams (English language arts, math, science, and social studies). Not-on-track students are identified as senior class members who have attained appropriate course credit but who have not passed one or more of the exit level TAKS exams (English language arts, math, science, or social studies).

The researcher analyzed student responses as submitted on a 90-item student survey for both identified groups. The study examined key dropout variables and possible relationships between the variables correlated to on-track and not-on-track students. The survey data could identify dropout variables that are correlated to students belonging in the on-track or not-on-track student groups earlier in their high school educational experience. In addition, the analysis of the Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire data

could be used by school leadership and board members in framing programs and/or programmatic modifications toward increasing student graduation within the four-year expectation based on the research findings.

<div align="center">**Research Questions**</div>

The study was conducted to determine:

1. What are some dropout comparison differences between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) student groups as identified in a Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) in a high school in South San Antonio, Texas?

2. Are there plausible correlations of scores (TAKS 9th grade math and reading and cumulative grade point averages) between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) potential graduates as identified in student records in a high school in South San Antonio, Texas?

<div align="center">**Operational Definitions**</div>

The findings of this study are to be reviewed within the context of the following definitions of operational terminology:

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS): The AEIS is a statewide system database that compiles specific information regarding the operations and achievements of all Texas independent school districts and their campuses. The AEIS database includes reporting on student performance from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and information from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

ACT Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ): The American College Testing - Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire is a student survey instrument comprised of 90 questions. It is divided into three sections: (a) student demographics; (b) life goals; and (c) individual growth, development, and planning. Students responded directly to the demographic section (14 questions) and used a Likert scale response for life goals (18 questions) and individual growth, planning, and development (72 questions), respectively.

Annual Dropout Rate: The annual dropout rate is the percentage of students who dropped out of either grades 7-8, grades 9-12, or grades 7-12 during a school year. In 2003, the Texas Legislature required that dropout rates be defined according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (TEA, 2008) dropout definition, beginning with the 2005-2006 school year. Although most campuses do not serve both grades 7-8 and grades 9-12, if a campus reports students in both grade spans, both rates are included regardless of the number of students served (TEA, 2009a).

Completion Rate: Completion rate is a standard measured by the national accountability system that measures the number or percent of starting freshman and whether they graduated with a high school diploma four years later.

Dropout: Texas uses the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (TEA, 2008) dropout definition of a dropout is a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, receive a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die.

Longitudinal Dropout: The longitudinal completion rate reflects the percentage of

students from a class of beginning 7th graders or 9th graders who completed their

high school education by their anticipated graduation date (TEA, 2009b).

Not-on-Track (NOT): Identified 12th grade students who have attained appropriate course

credit but who have not passed one or more of the state test requirements are

considered not-on-track.

On-Track (OT): Identified 12th grade students who have attained appropriate course

credit and passed all state test requirements are considered on-track.

Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS): PEIMS is a statewide

student and school district data management system for public education

information in the state of Texas.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS): The TAKS measures student mastery

of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the statewide curriculum, in

reading at grades 3-9; in writing at grades 4 and 7; in English language arts at

grades 10 and 11; in mathematics at grades 3-11; in science at grades 5, 10, and

11; and in social studies at grades 8, 10, and 11. Grade 11 TAKS is prerequisite to

a high school diploma.

Texas Education Agency (TEA): The Texas Education Agency is comprised of the

commissioner of education and agency staff.

Texas Graduation Requirements: Students meet Texas graduation requirements when they

attain appropriate course credits in specified content areas and have met successful

completion on the exit level TAKS test in English language arts, math, science and

social studies. A student may receive one of three distinct graduation designations: (a) the Minimum plan (22 course credit hours), (b) the Recommended plan (26 course credit hours), or (c) the Distinguished Graduation plan (26 course credit hours with four advanced measures) (TEA, 2008).

South San Antonio High School: The high school is composed of school zones within an urban area that also includes rural school zones. In this study, the school district is located in south San Antonio, Texas, and includes nine elementary, three middle, three alternative education programs, and *one high school*. Total enrollment from Early Education to 12th grade is approximately 11,333 with 351 (3.1%) African American, 10,110 (89.2%) Hispanic, 780 (6.9%) White, 14 (.1%) Native American, and 78 (.7%) Asian/Pacific Islander. Additionally, 9,291 (82%) economically disadvantaged, 1,689 (14.9%) Limited English Proficient and 7,870 (69.4%) are identified as at-risk. The high school is a traditional 9th through 12th grade campus with approximately 3,000 students.

2010 Senior Class: Six hundred-forty eight students who were enrolled, in attendance, and classified as 12th graders for the 2009-2010 school year comprised the Senior Class. The majority of student's were from the 2006-2007 entering freshman class with the exception of 147 students who failed once, 28 students who had previously failed twice, and 5 students who had previously failed at three previous grade levels.

Assumptions

1. The volunteering senior students not-on-track (NOT) for graduation and the senior students on-track (OT) for graduation during the spring 2009-2010 school year are representative of American high school needs and characteristics.

2. The responses to the survey questions represent reliable data from the two groups involved in the study and analysis of factors correlated to OT and NOT students in the 2010 senior class cohort of the high school used in this study.

3. The methodology proposed and described offered a logical design for this particular research project.

4. The selected survey instrument questions provided representative identification of dropout characteristics for on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) senior students in American high schools.

Limitations

1. The study was limited to a cohort group of volunteer senior students projected to graduate (or not) during the spring semester of 2010 in one high school and one district in south San Antonio, Texas.

2. The study was limited to the information acquired and attained from the literature review, student records (2007-2010), student surveys (SNAQ) Fall 2009, and results from analyzed data of one-third of the volunteering senior students at one local high school in south San Antonio, Texas.

3. The sample used for this study was considered a convenience sample.

Significance of Study

A plethora of research related to student dropouts exists. The continuation of students dropping out of school before graduation is detrimental to the welfare of each dropout student and society. The dropout phenomenon does not afford a "one size fit all" fix, and continued study is needed to grasp and provide appropriate interventions to address the national crisis through local intervention. The study will assist the local high school and community by shining a light on variables correlated to students dropping out of high school in their community. Toward this end, district leaders can provide ample resolve toward curtailing and reducing the number of potential dropouts. A pro-active approach through analysis of several sources of student data, in order to address student needs early in a student's high school experience, will assist the local high school in reducing the number of students lost to dropout. The magnitude of addressing the vast dropout issue can be enhanced through a better understanding of the variables correlated to a student dropping out in a local district, thus leading to enhanced intervention and prevention programs through an arena of alternative programming.

Analysis and recommendations from this local research and study will afford stakeholders a better understanding of the variables correlated to the student dropout rate within the district by possibly highlighting factors the district and high school may not be addressing. If the survey comparison results show any plausible correlation to dropout behaviors for identified students, those could be used at the district, state, and national level, as well. The survey instrument used could prove to be a viable tool for other school districts in the state and nation for identifying characteristics of potential high school

dropouts. Thus, the value of the research is to study the comparisons of students on-track

for graduation and students not-on-track for graduation. A better understanding of why

students become disengaged in their school through a comprehensive survey instrument

could enhance "holding power" leading toward graduation on the required four-year

expectation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Historical Background

An individual's chance for lifelong success is drastically impacted by dropping out of school with additional opportunity for educational progress and workforce mobility impacted (Rumberger, 1987; Weis, Farrar, & Petrie, 1989). Some dropout students turn to the General Education Equivalency (GED) as an alternative to the high school diploma; however, their collective advancement opportunities may still remain stagnant (Cameron & Heckman, 1993; Heckman & Rubinstein, 2001). As such, the continuing dropout dilemma has come to be one of the top educational challenges facing our country in this decade.

The dropout dilemma facing public education is at an all-time high. Higher numbers of students continue to leave school today than years past. The review of literature addresses pertinent dropout factors plaguing public education at the national, state, and local levels. Information and data about student dropouts has been available for many decades at the national and state levels. Technological advances have granted educational and policy leaders' tremendous ability to gather data validating not only the enormous student dropout crisis, but the cost of dropping out to both the individual student and our society at the national, state, and local levels. The student dropout issue is not new. Historically, tracking dropout numbers had been difficult and almost impossible. Student dropouts are especially evident in low socioeconomic, high minority school systems. Schools serving students from low socioeconomic, high minority populations

experience more prevalent factors associated with dropouts: low achievement, retention (resulting in over-age), poor attendance, and poorer family structures (Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007).

Additionally, the review of literature includes a summary of the evolution of the American high school and dropout research, including an analysis of lifelong consequences and factors that contributed to dropping out of school. Many factors correlated to dropping out of school are listed under the following domains: family, individual, school, and community. A review of the Texas state definitions for dropouts and a review of research conducted by the state of Texas on student dropouts are also included. Finally, a summary of literature review is provided.

<div align="center">**History of Dropout Research**</div>

The picture of today's high school is one of high expectation, rigorous course work, and high stakes. The current high school system is framed by the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). The expectation from the NCLB act is that *every* student will attain a high level of academic proficiency. However, the current American high school education system was built from societal needs that were much different from the needs of our world today. The original high school model evolved through student and community needs that required different tracks of education preparations, i.e., vocational training and acculturation into society. The majority of students were not prepared for additional educational opportunities beyond high school. The current societal need is much different and the evolving educational system of today aspires to redesign many of the original, held to, models of years past. Teachers, principals, state and local leaders continue to

implement and refine the mandates of the restructure effort under NCLB. Still, it is important to review how the American high school system began

Secondary education was not common during the early 19th century; it was afforded only for the well-to-do, unlike the universal system of education we have today. In 1910, approximately 10% of American youths attended high school throughout the nation. The first American high school was the Boston Latin Grammar School, founded in 1635 to prepare young men for college, mainly in law and ministry (Boyer, 1983). Student enrollments in high school remained small. During the 1800's, the first *public* high school opened in Boston, Massachusetts, called the English Classical School. The curriculum consisted of: composition, declamation, mathematics, history, civics, logic, surveying, navigation, and moral and political philosophy (Boyer, 1983).

The societal belief of a higher education beyond the elementary level took hold approximately 40 years after the first American high school opened its doors. An estimated 50,000 students attended public high schools by the end of the 19th century. In the late 1800s, enrollment opened to girls and the working class youths who were interested in learning skills for various trades (Boyer, 1983).

The Industrial Revolution and mass urbanization drove the need to construct more American high schools. While college preparatory schools still existed, much of the focus of the high schools shifted to vocational training. Parents and students saw the new vocational-type schools as a threshold into better industrial and farming opportunities. Thus, academic subjects were considered a hurdle rather than the core curriculum of the vocational training schools.

By the end of the 19th century, rising criticisms about American high schools surfaced. Educational leaders decided all students should be afforded an education that allowed them to obtain a suitable future, whether they were destined for post high school colleges, universities, or the workforce. In essence, "there would be no curricular distinction between students preparing for college and those who were preparing for life" (Kliebard, 1986, p. 10).

The national skyline of the early 20th century experienced many changes driven mainly by the influx of new immigrants into the United States. The presence of the new and growing population changed the vision of educating for post high school opportunities, to one that set out to accustom new immigrants into American cultures and values. To address the new diverse student populations, high schools began tracking students into different high school preparation opportunities. Some were placed on a college preparatory track, some were placed on a vocational track, and some were simply placed in a general study track to better acclimate into American society. As enrollments continued to climb more rigorous academic studies were lessened, "however some academic preparation was maintained, predominately reserved for the minority of students deemed college material" (Boyer, 1983, p. 54).

At the turn of the 20th century, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education issued what were termed the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education. The principles were a result of American high schools' enrollment explosion and a way to bring structure to the secondary levels of education. The principles were to serve as a guide for high schools and the new focus was on health, command of

fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocation, civic education, worthy use of leisure, and ethical behavior (Raubinger, Rowe, Piper, & West, 1969).

The sputnik launch brought even more and louder criticism of the American educational system. The American educational system was deemed lagging in all facets of educating the youth, especially in the sciences. The sputnik launch has been a rallying cry for many opponents of public education and is seen by many as the catalyst that has ignited the modern day reform efforts of the American educational system.

In 1983, Secretary of Education Terrell H. Bell appointed the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) to address the issues of a failing system. The Commission's report, *A Nation at Risk*, expressed alarm that the United States was not keeping pace with other countries' educational systems. The study cited a later analysis from economist Paul Copperman:

> Each generation of Americans has outstripped its parents in education, in literacy, and in economic attainment. For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach, those of their parents. (USDE, 1983a, p. 4)

Twelve indicators were drawn from the research that further supported the demise of American education in the early 1980s (a) some 23 million Americans were considered functionally illiterate; (b) 13% of American 17-year-olds were considered functionally illiterate; (c) the average achievement of American high school students was lower than it was 26 years ago during the Sputnik launch; (d) over half of the identified Gifted and Talented students did not match their tested ability with comparable achievement tests; (e) the College Boards Scholastic Achievement tests, SAT, demonstrated an unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980 and verbal scores had fallen 50 points and math scores had

fallen 40 points; (f) College Board achievement scores had fallen considerably in physics

and English; (g) superior achievement on the SAT had declined considerably; (h) nearly

40% of American students could not draw inference from written material, only one fifth

could write a persuasive essay, and only one-third could perform multiple step

mathematic calculations; (i) a continual decline was evident in science achievement; (j)

during 1975 through 1980, remedial math courses increased by 72% in colleges; (k)

college graduation reflected lower rates; and (l) business and industry leaders complained

that they had to exhaust millions of dollars toward remediation and workforce readiness

(USDE, 1983b).

As a result of the report, virtually all states raised the number of academic credits

required for graduation and increased the rigor of academic standards. Additionally, many

high school graduation requirements were linked to curriculum-based and/or exit level

examinations.

The National Commission's report determined that our nation's educational

system was mediocre and represented approximately one million student dropouts

annually (Gottardy, 1996). The *Nation Accountable: Twenty-Five Years After a Nation at

Risk* report showed that the quality of education attained had a direct effect on individual

earnings and dropouts in general were much more likely than their peers who graduated to

be unemployed, live in poverty, receive public relief, be involved in crime, have higher

incarceration numbers, be on death row, be unhealthy, or be single parents. Thus,

dropping out had negative lifelong consequences for the individual. The number of

dropouts today is staggering with estimates that over 6.2 million young adults between 16

and 24 years of age do not attend school and do not have a high school diploma. This figure represents 16% of the nation's population, categorized as a school dropout in 2007 (Center for Labor Market Studies, 2009).

Lifelong Consequences

Higher education generally relates to a better quality of life. On average, high school dropouts earn $8,100 less per year than high school graduates and approximately $1 million dollars less than college graduates during an average lifespan. Further analysis shows college degreed median income as $51,000 per year, compared to a non-high school graduate earning approximately $22,000 per year (poverty level). Earning power for student dropouts is detrimentally affected and the implications extend to society as well (McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Vasquez-Heilig, 2008).

High dropout rates also affect communities and the nation due to the loss of productive workers, higher crime costs, health disorders, and social services. Additionally, a dropout is eight times more likely to be involved in illegal crimes leading to increased incarceration compared to their counterparts (Harlow, 2003). Incarceration rates and high school dropout rates have an extremely high positive correlation with over one-half of all federal inmates having not attained a high school diploma (Hoyle & Collier, 2006). Lifelong consequences of dropping out come at a tremendous price for the individual and society. Consequences of dropping out was purported to cost the nation approximately $260 billion annually. Additional societal costs, in the form of lost wages, lost taxing capacity, welfare participation, and countless other direct and indirect outlays are also confirmed through research (Hoyle & Collier, 2006). Lochner and Moretti (2003) predict

that crime activity would have decreased by 7% and serious crimes, such as murders and assaults, would have decreased by 20%, if nationally, the 2003 graduation rate had been 10% higher. In addition, 100,000 more crimes, during the decade of the 1990s, were attributed to student dropout numbers, resulting in approximately $1.4 billion more dollars spent to control criminal activity. A recent study, applying Lochner and Moretti's crime model, predict future student dropouts from the pending class of 2012 will cost society in the form of increased violence and property crimes ranging between 19,564 to 33,287 additional incidents (Alvarez et al., 2009).

Failure to attain a high school diploma is shown to have a strong correlation to lifelong health implications as well. Some health problems shown to correlate with dropping out of school included substance abuse, pregnancy, psychological, emotional, and behavioral issues. Some researchers suggested implications associated with lifelong health problems have a positive correlation to an array of illnesses attributed to dropping out. The suggested illnesses that show correlation to dropping out include increased coronary disease, high blood pressure, cancers, Alzheimer's, mental illness, diabetes, depression, stress, lung illnesses, and obesity (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

Annual cost savings to society, if student dropouts were diminished, range from $625 million to over $1 billion dollars coming from reduced welfare, decreased crime, and incarcerations (Alvarez et al., 2009). In addition to lifelong consequences, other research has focused on what the predictors are for students dropping out of school.

Dropout Data and Reporting

All states were required to adopt the National Center of Education Statistics' (TEA, 2008) definition of a dropout beginning with the 2005-2006 school year. Under the nationally agreed upon definition by all state governors in 2005, a dropout is a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, receive a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die (TEA, 2009b). Prior to the new standard and adding to the vast confusion of combating student dropouts for many years was the question, "What exactly is a dropout?"

A dropout by definition is complex and confounded (Bridgeland et al., 2006). A review of the various ways dropouts are defined nationally further illustrates the problem. The different methods of calculating and reporting dropout rate sometimes generates controversy. There are many ways of calculating student dropout rates as seen in the USDE (2008) literature, i.e., Event Rate, Annual Dropout Rate, Four-Year Longitudinal Dropout Rate, Other Leavers, Attrition Rate, Status Rate, Cohort Rate, High School Completion Rate, and Freshman Graduation Rates. Each calculation method explains part of the big picture. However, the most comprehensive and value-added method is longitudinal rates: the study of a school cohort group of students. Prior to recent technology advances and methodologies, states generally underreported student dropout rates. Even with increased data capability and heightened focus on the dropout issue, high schools, on average, still experience daily loss of students.

Recent graduation rates show the continual plight of student dropouts in our nation, state, and local districts. The graduation rate for the class of 2001, nationwide, was 68%, showing that 32% of the students who should have graduated in 2001, did not. Additional analysis for the same cohort class shows the White graduation rate at 75% compared to African American and Hispanic students 50% and 53%, respectively (Swanson, 2003). The figure is even higher for students identified with special needs. Monrad (2007) shows that students with special needs such as emotional or behavioral issues will drop out at twice the rate than their non-special needs counterparts, and male students are more likely to drop out compared to female students at an approximate 8% gap difference.

The dropout data in Texas mirrors that of the nation. In 2003, Texas graduated approximately 67% of all students in public schools with Whites at 75%, African Americans at 59.9%, and Hispanic students at 57.8%. Five years later, in 2008, the Texas graduation rate was 79% with White students at 88.8%, African American students at 71.8, and Hispanic student rates at 70.8%, respectively (*Education Week*, 2006).

As previously stated, *A Nation at Risk* described the condition of education in the United States as below acceptable for American expectations (NCEE, 1983). A year later, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 72 (HB 72), which led to the Texas Educational Opportunity Act of 1984, enhancing student dropout legislation. The bill also increased graduation requirements, established an exit-level exam for graduation requirements, prohibited social promotion, set compulsory attendance standards, and instituted the "no pass-no play" policy that stipulated extracurricular participation as a privilege to be

earned through academic proficiency. HB 72 specifically attempted to curtail high school dropouts. The new legislation covered nine components to improve public education in Texas: (a) set academic achievement as a priority, including adopting a "no pass, no play" rule for students in out-of-class extracurricular activities; (b) required students in odd number grades to take an annual test covering English language arts and mathematics, exit level exams to receive a high school diploma; (c) provided a pay raise to teachers, instituted the planning period, lowered teacher-student ratios for the early grades, and implemented a career ladder compensation supplement for teachers; (d) required professional teachers to obtain successful passage of the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers (TECAT); (e) revamped the public school finance to funnel more money to property-poor school districts; (f) instituted accountability measures for the educational community through the implementation of the Public Education Management System (PEIMS); (g) required dropout reduction programs; (h) obligated school board trainings; and (i) reduced the state Board of Education from 27 members to 15 (Kuehlem, 2004).

The 1984 legislation also authorized the TEA to implement a system for data collection on student dropouts and began developing programmatic strategies to reduce the statewide longitudinal dropout rate not to exceed more than 5% annually (Texas Education Code, 1986). The report mandated by HB 72 and conducted by the IDRA was known as the Texas School Dropout Survey Project (TSDSP). IDRA estimated that one-third of Texas students dropped out before completing high school. The dropout rates for African American and Hispanic students were higher than White students. The reasons

cited by most students causing them to leave school included failing grades, excessive absences, marriage, pregnancy, and financial difficulties at home. Additionally, few Texas school districts reported having dropout prevention programs, and even fewer had evaluation data about the students who were leaving their schools. This led to the passage of HB 1010 in 1987 (Frazer, Nichols, & Wilkinson, 1991). HB 1010 increased the responsibility for state and local educational entities to collect student dropout information, monitor dropout rates, and provided dropout reduction program legislation (Texas Education Code, 1988). The bill also required TEA to establish a statewide dropout data clearinghouse using data from the Annual Performance Reports (APRs), a district self-reporting mechanism. Additionally, each school district was required to add support for at-risk students through personnel and program enhancements.

The Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) came on line in 1990 and took the place of the annual performance reports. A major performance indicator mandated through the AEIS reports was the annual graduation numbers and dropout rates. AEIS data were then used to create the Performance-Based Monitoring Accountability System (PBMAS), a system used to rate accountability of state districts and campuses. As such, dropout rates became a major indicator for state accountability measures at each district and secondary school. The early 1990s allowed educational and policy leaders to view actual student data as opposed to estimated figures. Dropout records enabled the Texas Education Agency to analyze student progress on an annual basis and gave a year-to-year picture of progress for each student.

In 1996, TEA compiled data to monitor student success as opposed to student failure and created the completion rate measure. The completion rate measure provided an indicator of student and school success rather than failure by tracking a cohort group of students entering 9th grade with a status standard four years later, using the fall PEIMS submission during the students' 5th year. School leaver codes were categorized to reflect graduates, dropouts, or other leavers, withdrawn to enroll in private schools in the state, outside the state, colleges, or home schooled.

That same year, a series of new dropout terminology emerged. Longitudinal rates began to report the status of students four years after they begin 9th grade and students were given a designation of one of the following: graduate, continuer, General Educational Development (GED), or dropout. Annual dropout rates and longitudinal completion rates played an important role in the district and campus accountability ratings. Currently, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) performance, dropout rates and completion rates are used to identify the annual performance level rating of each campus and district as: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, or Academically Unacceptable (TEA, 2009a).

Texas uses two formal categories to gauge student dropouts, the "annual" dropout rate and the "longitudinal" dropout rate. The annual dropout rate shows the percentage of students who drop out of school during one academic school year. The longitudinal completion rate shows the percentage of students from beginning 9th grade or 7th grade, depending on the type of school structure, who complete high school during the expected time frame (TEA, 2009b).

Measuring data on the dropout rates described how many there were but did not answer the question of why? Factors correlated to students dropping out of school are a national, state, and local concern.

Factors Correlated to Dropping Out of School

Some 30 years ago, Rumberger (1987) showed noticeable data about high school dropouts: (a) minority populations were increasing in urban schools and the higher ethnic dropout rate was a reflection of the population increases; (b) dropout students of the future will be more disadvantaged than those in the 60s or 80s due to enhanced technological advances in the workforce, the new workforce evolution would place larger disparity between a high school dropout and a high school graduate; (c) many states, including Texas, raised high school graduation requirements and were highly committed to intervention leading to a reduction in the national dropout problem; and (d) the high school completion rate would become a main accountability measure used to rate the public school and overall educational system (Gottardy, 1996). Many researchers have studied the phenomenon of student dropouts.

Peng and Takai (1983) in the study, *High School and Beyond*, used student surveys to show dropout reasons endorsed by students' responses included:

1. School-related, such as missing too many school days, choosing a GED, making poor grades, and just not liking school.

2. Males generally dropped out for school-related reasons in greater percentages than females: 89% of males cited school-related reasons compared to 75% of

females. In particular, males left school for disciplinary reasons at higher rates than females.

3. Twenty-two percent (22%) of males described being suspended from school, and 15% of them stated they were expelled. In comparison, 9% of females described being suspended, and 3% expelled.

4. Forty-five percent (45%) of female dropouts left school for family reasons, compared to 25% of males Additionally, 28% of females left school due to pregnancy and 12% of females cited marriage as a reason for dropping out.

5. Hispanic student dropouts left school for family-related reasons in greater percentages than White student dropouts, 44% versus 27%, respectively.

Another very interesting statistic from the study was noted: dropout rates for students with fewer than 10 credits by the end of their 10th grade year were higher than students who had attained 10 or more credits by the end of their 10th grade year. Specifically, 55% of students who earned between 5-10 credits dropped out compared to 4% of those who had earned at least 10 credits. The study further showed student dropouts with less than 10 credits at the end of their 10th grade year increased 34% from 21% in 1992 to 55% in 2004. Thus, the study revealed many factors for dropping out and provoked many questions not only about the reasons for dropping out, but also the highly interrelated correlates relating to dropping out, leading to other studies aimed at digging deeper into the thought processes and thoughts of high school dropouts.

In the 2006 study, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts,* funded by Bill and Linda Gates, 467 ethnically and racially diverse student dropouts

participated in one-on-one and small group interviews with researchers (Bridgeland et al., 2006). The student dropouts represented small and large, rural and urban high school systems, and the students ranged in age from 16 to 24 years old. The quantitative/qualitative study estimated over 3.5 million Americans did not have a high school diploma nor were enrolled in high school in 2003 (Bridgeland et al., 2006). The crest of the study concentrated on five main purpose statements: (a) consequences of the nation's low graduation rate, (b) who is dropping out, (c) why do students drop out of school, (d) student regrets, and (e) what might help students stay in school?

Simply and tragically, a magnitude of factors and experiences comprise a student dropout. Many interviewed students indicated they experienced a disconnection to their school, were bored, felt unmotivated, and, missed academic challenges with relevance to their respective futures, leading to disengagement (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Additionally, further analysis of the 467 dropouts determined: (a) classes were not interesting (47%), (b) missed too many days and could not catch up (43%), (c) spent time with people who were not interested in school (42%), (d) had too much freedom and not enough rules in their lives (38%), and (e) were failing in school (35%).

In another research study, 20 "at-risk" indicators were analyzed within three identified student groups (low grade group, disruptive behavior group, and low-socioeconomic group). Fourteen of the 20 "at-risk" indicators showed a positive correlation to dropping out of school, including: (a) low grades (highest correlation), (b) suspended students (highest correlation), (c) low socio-economic students (highest correlation), (d) late to school without an excuse, (e) number of days absent from school,

(f) number of household members, (g) highest education attained by mother, (h) gender of student, (i) felt a threat of being hurt at school, (j) number of fights at school, (k) behavioral or emotional problems, (l) total number of schools attended, (m) mother's permissiveness, and (n) the first sexual experience occurred at age 15 or younger (Suh et al., 2007).

Other research findings support a positive correlation between five major demographic indicators and dropouts. Those were: (a) poverty, (b) race or ethnicity, (c) family configuration, (d) parents' education, and (e) limited proficiency in English (Nowicki, Duke, Sisney, Stricker, & Tyler, 2004). The researchers contended that dropouts could be predicted up to 80% accuracy by identifying the at-risk students in each category. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and single parent households who experience difficulties in academics, attendance, promotion from grade-to-grade and behavioral problems drop out at a much higher rate than their counterparts from more affluent, more traditional family structure, and more demographically advantaged peers (Zvoch, 2006). Supporting, and adding to the research, Somers and Piliawsky's (2004) study of African American adolescent risk factors includes poverty, large family size, economically disadvantaged students, little or no family support, low self-esteem, and low maternal intelligence as contributory factors in predicting student dropouts. Inevitably, researchers needed a system to synthesize the research and develop categories of factors related to a student's decision to drop out.

Categorical Domains and Risk Factors

The high school dropout rate is remarkably high in the United States, with estimates that a student drops out every nine seconds. Research on the

causes of dropping out reveal reason as individual as each student, and
these forces often act in combination with each other. (Hupfeld, 2007,
p. 1)

The study, *Dropout Risk Factors and Exemplary Programs*, provided analysis supporting

categorization of at-risk variables. The four recommended categories are: Individual

Domain, Family Domain, School Domain, and Community Domain (Hammond et al.,

2007).

The individual risk factor domain includes: background characteristics, early adult

responsibilities, social values and behaviors, school performance, school engagement, and

students' behavior. The individual risk factor domain reveals common factors that a

dropout student is associated with: (a) a high number of work hours outside the home, (b)

parenthood, (c) low achievement and retention, (d) non-attendance, (e) low expectations,

(f) non-commitment to school, (g) non-extracurricular participation, (h) high misbehavior,

(i) low socio-economics, (j) low parent education attainment, and (k) single or no parent

household significantly correlated to dropping out (Hammond et al., 2007).

Hupfeld's (2007) research in Resiliency and Dropout Prevention supports other

research findings describing the individual dropout domain with high correlations to inter-

related risk and demographic factors such as low-income families, being minority, being

male, being from a single parent household, having limited English ability, any form of

learning or emotional disability, high mobility, and over-age. The factors vary in severity

of influence impacting a student's dropout probability. Some distinct and notable risk

factors included achievement, retention, attendance, misbehavior, low socioeconomic,

low parent education attainment, and single parent homes as most predictive (Hammond et al., 2007).

The individual dropout domain also included behavior and psychological disengagement, including discipline problems and low self-esteem coupled with the fear of the unknown as contributing significantly to the problem. Behavior such as cutting class, not performing in school, and not being able to catch up were some other contributory factors for dropping out. Analysis of student surveys from prior research indicated that many students felt they just did not belong at high school and experienced difficulties with teachers (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986).

Social disengagement exists when (a) students lack the necessary tools to get along; (b) students do not get involved with extracurricular activities, clubs or organizations, and (c) students' association with other classmates who possess the same disengaging characteristics. Most dropouts have been scorned by adverse circumstances, such as poverty, pregnancy, homeless, low self-esteem, drug or alcohol abuse, health related, language barriers, inequity of educational opportunities, and hopelessness (Dobizl, 2002).

The individual dropout domain also included student employment, specifically, students who were employed more than 20 hours outside the home per week. Historically, student employment has been a normal function of growing up. Student employment may cause students to work outside the home at various levels ranging from minimal hours per week (10 or less), moderate number of hours per week (10 to 20), and intensive (20+) number of hours worked outside the home per week. Of interest, the research findings

indicated students who were not employed were statistically more inclined to drop out of school compared to the group of students who were employed minimal to moderate, from 1 to 20 hours per week. On the contrary, high school students who were intensively employed, 20 or more hours per week, had a significant relationship on dropping out of school (Warren & Cataldi, 2006). Because many other interrelated factors could be contributing to hours worked, such as a student's socioeconomic status and the family's need of support, more local research should be conducted in this area.

A multitude of research confirms individual risk factors positively correlate to a student's decision to drop out of school. Risk factors have been studied in depth and can assist the powers that be in the identification and probability of a potential dropout. Predicting a student dropout is only part of the task. A student's identification of at-risk brings focus to the potential that a student may drop out and though the label of at-risk elevates the awareness, it is what the student is at-risk for that is of the greatest importance. What happens within high schools can assist to minimize the number of students that either decide to drop out or rather get pushed out of schools. The context of what school environments create to assist students toward overcoming factors or variables can have a positive impact on the student's likelihood to graduate (Zvoch, 2006). In addition to individual dropout factors, schools also contribute to school domain factors associated with student dropouts.

The school risk factor domain includes school structures such as school resources, student body characteristics, student body academic performance, school environment, and school policies and procedures. Research shows that traditional large urban, low

socioeconomic schools lack promoting power necessary to move some students through high school, thus contributing to increased student dropouts. The lack of promoting power in schools has received more attention in recent years. Hammond et al.'s, (2007) study used the term "dropout factories" to describe schools lacking the ability to promote many students through high school and ultimate graduation. Schools with higher numbers of low-socioeconomic and high ethnic student populations traditionally post lower performance ratings and higher school dropout rates than their more affluent, less ethnic schools. McNeil (1997) suggested that school size and larger student populations had a positive correlation on a student's decision to drop out. McNeil states, "school size may also contribute to the dropout problem, because larger schools make it more difficult for students to engage in the schooling environment" (p. 210).

Students with identified disabilities also show a higher probability of not graduating. In a study, 228 students with learning disabilities (LD) and mental retardation (MR) were interviewed and their collective perception supported prior research of school size and its effect on a student's decision to drop out of school (Dunn, Chambers, & Rabren, 2004). In addition, results indicated that approximately 70% of students surveyed agreed that school personnel could have influenced them to stay in school by providing assistance with their attitudes and effort, better attendance policies, improved teacher behavior, better discipline policies, and increased peer intervention (Dunn et al., 2004).

In addition to school size, high stakes accountability systems also play a role in why students decide or sometimes get pushed out of the school system. An ethnography study conducted in Brazos County, Texas, showed high stakes accountability systems

including exit-level exams contributed to increased student dropouts. This was more evident for English language learners, ethnic student groups, and low socioeconomic disadvantaged student groups. Higher accountability measures encouraged a few unscrupulous high school systems to push students out in the name of "measurable improvement" ratings (McNeil et al., 2008). High stakes exit testing predominately attributed to *No Child Left Behind*, which created tremendous retention power and increased dropouts among all student groups, but primarily among minority and high low socioeconomic disadvantaged systems (Hammond et al., 2007). Other researchers suggested that high stakes exit exam studies apply many assumptions to the findings and contend that high stakes exams have little to no affect on dropout rates.

Wilkins (2008) provided peer review analysis of McNeil et al.'s (2008) research, *Avoidable Losses: High Stakes Accountability and the Dropout Crisis,* suggesting that too many causal correlations misrepresented the research findings. The peer reviewer acknowledged that some scientific facts from the original study were true but concluded that the misapplication of the research model used in the analysis and the researchers' universal application of one geographical area studied could not provide concrete evidence that a significant correlation between exit exams and dropout rates exist.

An increasingly number of states required high school students to pass exit level examinations as a requirement for graduation. Twenty-three states, representing over 60% of high schools in the nation, implemented exit exams for graduation requirements. By 2012, it is expected that approximately 75% of the nation's public high school students will have to perform satisfactorily on an exit examination to meet graduation requirements

(Greene & Winters, 2004). Supporters agree that testing students before entering post high school colleges, universities, and workforce is essential to validate the value of a high school diploma. However, opponents generally argue that exit exams lead to increased dropout rates (Warren, 2002). Greene and Winters (2004) believe the public and media have instilled a false claim that exit exams promote higher dropout rates. According to Dee and Jacob (2006), states with easier exit level exams have a 4% more probability of student dropouts versus states with no exit exam, and that rate increased to 5.5% in states determined to have a more rigorous exit-level exams.

The concern of exit exams grows when applied to minority student populations. Amrein and Berliner's (2002) research suggested states with higher ethnicity and higher low economically disadvantaged student populations were affected more by the requirement of the exit exam to meet graduation. Chudowsky and Gayler (2003) argued that exit exams were not directly causing groups of students to drop out from school at increased rates, but agreed that the exit exams may be the tipping factor for a number of students deciding to drop out or not.

Those supporting exit exams argue that the additional requirement of an exit-level exam validates the high school diploma and lets employers know that all graduates possess a high level of academic proficiency, thus the high school diploma is seen as valued in the labor market. Supporters of exit exams also argue that they assist schools by mandating a rigorous teaching and learning environment (Glenn, 2006; Greene & Winters, 2004). According to the Center on Education Policy (2006), exit exams have a major impact on curriculum and instruction and most likely assist schools by requiring

individualized attention to students who under a non-exit exam requirement would be allowed to transition from high school without the additional support. Martorell (2004) examined the impact of the exit exam in Texas and showed two interesting results. The study findings showed students who barely failed the exit exam in 10th or 11th grade were no more likely to drop out than students who barely passed the exam in the same grades. Additionally, they determined that the exit exam did not increase the probability of graduation for those students not passing the exam. Students who barely failed the exit-level exam possessed higher numbers of GED certificates and lower numbers of high school diplomas and did not participate in post high school educational opportunities at the same level as students passing exit exams.

Jacob (2009) conducted an analysis of the Michigan census data and suggested exit exams have a much higher negative impact on a student's ability to receive a high school diploma or any other form of high school completion, particularly for Black students. His analysis of grade-level dropout data from the CCD indicated that Minnesota's use of exit exams showed a greater increase in student dropout rates, particularly in urban and high-poverty school districts. The study showed exit exams had a higher risk relationship to dropping out among senior students. Regardless, exit exams should be considered one of many factors affecting a student's decision to drop out of school.

The effect schools can have on a student is tremendous and can be positive or negative. The school environment has received much attention in recent years to determine if in fact, the schools are part of the dropout problem. Ultimately, the answer

according to some researchers is a resounding "yes." Jerald (2006) states: "School-level factors play a significant role in determining whether students will earn a diploma. Institutions matter as much as individuals and attending a high school with certain characteristics can be a risk factor for dropping out (p. 6).

In addition to the individual and school domains, the family domain includes factors attributed to student dropouts. The family risk factor domain includes family background characteristics such as: family dynamics, family engagement, and family commitment to education. Consistent factors contributing to the dropout crisis is the family structure that also includes the education level of parents, income or occupation level, and family stress levels (Hammond et al., 2007). Family structures that lacked support mechanisms or that were too permissive added to the overall dropout potential of a student. Research showed family attitude and genuine family value toward the long-term benefits of education could influence, positively or negatively, future dropouts.

Rumberger (1987) showed that children usually follow the educational path of the same gender as their parents. This was especially truer in White and African American families. A family structure with a sibling dropout also increased the potential for other siblings to follow the same pattern (Dynarski & Gleason, 1998). A family lacking structure usually led to increased social disengagement and many times to discipline issues. A high number of discipline referrals should be a warning sign that some type of intervention action is warranted (Tobin & Sugai, 1999). The family structure once thought to permeate unconditional support and guidance to children has diminished. Increased family dysfunction, premature parenthood, responsibilities causing two parents in the

workforce, and many other reasons have led to the deterioration of the family unit. Ultimately, a breakdown in the family structure led to increased numbers of dropouts in the community in several ways.

The community domain included the general area where students lived and the demographic characteristics of the student's home environment. Students from the western and southern part of the country were considered to have higher dropout rates. Impoverished communities, single-parent households, and higher crime areas are all community factors leading to higher dropouts (Ekstrom et al., 1986; Hammond et al., 2007). Dilapidated communities normally have higher crime, unemployment, and survival instincts, causing more students to leave school to work and support themselves or family (Ekstrom et al., 1986; Hammond et al., 2007). As human beings, we are normally influenced by our surroundings. A community that encompasses organization, beautification, and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods, usually reflect and expect more opportunity in life.

On the other hand, neighborhood areas that struggle for survival reflect the strife of their inhabitants and show the wear and tear and lack of resources to usually maintain themselves. As would be expected, their expectation of what a school should offer is lower than modern communities. Traditionally, premier educators have not generally left suburbia to travel into poorer neighborhoods to teach. The trend has shifted somewhat, and there has been more focus on providing an improved teaching force in many disadvantaged communities. Committed leaders are striving to bring opportunities to many under privileged areas. School systems struggle to provide the interventions

necessary to help more students be academically successful while working with other agencies to integrate services addressing the needs of the individual, family, and community domains.

Table 2.1 shows some variables that are most prominent within categories describing influences affecting the potential a student may become a school dropout. The individual domain describes variables about a particular student, the family domain includes variables surrounding the immediate life and values of the family, the school domain provides a look at some variables impacting the student within the context of their educational environment, and the community domain provides a list of variables impacting a student within the type of community or area where they live.

Table 2.1. Dropout Variables by Domain: Variables That Influence a Potential Student Dropout

Individual Domain	Family Domain	School Domain	Community Domain
Background	Characteristics	Structure	Location
Responsibilities	Structure	Resources	Demographics
Values	View of Education	Programs	Impoverished
Behaviors	Education	Policies	Single Parent Families
Interest	Occupation	Procedures	High Crime
Engagement	Income	Practices	High Unemployment
Attendance	Work Load	Engaging	Unorganized
Self-Esteem	Discipline	Supporting	Welfare

Student Voice and Dropouts

Ultimately, one of most important keys to understanding the dropout problem is the complex make-up of the individual student's perception. The key is found in understanding individual students themselves, their voice, and their potential. As President Barack Obama said in a speech in November of 2008:

> One voice can change a room, and if one voice can change a room, it can change a city, and if it can change a city, it can change a state, and if it can change a state, it can change a nation, and if it can change a nation, it can change the world. (IDRA, 2008, p. 3)

President Obama's words confirm the idea that schools can do better at empowering students to take charge of their future by giving voice to their challenges, educational needs, and future aspirations. By giving students "voice," schools can address the needs of students leading to better developed and engaging programs as an alternative to dropping out of school.

As previously indicated in the literature, countless risk factors and indicators for predicting future dropouts have been revealed in several research studies. Research indicated that schools should assume the responsibility to implement tools necessary to gather and analyze data on students' needs based on survey responses. This process most likely can assist to improve student engagement. Cortez and Johnson (2008) states, "when students are asked what they think, they are being taught that they are active and meaningful participants in their education and what they say matters" (p. 9). Many times the student's voice is interpreted, and many times, misinterpreted by adults.

Research data collected from at-risk students revealed a major factor influencing and ultimately impacting a student's decision to drop out was the student-teacher

relationship. Dropping out infers a disconnection between the student and the school, and the teacher-student relation is the pinnacle of that connection. It can be assumed that poor student-teacher relations are high predictors of the dropout dilemma (Wayman, 2002). Wayman contends that many teachers treat students of different ethnic backgrounds differently, and this different treatment creates alienation and distance between the teacher and student. Thus, the lack of connection between teacher and student leads to a student feeling uncomfortable and eventually culminates in disengagement between the student and school. In 1999, a study conducted using student focus groups included 72 Hispanic dropouts (Davison-Aviles, Guerrero, Barajas-Howarth, & Thomas, 1999). The survey questions asked:

1. What were some reasons you dropped out of school?

2. What could have prevented you from dropping out of school?

3. What would you say to a relative or friend that was contemplating dropping out of school?

The primary findings of the research suggested that school personnel needed to understand for many minority students, the ultimate determination of dropping out of school was based more on social and cultural factors than on the academic functions of the school. Specifically, the researchers in this particular study recommended the schools use an array of Chicano/Latina historical literature within their settings in order to provide role models for students. Not only would students become aware of the history of Hispanic leadership in the United States, but they could also take pride in their accomplishments and contributions to society. The researcher further recommended that

the school treat all students equally without bias and maintain the same level of expectation within the curriculum planning that celebrates all cultural contributions to education. Furthermore, the school could make it a priority to get all students engaged in sports, community, clubs, and other extra- and co-curricular activities.

Ultimately, the researcher recommended strategies that validated successes of other cultural contributions as opposed to suppressing such factual stories. Finally, the researcher suggested hiring Chicano and Latina teachers who cared about all students (Davison-Aviles et al., 1999). Additional studies about student-teacher relations as dropout indicators could shine light on the importance of the role of teacher bias and its relationship among student groups including ethnic, special needs students, students from poverty, students from dysfunctional family structures, and community backgrounds.

The America's Promise Alliance Youth Engagement Handbook was developed based on the fact that students were genuinely the experts of the schools (Williams & Cato, 2009). They know what it is like to attend a school, deal with peer pressure, what motivates and connects them, and other important related issues. They also know what environment they will be met with when they return home each day (Williams & Cato, 2009). In essence, sustainability and holding power may reside in students' collective needs and thoughts about their school. If schools are genuinely interested about what engaged students, what interests students, and what would assist them toward graduating, the schools should include opportunities for students to express their voice.

The study, *Evaluation of Student Perceptions on Dropout Prevention*, utilized responses of 120 students from an inner city high school in San Diego, California (Ochoa,

1994). The focus of the study gathered data through the use of student surveys about their collective perception of their school. The findings from the focus groups and supporting survey instruments showed that students recognized they needed to be responsible for their own actions when it came to success, or non-success, in regard to education. The focus student group endorsed a desire to have more direction in their respective future aspirations and further indicated two main contributors that would lead them to potentially consider dropping out: lack of teacher involvement and academic pressures (Ochoa, 1994).

In another study, Dynarski and Gleason (1998) used a variety of student surveys to gather important information from over 6000 students. The study focused on students' thoughts of their school. The study included baseline surveys with follow-up at six-month intervals and then again at two-and three-year intervals, respectively. The information gathered through the surveys provided important data about the perception of students attending various traditional and alternative high school programs. The results of the surveys and questionnaires showed a reduction in student alienation, specifically in larger urban schools.

Many unique indicators and identifiable traits exist, and when merged, comprise a probable dropout. Each school has a unique set of indicators within the context of their system. And, it is within each school's unique environment that intervention and prevention programs can be developed to reduce the number of disengaged students. However, when a student who possesses one or more at-risk factors and whose voice is not heard or analyzed will most likely become disengaged in the school and face

increased probability of becoming a dropout. It is from the lack of interaction that a

school fosters alienation and ultimate disengagement that helps create a student dropout.

The at-risk student stands little or no relative chance of success or graduation in an

environment that does not hold student interaction at its heart.

Thus, a positive relationship between student and school can transcend many

predictive variables and at-risk factors that usually elevate tendencies most associated

with dropping out of school. This is not to say that identification is not important, as

indeed it is. However, what school personnel do with the information such as

programmatic development, fostering student relationships, and relevant educational

opportunities, is most important. As previously stated and supported through research, the

larger the school environment – the more likely student achievement is negatively

impacted. This is especially true in low-socioeconomic, high ethnic high schools

(Hammond et al., 2007; Shore & Shore, 2009).

Many schools do not place student relationships at or near the top of their priority

list. Dropouts are usually pushed down the list by curriculum, rules and regulations,

student codes of conduct, lack of athletic opportunities, and policies and procedures.

However, when schools fail to provide a relevant and positive school experience, students

may tend to feel unimportant to the point of feeling meaningless. In turn, students may

revolt either by acting out or silently disengaging themselves, both contributing to

possibly dropping out (Smyth, 2006). Predictors such as attendance, course success, credit

accumulation, a student's socio-economic status, and many others are correlated to high

school dropouts. A school system, through identification, intervention, and meaningful

connectedness can in fact provide the necessary environment to engage the majority of students toward graduation (Pinkus, 2006). "The presence of one key adult in a child's life can have an overriding positive impact on whether the child will ultimately drop out or not" (Hupfeld, 2007, p. 3). Ultimately, a complex meshing of unique at-risk factors exists for each potential dropout.

Researchers determined that a strong connection between school engagement and a student's resiliency exists. Seven determinates of a school environment should possess the following standards: (a) no single risk factor can be used to accurately predict who is at-risk of dropping out; (b) academic performance and school engagement are equally important and closely correlated; (c) resilient people are able to overcome many of the factors affecting potential student dropouts; (d) six resiliency skills, if addressed can intervene potential dropouts: building confidence, making connections, setting goals, managing stress, increasing well-being, and understanding motivation; (e) one caring and supportive adult can make a difference to a child; (f) supportive teacher relationships can reduce dropouts by 50%; and (g) what schools do can engage students and keep them in school (Hupfeld, 2007).

For many students, the school they attend may be the strongest and in some cases, the only chance of graduating. Research in the review of literature indicated student voice should be utilized in order to develop an engaged school. Researchers have shown when a school does not work toward engagement, many students can feel alienated. There are differing stages of alienation influenced by school environments and students may fall in any of the four categories: (a) *powerlessness*, students' feelings that they have no control

over their life or societal outcomes; (b) *meaninglessness*, students' inability to see how the participation in school will contribute in a positive way within their lives; (c) *normlessness*, students who place getting ahead and only conform for superficial reasons and are not really sure of the rules they should follow; and (d) *estrangement*, students' feelings of separation from other groups – they would rather be by themselves than with others (Brown, Higgins, Pierce, Hong, & Thoma, 2003). Overwhelmingly, research indicates analysis of student needs based on student voice as a requirement to address each school's particular set of challenges.

In yet another study, questionnaires and observation teams were used to gauge the differences between schools with high dropout rates compared to a group of schools with low dropout rates within 196 Kentucky schools. Findings suggested a distinct difference between the two groups of schools. Conclusions from the study included low dropout rate school staff dressed more professionally and seemed to provide more interaction and support to the students (observed), teachers in low dropout rate schools used more instructional strategies and engagement techniques (observed), low dropout rate schools were cleaner, in better condition, and seemed to operate more orderly (observed). High dropout rate schools reported a lack of post high school opportunities (questionnaire), low dropout rate school administration had twice the experience level compared to high dropout rate schools (questionnaire), and high dropout rate schools administrators reported little to no parent involvement compared to the contrary by low dropout rate school administration (questionnaire) (Hupfeld, 2007).

Relevant to the body of research is the conclusion that tools such as *questionnaires* could assist the assessment and evaluation of "collected" student responses. A student questionnaire may provide vital information from the customer that is essential in understanding the student characteristics and needs within the context of school reform. Further analysis supports the need for further research about the use and implementation of student needs questionnaires (Brown et al., 2003). How the questionnaire instrument is formatted and what it should include can be deduced from previous research. What is known through previous research is that fixed attributes and many risk factors (SES, ethnicity, etc.) cannot be controlled, and schools should not use them to mask the continual plight of students dropping out.

Rather, schools should group the individual, family, and community attributes into *modifiable factors* and use available resources to overcome and assist students. Specifically, schools should create better and more engaging systems. As research indicates, in order to prevent student dropouts, school leaders, teachers, and staff should value the importance of students' needs about their high school experience, solicit, and use student data to develop counseling and programming to address the student characteristics. Research also indicates school staff should engage students and make their high school experience relevant while assisting them to understand the importance of high school and lifelong goals. Ultimately, schools should foster the notion that a teacher or other caring adult in the system can either make or break a student's success and ultimate graduation (Dunn et al., 2004).

Summary

The dropout crisis throughout our nation and Texas is one of paramount magnitude that needs the attention of policymakers, business, educators, and society. Over the past recent years, technology advances and tracking mechanisms revealed the enormous student dropout dilemma. The data depicting the trend of student dropouts has improved in recent years, but the problem is so big that small positive steps are inadequate compared to what the data suggest in numbers and percents of dropouts.

The dropout dilemma is created by a plethora of factors ranging from the individual, family, community, and school domains. Many reasons students drop out of school are imposed upon them from their family and community and even schools. Schools, especially large and impersonalized, offer no refuge to students who possess any at-risk indicators making them potential dropouts. Schools that do not celebrate the awareness of cultural biases or implement programs to ensure equity and equality usually miss the mark and continue the same traditional system where the phenomenon of the student dropout evolved and continued spreading.

Texas has improved the data and policy toward changing the dropout crisis. This state has demonstrated improvement but still remains in the bottom 15 states for reported dropout figures (Shore & Shore, 2009). This can be somewhat attributed to the metropolitan makeup of the state, whereas 200 of the 1131 school districts in the state comprise 84% of total students within the system. The majority of Texas students are attending metropolitan or urban fringe districts. A student's success or non-success within school relies much on engaging the student, which relies on the student-teacher

relationship. Other indicators of at-risk for dropping out of school include poor attendance, low-socioeconomic status (poverty), classes uninteresting, disengagement from school, no mentoring teacher available, and many other factors. A student dropout and society face lifelong effects, including lower income power, poorer health, welfare status, non-taxing entity, and increased incarceration (Hoyle & Collier, 2006). The trend tends to be generational. Research showed that students who drop out of school normally have a parent or other sibling who did not complete high school. The involvement of student voice is critical in making strides to combat the dropout crisis. To meet the challenge of producing high schools of the future requires looking at what the research says about students leaving our high schools and how we can address the dropout problem eroding the academic progress of not only our nation's high schools, but our nation's future and that of our nation's children's futures. The students are valuable holders of information who, through inquiring means, can provide the blueprint that each school within each district within each state can make a difference in the nation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Rudestam and Newton (1992) stated, "The goal of a methodology chapter is to provide a clear and complete description of the specific steps to be followed. It is necessary to describe these steps in sufficient detail to permit a naive reader to replicate your study" (p. 60). The present study utilized a student survey in printed form to analyze educational experiences of students in the class of 2010 graduation cohort of senior high school students in a one high school district in San Antonio, Texas.

Permission was requested and granted from the local high school and district leadership to conduct the student research study (Appendix A). Additionally, authorized parental permission for children less than 18 years of age to participate in the survey instrument was obtained (Appendix B). All student survey participants were given an information sheet and the researcher followed a consistent script (Appendices C & D) explaining the purpose, procedure, and instructions to be followed for their voluntary participation. Student anonymity was protected through the use of unidentifiable coding used in the study survey instruments and data collection.

The study is descriptive and quantitative in nature. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) previously stated, "Descriptive research as its name implies aims to describe the characteristics of the phenomena being studied" (p. 60). The statistical method used was the multivariate analysis (MANOVA). The MANOVA was conducted to determine if any comparison differences existed between the two groups used for this study on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) from the 2010 senior student groups.

The purpose of this study was to compare the results of a student survey instrument from a senior high school student class that were grouped as either on-track or not-on-track for graduation during the 2009-2010 school year. Many variables exist as to why students drop out of high school. The instrument used to gather student data for this study was the American College Testing - Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ). The SNAQ was used to gather student cohort responses within categories including individual and family demographics: Life Goals, Career Development and Planning, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and Development. The 90-item SNAQ was used to record student responses to questions related to their high school experiences during their high school years at a local high school. For purposes of this research study, the sample group participants were considered holders of the information by their participation in the high school prior to and during the 2009-2010 school year, the year of this study.

Additionally, the study focus was to identify variables through descriptive multivariate statistical analysis and additional question item analysis that may be prevalent in one group (on-track) and not the other (not-on-track) to analyze differences between the two groups. The researcher conducting this study anticipated the information and data obtained from the research and comparisons could be used to implement programs for identified students earlier within their high school years to increase the probability of high school completion and successful graduation for more students. The researcher plans to present the findings to the district's administrative team and local

school board to develop comprehensive strategies for reducing student dropouts at the local school district.

This chapter describes the research method being utilized for this study. This chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) research participants, (b) instrumentation, (c) statistical analysis, and (d) specific survey question analysis. The procedures outlining this study are described in detail in the following sections.

Research Participants

The researcher gathered data from the participating senior students of the 2009-2010 senior class. Through voluntary participation, senior class members participated by completing the American College Testing - Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ). Participating students took the survey during their scheduled English classes at the high school used for this study. All surveys were administered by the researcher and each class and all participating students received the same instructions prior to participation.

The SNAQ is a 90-item question survey instrument that requires participating students to answer questions using a Likert scale analysis of questions subcategorized as Life Goals, Career Development and Planning, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and Development. The SNAQ survey reflects questions addressing the dropout variables indicated by previous research (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Hammond et al., 2007; Martorell, 2004).

The research population from the high school in south San Antonio consisted of 648 12th grade students. Table 3.1 shows the study population consisted of 648 senior

students: 313 (48%) male and 335 (52%) female. The ethnicity breakdown of the

population showed 566 (87%) Hispanic; 20 (3%) African American; 53 (9%) White; and

9 (1%) other. Additionally, special populations showed 21(3%) English as a Second

Language and/or Limited English Proficient students; 400 (62%) of the students were

identified as at-risk; 444 (69%) of the population were economically disadvantaged; and

80 (12%) were identified as special education.

Table 3.1. Summary Distribution of the Study Population at the High School in South San Antonio, Texas

Characteristics	N	%
Total Population	648	100
Male	313	48
Female	335	52
Hispanic	566	87
African American	20	3
White	53	9
Other	9	1
ESL/LEP	21	3
At-Risk	400	62
Economically Disadvantaged	444	69
Special Education	80	12

A total of 231 SNAQs, with 3 incomplete, were collected during the research.

Table 3.2 shows the study sample group students who participated in the study and

completed the SNAQ survey; 105 (46.1%) were male and 123 (53.9%) were female

students. The breakdown of ethnicity was: 188 (82.5%) Hispanic; 4 (.2 %) African

American; 18 (.8%) White; and 18 (.08%) other. Additionally, the student group

breakdown was 2 (.1%) English as a Second Language and/or Limited English Proficient

students; 126 (55.3%) at-risk students; 163 (71.5%) economically disadvantaged; and 24

(10.5%) special education.

Table 3.2. Summary Distribution of the Study Sample Group at the High School in South San Antonio, Texas

Characteristics	*N*	%
Total Population	228	100.0
Male	105	46.1
Female	123	53.9
Hispanic	188	82.5
African American	4	.2
White	18	.8
Other	18	.8
ESL/LEP	2	.1
At-Risk	126	55.3
Economically Disadvantaged	163	71.5
Special Education	24	10.5

Table 3.3 shows further analysis of the sample group participants as 158 (69.2%) on-

track (OT) and 70 (30.8%) not-on-track (NOT) to graduate at the end of the 2009-2010 school

year. The on-track student group consisted of 89 (55.3%) females and 71 (44.1%) males. The

not-on-track student group consisted of 35 (50%) females and 35 (50%) males. Additionally,

the ethnic breakdown for the on-track student group included: 133 (84.2%) Hispanic; 13

(8.2%) White; 1 (.06%) African American; 11 (7.0%) other; 93 (58.9%) 'at-risk'; 108

(68.4%) economically disadvantaged; and 16 (10.1%) special education. The ethnic

breakdown for the not-on-track student group included: 57 (81.4%) Hispanic; 5 (7.1%)

White; 3 (4.4%) African American; 5 (7.1%) other; 59 (84.3%) at-risk; 54 (77.1%)

economically disadvantaged; and 11 (15.7%) special education.

Table 3.3. Summary Distribution of the Sample Groups Within Identified On-Track and
Not-on-Track Designation at the High School in South San Antonio, Texas

Characteristics	OT	%	NOT	%
Sample Group	158	100.00	70	100.0
Male	71	44.10	35	50.0
Female	89	55.30	35	50.0
Hispanic	133	84.20	57	81.4
African American	1	.06	3	4.4
White	13	8.20	5	7.1
Other	11	7.00	5	7.1
ESL/LEP	0	0.00	2	2.9
At-Risk	93	58.90	59	84.3
Economically Disadvantaged	108	68.40	54	77.1
Special Education	16	10.10	11	15.7

Other pertinent demographic information included the sample groups' employment

outside the home, extracurricular and community participation, number of adults and

children in the home, as well as the student's responses of completing high school, plans

after high school, and grade distribution and family dynamics as summarized in table form

in Chapter IV. Thus, data were analyzed using the 228 completed SNAQ surveys

instruments in this study.

Instrumentation

The researcher chose to use the American College Testing (2005) Student Needs

Assessment Questionnaire. This instrument is comprised of 90 questions and is divided

into three sections (Appendix E).

Section one is labeled, *Student Demographics*, and is comprised of 14 questions

that included the following: student identification number, date of birth, gender, grade

level, estimated GPA, the student's plans for the future, the number of activities the

student is involved in, the number of hours the student works outside the home, the

student's ethnicity, the most prominent language spoken at the student's home, the

number of other children living in the student's home, the number of other people living

in the student's home, the role of the other people live in the home, and the likelihood the

student will complete high school.

Section two consisted of 18 questions and is categorized as *Life Goals*. This

section used a 1-4 Likert scale response, with 1 reflecting that a particular item is "not

important," 2- "little importance," 3 - "average importance," and, 4 - "great importance,"

to the student.

Section three is categorized as *Individual Growth, Development, and Planning

(IGP)* and consists of 72 questions. This section was divided into three subgroups.

Subgroup A is labeled, *Personal Growth and Development*, subgroup B is labeled,

Educational Development and Planning, and subgroup C is labeled, *Personal Growth and

Development*. The IGP category used a 0-4 Likert scale selection that recorded the

students' responses that they would have wished to had received more assistance with

during their high school years. Student choices included: 0 - "not important," 1 - "no further assistance needed," 2- "would have liked a little more help," 3 - "would have liked medium amount of more assistance," and 4 - "would have liked much more help."

The researcher also used students' grade point averages (GPAs), and freshman math and reading TAKS scores to further analyze the comparison of the two groups through a multivariate analysis. The GPA and TAKS score data provided the researcher a more in-depth analysis of differing comparison variables of the two groups' specific to the body of research.

Statistical Analysis

Data were entered into SPSS version 18.0 for Windows for analysis. As previously stated, the analyses compared two sample groups of senior students from a local school district using the ACT Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire instrument. Responses from the two groups of students were used to conduct this study.

Section one, individual and family demographics, was reported in descriptive statistic format using frequencies and percentages. The frequency is the number of participants that fit within a certain category. Percentages provide a representation for additional comparisons.

Sections two and three were analyzed through multivariate analysis (MANOVA) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine if a statistically significant difference exists between the dependent variables (Life Goals, Career Development and Planning, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and Development) between the on-track and not-on-track student groups.

The original research plan called for an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to be conducted on the Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire to produce a factor solution that closely matched the variables that were analyzed as dependent variables in the research. Estimated factorial analysis shows the statistical grouping of questions most alike for the purpose of creating subgroups. The survey instrument questions receiving similar responses were then grouped together because they were determined reliable through the EFA analysis (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). This type of analysis is appropriate when underlying constructs are suspected.

Upon further research and investigation, the researcher determined that the questionnaire instrument reflected subgroup construction. The researcher used Chronbachs alpha to determine the reliability of subgroups: Life Goals, Career Development and Planning, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and Development.

Multivariate Analysis

In addition to descriptive statistical findings, multivariate analysis was conducted to determine if any comparison differences existed between the two groups. The first research question addressed: What are some dropout comparison differences between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) student groups as identified in a Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) survey in a high school in South San Antonio, Texas? The Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) sub-scores (Life Goals, Personal Growth and Development, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth

and Development) were used to determine if a statistical significant difference existed

between the students on-track to graduate versus not-on-track to graduate.

> H1$_o$: There is no statistically significant difference in Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) sub-scores (Life Goals, Personal Growth and Development, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and Development) between students on-track to graduate and those not-on-track to graduate.

> H1$_a$: There is a statistically significant difference in the Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) sub-scores (Life Goals, Personal Growth and Development, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and Development) between students on-track to graduate (OT) and those not-on-track to graduate (NOT).

A multivariate analysis (MANOVA) and two analyses of variance (ANOVAs)

were conducted to assess whether or not differences existed in Student Needs Assessment

Questionnaire (SNAQ) sub-scores (Life Goals, Personal Growth and Development,

Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and Development) between

students on-track to graduate and those not-on-track to graduate. The dependent variables

were Life Goals, Personal Growth and Development, Educational Development and

Planning, and Personal Growth and Development contingent on Chronbachs reliability

alpha. The Chronbach test was used to determine if the instrument items were reliable. If

the MANOVA proved significant, a secondary analysis would be conducted. ANOVAs

were used, therefore, to examine the differences on each of the dependent variables of on-

track versus not-on-track student groups. Additional item analysis to provide further

analyses of the actual survey responses is provided.

The second research question: Are there plausible correlations of scores (TAKS

9th grade math and reading and cumulative grade point averages) between on-track (OT)

and not-on-track (NOT) potential graduates as identified in student records in a high school in South San Antonio, Texas? A multivariate method was utilized to determine if a statistically significant difference existed on freshman TAKS reading and math scores and the cumulative grade point averages (GPAs) between the two groups, those on-track to graduate and those not-on-track to graduate.

$H2_o$: There is no statistically significant difference on achievement scores (reading, math, and GPA) by group on-track to graduate versus not-on-track to graduate.

$H2_a$: There is a statistically significant difference on the achievement scores (reading, math, and GPA) by group on-track to graduate versus not-on-track to graduate.

The MANOVA is traditionally used when two or more dependent variables are being analyzed. The MANOVA is a better measure as it decreases the chance for a type I error. The results of the MANOVA presented findings for the main effects and/or interaction of the dependent variables by student groups. The MANOVA reveals whether a mean difference exists within the main effect and/or the interaction of the dependent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Additionally, if the MANOVA proved statistically significant, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess whether differences existed on the three achievement measures (reading, math, and GPA) by groups on-track to graduate versus not-on-track to graduate (Student Worksheet, Appendix F). For this research question, the three dependent variables were scores (reading, math, and cumulative GPA). The independent or grouping variable was graduation potential on-track to graduate and not-on-track to graduate.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to compare variable differences of on-track and not-on-track senior students at a local high school. The two groups of students consisted of on-track and not-on-track for graduation during the 2009-2010 school year. Additionally, further comparisons between the two groups using freshman reading and math TAKS scores as well as their cumulative grade point averages provided additional comparison.

The comprehensive survey instrument utilized for this study was the American College Testing - Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) instrument. The researcher set out to answer two research questions: (a) What are some dropout comparison differences between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) student groups as identified in a Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) in a high school in South San Antonio, Texas? and (b) Are there plausible correlations of scores (TAKS 9th grade math and reading and cumulative grade point averages) between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) potential graduates as identified in student records in a high school in South San Antonio, Texas?

This chapter sets out to present the findings of the research study. The findings will be presented in five sections. The first section provides demographic profiles and descriptive statistical analyses of the sample group from senior students at the local high school. The second section provides a statistical analysis of the ACT Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire using dependent variables: Life Goals, Career Development and Planning, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and

Development. Section three provides a question item analysis of the subgroup Educational Development and Planning. Section four provides a statistical analysis of dependent variables scores using the seniors 9th grade TAKS reading, math, and cumulative grade point averages. And, finally section five provides a summary of the study findings.

Demographic Profile of the Population

At the time of the study, the participants were high school seniors. There were 228 participants in the sample group of this study; Table 4.1 shows the frequencies and percents of the sample group gender distribution: 105 (46.1%) were males and 123 (53.9%) were females. Frequency and percents for gender of the two groups on-track and not-on-track are presented in Table 4.2. Table 4.3 provides ethnicity frequencies and percents of the two student groups. Table 4.4 shows the grade distributions of the high school sample group comprising the student groups from the research 167 (73.2%) of the total sample group describe their grades as ranging between A and B-. Frequency and percents for plans after leaving high school are presented in Table 4.5; the majority of participants 89 (39.0%) plan to attend a two-year community or junior college, and 76 (33.3%) plan to attend a four-year college or university. The majority of participants (210 or 92.1%) endorsed they "definitely will complete high school." Frequencies and percents for likelihood of completing high school are presented in Table 4.6.

Participants' activities included out-of-class extracurricular and community activities. Frequency and percents for activities are presented in Table 4.7. For out-of-class extracurricular activities, the majority of participants (108 or 47.4%) endorsed being involved in one or two extracurricular programs. The majority of participants (120 or

52.6%) endorsed being involved in no community activities. More than half (139 or 61.0%) of the participants were not employed outside the home and 24 (10.5%) worked 20 or more hours per week outside the home. Frequency and percents on work are presented in Table 4.8.

English was the most used language in the home for the majority of participants 169 (74.1%); frequencies and percents are presented in Table 4.9. For number of children in the home, two was most frequent 59 (25.9%); the frequencies and percents are shown in Table 4.10. Participants' family homes collectively endorsed a mother/stepmother living in the home (199 or 87.3%). However, a much lower representation of mothers/stepmothers was observed in the not-on-track senior group. The on-track participants (145 or 91.8%) endorsed a mother or stepmother in the home compared to 54 (77.1%) of not-on-track participants stating that a mother or stepmother was living in the home, supporting research of the relationship between the maternal presence, and dropping out of school. Frequencies and percents for persons living in the home are provided in Table 4.11. Tables 4.12 through 4.15 provide summary data from multivariate and analysis of variance, Chronbachs reliability alpha, and question item analysis.

Gender

Table 4.1 shows 228 participants in the study; of those, 105 (46.1%) were males and 123 (53.9%) were females.

Table 4.1. Summary of Total ACT Student Needs Assessment Questionnaires and Gender Distribution of the Sample Group Senior Class Members of 2010

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Total	228	100.0
Male	105	46.1
Female	123	53.9

Student Groups

Table 4.2 shows the two senior groups on-track and not-on-track for the study. One-hundred fifty-eight senior students were identified as on-track (attained appropriate core credit and passed state TAKS test requirements in English language arts, math, science, and social studies) and 70 senior students were identified as not-on-track (attained appropriate core credit and have not met state TAKS test requirements in one or more of the core subjects: English language arts, math, science, and social studies). The 158 students from the OT sample group were comprised from 71 (44.1%) males and 89 (55.3%) females. NOT students consisted of 70 (30.8 %) with 35 (50%) males and 35 (50%) females.

Table 4.2. Summary of Distribution of Identified On-Track and Not-on-Track Sample Group Students for the Senior Class Members of 2010

Student Group	Frequency	Percent
On-Track	158	69.2
Male	70	44.1
Female	89	55.3
Not-on-Track	70	30.8
Male	35	50.0
Female	35	50.0

Ethnicity of the Student Groups

Table 4.3 provides the ethnicity distribution for the 158 OT and 70 NOT students

who comprised the two groups for this study. The OT ethnicity distribution shows that 1

(.06%) of the students was African American; 1 (8.2%) of the students was White; 133

(84.2%) of the students were of Hispanic origin; and, 11 (7.0%) of the students were

other ethnicity. The NOT ethnicity distribution shows 3 (4.4%) were African American; 5

(7.1%) were White; 57 (81.4%) were Hispanic; and, 5 (7.1%) of the students were other

ethnicity.

Table 4.3. Summary of Ethnicity Distribution of Identified On-Track and Not-on-Track
Students Comparing the Sample Group From the SNAQ Responses for the Senior Class
Members of 2010

Grades	Frequency	Percent
On-Track	158	69.2/100.0
African American	1	.06
White	13	8.20
Hispanic	133	84.20
Other	11	7.00
Not-on-Track	70	30.8/100.0
African American	3	4.4
White	5	7.1
Hispanic	57	81.4
Other	5	7.1

Grade Distribution

Table 4.4 includes the student's responses of grade distribution in high school. The

OT participants described their grades ranging between: A- to A, 33 (20.5%); B to A-, 59

(36.6%); B- to B, 40 (24.8%); C to B-, 22 (13.7%); C- to C, 5 (3.1%); and below D, 1

(0.6%). The NOT participants described their grade ranges as: B to A-, 13 (18.6%); B- to

B, 23 (32.9%); C to B-, 21 (30.0%); C- to C, 10 (14.3%); and below D, 2 (2.9%).

Table 4.4. Summary of Frequencies and Percentages Showing Grade Distribution From the Sample Groups, On-Track and Not-on-Track for the Seniors Class Members of 2010

	On-Track ($N = 158$)		Not-on-Track ($N = 70$)	
Grades	F	%	F	%
A- to A	33	20.5	0.0	0.0
B to A-	59	36.6	13	18.6
B- to B	40	24.8	23	32.9
C to B-	22	13.7	21	30.0
C- to C	5	3.1	10	14.3
D to C-	0	0.0	2	2.9
Below D	1	0.6	0	0.0

Student's Plan After High School

Table 4.5 shows the sample groups' responses of post high school plans. The

majority of OT participants plan to attend a two-year or four-year college or university

upon graduating from the local high school, 61 (37.9%) and 62 (38.5%) respectively. The

intentions of the NOT participants also reflect a similar pattern with 28 (40.0%) planning

to attend a two-year and 14 (20.0%) planning to attend a four-year college or university.

The NOT participant also described higher rates of undecided as 5 (7.1%) and other as 5

(7.1%) responses than the OT participants as 8 or (5.0%) and 3 (1.9%), respectively.

Table 4.5. Summary of Frequencies and Percentages Showing Post High School Plans for On-Track and Not-on-Track Senior Class Members of 2010

Plans after High School	On-Track ($N = 158$)		Not-on-Track ($N = 70$)	
	F	%	F	%
Obtain fulltime job	9	5.6	7	10.0
Operate farm or business	1	0.6	0	0.0
Serve in armed forces/military	7	4.3	6	8.6
Care for home/family	0	0	1	1.4
Attend vocational/technical school	4	2.5	2	2.9
Attend two-year community or junior college	61	37.9	28	40.0
Attend four-year college or university	62	38.5	14	20.0
Other	3	1.9	5	7.1
Undecided	8	5.0	5	7.1

Student Perception of Completing High School

Table 4.6 shows the senior students' responses of completing high school this year. The majority of students OT was 154 (95.7%) and students NOT was 56 (80.0%) participants endorsed they "definitely will complete high school" this year. Fewer OT seniors endorsed they would *probably* complete high school this year at 6 (3.7%) compared to 13 (18.6%) NOT participants. One student from each group perceives he or she will most likely not complete high school this year.

Table 4.6. Summary of Frequencies and Percentages Showing Student Responses of Completing High School From the Senior Class Members of 2010

Likelihood Will Complete High School	On-Track (*N* = 158)		Not-on-Track (*N* = 70)	
	F	%	F	%
Definitely will complete high school	154	95.7	56	80.0
Probably will complete high school	6	3.7	13	18.6
Probably will not complete high school	1	0.6	1	1.4

Student Responses: Out-of-Class Extracurricular Participation

Table 4.7 illustrates the perception of involvement with out of class extracurricular activities. The OT participants not involved in out-of-class extracurricular activities was 42 (26.1%); those involved between one and two was 79 (49.1%) and 3 or more was 36 (22.4%). The NOT participants not involved in out of class extracurricular activities was 24 (34.3%); those involved between one and two activities was 29 (41.4%) and 3 or more was 16 (22.9%). The OT students were more involved in community activities, though not significantly, 48 (29.8%) endorsed between 1 and 2 community activities and 21 (13.0%) described three or more community activities and finally, 80 (49.7%) OT participants endorsed no community activity involvement. The NOT participants were 40 (57.1%) who described they were not involved in community activities and 13 (18.6%) who were involved in one to two and 12 (17.1%) who were involved in three or more community activities.

Table 4.7. Summary of Frequencies and Percentages Showing the Sample Groups' Perception of Participation in Out-of-Class Extracurricular and Community Activities for the Senior Class Members of 2010

Activities	On-Track (*N* = 158)		Not-on-Track (*N* = 70)	
	F	%	F	%
Out-of-Class Extracurricular				
None	42	26.1	24	34.3
1-2	79	49.1	29	41.4
3 or more	36	22.4	16	22.9
Community/Volunteer				
None	80	49.7	40	57.1
1-2	48	29.8	13	18.6
3 or more	21	13.0	12	17.1

Student Employment

Table 4.8 shows the majority of OT was 102 (63.4%) students and NOT was 37 (52.9%) students as not employed outside the home. The OT students employed outside the home per week consisted of: 1-5 hours, 11 (6.8%); 6-10 hours, 5 (3.1%), 11-15 hours, 12 (7.5%); 16-20 hours, 12 (7.5%); and more than 20 hours, 17 (10.6%). The NOT participants employed outside the home per week was: 1-5 hours, 10 (14.3%); 6-10 hours, 6 (8.6%), 11-15 hours, 5 (7.1%); 16-20 hours, 3 (4.3%); and more than 20 hours as 7 (10.0%) per week.

Table 4.8. Summary of Frequencies and Percentages Showing Student's Participation in Weekly Hours of Employment Outside the Home for the Senior Class Members of 2010

	On-Track ($N = 158$)		Not-on-Track ($N = 70$)	
Student Employed Hours Outside the Home	F	%	F	%
None	102	63.4	37	52.9
1-5 hours	11	6.8	10	14.3
6-10 hours	5	3.1	6	8.6
11-15 hours	12	7.5	5	7.1
16-20 hours	12	7.5	3	4.3
20 or more hours	17	10.6	7	10.0

Primary Language Spoken at Home

Table 4.9 shows the language most spoken in the student's family home; English was most frequent for the majority of all participants at 169 (77.3%). However, almost one-fourth of the homes' primary language was not English.

Table 4.9. Summary of Frequencies and Percentages Showing the Language Most Spoken in the Student's Home for the Senior Class Members of 2010

	On-Track ($N = 158$)		Not-on-Track ($N = 70$)	
English as Primary Language Most Spoken in Home	F	%	F	%
Yes	115	71.4	54	77.1
No	44	27.3	15	21.4
Prefer Not to Respond	2	1.2	0	0

Number of Other Children Living in the Home

Table 4.10 shows the OT participants described as 15 (9.3%) with no other children living in the home; 20 (12.4%) had one; 44 (27.3%) had two; 44 (27.3%) had three; 25

(15.5%) had four; and 13 (8.1%) had five or more other children living in the home. The

NOT participants described 10 (14.3%) with no other children living in the home; 8

(11.4%) had one; 15 (21.4%) had two; 9 (12.9%) had three; 10 (14.3%) had four; and 18

(25.7%) had five or more other children living in the home.

Table 4.10. Summary of Frequencies and Percentages Showing Other Children Living in the Home for the Senior Class Members of 2010

Number of Other Children Living in Home	On-Track (N = 158)		Not-on-Track (N = 70)	
	F	%	F	%
None	15	9.3	10	14.3
1	20	12.4	8	11.4
2	44	27.3	15	21.4
3	44	27.3	9	12.9
4	25	15.5	10	14.3
5 or more	13	8.1	18	25.7

Number of Other Adults Living in the Home

Table 4.11 shows other adults living in the participants' family homes. They

included mother/stepmother, father/stepfather, foster parents/guardians, siblings,

grandparents, and other adults. The OT participants described 145 (90.1%) with a mother

or stepmother living in the family home. NOT participants described 54 (72.9%) with a

mother or stepmother living in the family home. Other adults living in the home described

by the OT participants included 105 (65.2%) father; 11 (6.8%) foster parent or guardian;

124 (77.0%) adult sibling; 16 (9.9%) grandparent; and 14 (8.7%) indicated another adult,

living inside the family home. The NOT participants further described adults in the family

home as 45 (64.3%) father; 6 (8.6%) foster parent or guardian; 51 (72.9%) adult sibling; 8

(11.4%) grandparent; and 14 (20.0%) indicated another adult, living inside the family

home.

Table 4.11. Summary of Frequencies and Percentages Showing Other Children and
Adults Who Live in the Home for the Senior Class Members of 2010

	On-Track (N = 158)		Not-on-Track (N = 70)	
Adults Living in Home	F	%	F	%
Mother or stepmother	145	90.1	54	77.1
Father or stepfather	105	65.2	45	64.3
Foster parent(s), guardians(s), etc.	11	6.8	6	8.6
Adult sibling	124	77.0	51	72.9
Grandparent(s)	16	9.9	8	11.4
Other adults	14	8.7	14	20.0

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The original data analysis plan described conducting an Exploratory Factor

Analysis on the research variables; however, the ACT Student Needs Assessment

Questionnaire instrument provided existing subscales that revealed acceptable reliability.

The survey instrument subscales consisted of: Life Goals (18 questions), Career

Development and Planning (15 questions), Educational Development and Planning (21

questions), and Personal Growth and Development (36 questions). The Chronbachs alphas

for those subscales are provided below.

Reliability

Chronbachs alphas for the research variables are presented in Table 4.12. The

alpha coefficients include: Life Goals (α = .782); Career Development and Planning (α =

.903): Educational Development and Planning (α = .910), and Personal Growth and

Development (α =.961). George and Mallery (2003) suggest the following rules of thumb

for evaluating alpha coefficients: > .9 Excellent, > .8 Good, > .7 Acceptable, > .6

Questionable, > .5 Poor, < .5 Unacceptable. The alpha results indicated internal

consistency of the scales was generally excellent. The exceptions was found in Life

Goals, which was acceptable with α = .782, but still in the acceptable range for this study.

Table 4.12. Summary of Chronbach's Alpha for Research Variables Showing Reliability
for Dependent Variables of Career Development and Planning, Educational Development
and Planning, and Personal Growth and Development Subgroup Questions on the ACT
SNAQ Survey Instrument

Research Variables	A	Items
Life Goals	.782	18
Career Development and Planning	.903	15
Educational Development and Planning	.910	21
Personal Growth and Development	.961	36

Multivariate Analysis

Results of the Multivariate Analysis for Dependent Variables: Life Goals, Career

Development and Planning, Educational Development and Planning,

and Personal Growth and Development

To examine the first research question, what are some dropout comparison

differences between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) student groups as identified in

a Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) survey in a district in South San

Antonio, Texas? A multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The

MANOVA assessed whether differences existed on (SNAQ) sub-scores in Life Goals, Career Development Planning, Educational Development Planning, and Personal Growth and Development between the two groups.

The assumptions were assessed and met. Homogeneity of variance was tested using Box's M and was not significant. Homogeneity of variance was assessed using Levene's Test and was not significant. Normality was assessed using the one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and was not significant. The MANOVA was significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .941$, $F (4, 180) = 2.84$, $p = .026$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .059$.

The ANOVA revealed approaching significance for Educational Development and Planning, $F (1, 183) = 3.73$, $p = .055$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .020$. Participants who were not-on-track to graduate had higher mean scores on educational development plan (*M = 3.95, SD = 0.65*) than those on-track to graduate (*M = 3.73, SD = 0.69*), suggesting that not-on-track students would have liked more assistance and opportunity about educational development and planning during their earlier high school years. The other ANOVAs were statistically non-significant. Results of the MANOVA are presented in Table 4.13, along with the means and standard deviations.

Table 4.13. Summary of ANOVAs on Dependent Variables by Subgroups Between On-Track for Graduation Versus Not-on-Track for Graduation

Dependent Variables	F	Sig.	Partial Eta^2	Power	On-Track (N = 158)		Not-on-Track (N = 70)	
					M	SD	M	SD
Life Goals	1.56	.213	.008	.237	3.19	0.35	3.12	0.35
Error	(0.12)							
Career Development Plan	0.26	.608	.001	.080	4.04	0.68	3.98	0.71
Error	(0.47)							
Educational Development Plan	3.73	.055	.020	.485	3.73	0.69	3.95	0.65
Error	(0.46)							
Personal Growth Development Plan	2.10	.149	.011	.302	3.08	0.87	3.29	0.88
Error	(0.76)							

Note. Number in parenthesis represents the mean squared error.

Item Analysis of Subgroup Educational Development and Planning

Further analysis of Educational Development and Planning were conducted. An item analysis of the 16 questions comprising the subgroup is provided in Table 4.14. The weighted need index (WNI) was calculated using the following values: "much more help"= 3; "medium amount of help" = 2; "little more help" = 1; and "no further help" = 0. The average question scores were calculated and multiplied by 100 to create the WNI.

Table 4.14. Summary of Question Item Analysis of Subgroup Educational Development and Planning

Rank	Index	Item	Item Text
1	237	36	Learning how to apply for financial aid for education/training after high school
2	231	35	Learn more about types and sources of financial aid for education/training after high school
3	219	34	Requirements for/applying to schools I might attend after high school
4	213	33	Choosing education/training that will be right for me after high school
5	206	19	Improving my mathematical skills
6	206	23	Improving my study skills and study habits
7	201	32	Learning about education options after high school (Vo-Tech, College, etc.)
8	193	20	Developing proficiency in a foreign language
9	192	29	Getting more help from my counselor and/or advisor
10	184	18	Improving my writing skills
11	182	31	Learning what high school courses required for jobs of interest to me
12	181	26	Improving my test-taking skills and strategies
13	177	24	Scheduling time to do my homework
14	165	21	Developing my ability to speak in front of others
15	163	22	Better understanding computers
16	163	25	Better understanding my scores on achievement and ability tests
17	157	27	Selecting high school courses that fit my plans and goals
18	151	30	Becoming more involved in school activities
19	148	28	Getting more help outside of class from my teachers
20	135	17	Increasing my reading speed
21	129	16	Better understanding what I read

Multivariate Analysis of Academic Scores

Grade Point Average (GPA) and Freshman Reading and Math TAKS Scores Results of

the Multivariate Analysis for Dependent Variables: Sample Groups Cumulative

To examine research question two, are there differences of scores (TAKS 9th grade math and reading and cumulative grade point averages) between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) potential graduates as identified in student records in a district in South San Antonio, Texas?

Ninth grade reading and math TAKS scores were used to analyze the differences in group membership: on-track and not-on-track senior students. TAKS scores are reported in scale format. A TAKS scale score of 2100 and above is considered passing

and 2099 and below is considered not passing. Additionally, a TAKS scale score of 2400 or above is considered commended level. Scale scores for the sample group are included in Appendix F.

A multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to assess whether or not differences existed on the three dependent variables (freshman math, reading, GPA) by student groups on-track to graduate versus not-on-track to graduate. The assumptions were assessed. Homogeneity of covariance was tested using Box's M and was found to be significant ($p = 0.37$). According to Stevens (2002): "it is very unlikely that equal covariance matrices assumptions would ever literally be satisfied in real practice" (p. 270). The homogeneity of variance assumption was assessed using Levene's Test and found to be significant for two of the variables. The researcher conducted three t-tests to validate Steven's (2002) statement that ANOVAs are robust against violations of homogeneity of variance (p. 268). The t-tests were significant even when equal variances were not assumed, which is consistent with Steven's statement.

Normality was assessed using the one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test where only TAKS Math was significant for the on-track to graduate group, which according to Stevens (2002), "the effects of skewness and kurtosis on the level of significance tend to be slight" (p. 261). This significant finding should not impact the analysis.

The MANOVA was significant, Pillia's Trace = .205, F (3, 206) = 17.69, p = .001, multivariate $\eta^2 =$ .205. The ANOVAs revealed significant differences for all three dependent variables. For GPA, F (1, 208) = 35.21, p = .001, multivariate $\eta^2 =$ .145; participants who were on-track to graduate (*M = 2.79, SD = 0.76*) had higher mean scores

than those not-on-track to graduate (*M = 2.15, SD = 0.58*). For reading, F (1, 208) =

20.21, p = .001, multivariate η^2 = .089; participants who were on-track to graduate (*M =*

2246.97, SD = 161.79) had higher mean scores than those not-on-track to graduate (*M =*

2137.06, SD = 161.12). For math, F (1, 208) = 51.08, p = .001, multivariate η^2 = .197;

participants who were on-track to graduate (*M = 2136.55, SD = 180.72*) had higher mean

scores than those not-on-track to graduate (*M = 1956.50, SD = 125.90*). Results of the

ANOVAs are presented in Table 4.15, along with means and standard deviations.

Table 4.15. Summary of ANOVAs on Dependent Variables of GPA, Reading and Math
Scores Between On-Track for Graduation Versus Not-on-Track for Graduation

Dependent Variables	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta^2	Power	On-Track (N = 148)		Not-on-Track (N =62)	
					M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
GPA	35.208	.001	.145	1.00	2.79	0.76	2.15	0.58
Error	(0.51)							
Reading TAKS	20.213	.001	.089	0.99	2246.97	161.78	2137.06	161.12
Error	(26110.95)							
Math TAKS	51.082	.001	.197	1.00	2136.55	180.72	1956.50	125.90
Error	(27729.58)							

Note. Number in parenthesis represents the mean squared error. This is the summed values of (X-mean)², otherwise known as the sum of residuals². Each observation is the mean plus a random error. The unexplained variation is called 'error,' but is in fact essential to performing the ANOVA. The 'F' statistic is the ratio of explained to unexplained variation (F = variability between-groups divided by variability within-groups [or error]; Within-group variability = experimental error; Between-group variability = effect of the IV. Total variance = total SS / total df [Sums of squared deviations divided by degrees of freedom] (Rutherford, 2001).

Summary of the Findings

The quantitative data involving Multivariate Analysis showed plausible variables existed between on-track versus not-on-track student groups in this study. The variables that showed statistically significant differences between the two student groups were Educational Development and Planning subgroup, 9th grade math and reading scores, and cumulative grade point averages. Additionally, other factors showed significant differences between the two student group responses including the student's current academic grade range perception, the student's perception of graduating from high school this year, the number of children and other adults living in the family home, and the presence of a mother or stepmother in the family home.

The p-value (significance) in Tables 4.13 shows that Educational Development and Planning was approaching significance at p = .055, though not statistically significant at alpha .05, it was still reliable for the study and Table 4.15 showed variables for 9th grade math and reading scores and cumulative GPA at p = .001 each. Descriptive statistics for other factors determined by the study supported major differences between the two groups and increased potential for dropout are shown in the following: Table 4.4 showed the students' perception of current academic grade rating distribution (58.2% OT vs. 18.6% NOT) considered having above an overall "B" grade average; Table 4.6 shows students' perception that they will definitely graduate from high school this year (95.7% OT vs. 80.0% NOT); Table 4.10, family households with five or more children (8.1% OT vs. 25.7% NOT); Table 4.11, a mother or stepmother living in the family home (90.1% OT vs. 77.1% NOT) and other adults living in the family home (8.7% OT vs. 20.0%

NOT). It is clear that some variables were different between the two student groups, descriptively and analytically.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents a summary of the research methodology and findings based on the two research questions outlining this study. Following is a section consisting of conclusions drawn from the data and selected literature review. Implications from the research study comprise the third section, followed by additional recommendations of study for potential student dropouts in American schools. The research data from this study contribute to the research literature on a student's decision to drop out of school and correlates associated with this decision. Schools can benefit from data collected from the survey instrument used for this study in two ways: (a) by utilizing student responses to develop more engaging environments and (b) by increasing holding power to graduate more students. Thus, schools will have a new tool to help reduce student dropouts. More graduates at local high schools will reduce dropouts at the local, state, and national levels.

Summary

The researcher began the review of the literature on student dropouts during the summer of 2009 and collected student test score data during the fall of 2009. Student records were gathered through the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) system. The 90-item student survey was used as it reflected many of the students' characteristics correlated to variables of dropping out of school, as discerned from the literature.

Hammond et al.'s (2007) research indicated that students from low socioeconomic, high minority schools experience more variables associated with increased dropout schools, such as: low achievement, retention, poor attendance, and poorer family structures. The high school participating in this study had a 93% minority and 76% economically disadvantaged student population. The high school population from this study represented high ethnicity and low economically disadvantaged students.

The purpose of this study was to compare student responses to a questionnaire disseminated to a group of senior students at a local high Texas school in a school district in San Antonio. For this study, the senior high school students were categorized into two groups: on-track and not-on-track for high school graduation. The student instruments were disseminated in October 2009 through all senior English classes at the local high school. Survey results were provided in two reports: cumulative report and a subgroup report in October 2009.

The researcher analyzed student dropout factors through a survey to determine if differences in student responses between the two groups existed. Additionally, the researcher analyzed student state test scores and local course grades (TAKS and GPA scores) to further determine if any major differences existed between the two groups. The literature review showed studies using surveys to gather student responses about their reasons for dropping out. Peng and Takai (1983) utilized student survey instruments to determine school-related variables culminating in school disengagement as a major factor for deciding to drop out of school. One of the salient findings in this study parallels Peng and Takai's (1983) study indicating not-on-track students felt disengaged from their high

school, thus revealing they were exhibiting a major factor for deciding to drop out of school.

The sample group for the study consisted of 228 students who were part of the senior class at the high school of this study. Descriptive statistics showed significant differences between the two groups of students on 5 of the 14 student demographic survey question responses.

The survey questions were further categorized into scales formulated and validated through statistical analysis. George and Mallery (2003) provided reliability coefficients for (Chronbach's coefficient alpha) the survey subscales as excellent to unacceptable, .9 to less than .5, respectively. The survey subgroup of Educational Development and Planning ($\alpha = .910$) and Academic Scores (TAKS and GPA) were analyzed using multivariate analyses. The multivariate analysis incorporated students' graduation power as the independent variable and subgroup scores and academic scores (TAKS and GPA) as the dependent variables. Additional analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted depending on significant differences reflected in the multivariate analysis of the main or interaction effects. A total of four ANOVAs were conducted to further analyze the effect of the independent variable graduation power on the dependent variables subgroup and academic scores between the two groups of senior students.

Conclusions From the Research Questions

The first research question, "What are some dropout comparison differences between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) student groups as identified in a Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire (SNAQ) in a high school in South San Antonio,

Texas?" The researcher analyzed scores from Life Goals, Personal Growth and

Development, Educational Development and Planning, and Personal Growth and

Development between students on-track to graduate and students not-on-track to graduate.

The on-track senior students differed in their survey responses from the not-on-track

senior students. Senior student responses to the Educational Development and Planning

survey questions approached significant difference between the two student groups.

Students not-on-track to graduate wanted more assistance from their high school than

those who were on-track within the survey subgroup: Educational Development and

Planning. Findings from this study reflect prior research on dropout variables conducted

by Bridgeland et al. (2006), Hammond et al. (2007), and Martorell (2004). The findings

for the subscale Educational Development was in contrast to the results of the other

subgroups, Life Goals, Career Development, or Personal Development, that did not show

statistically significant differences in the survey responses between the two student

groups.

 Additionally, descriptive statistics showed major differences between group

membership and academic scores. The students' perception of their "academic grade

range distribution" and their perception of "definitely graduating from the local high

school this year" differed between the two groups of students. Survey responses also

confirmed that the students who were involved in at least one or more extracurricular

activities were more apt to belong to the on-track student group.

 Family structure was also shown to be related to student group. Students who did

not have a mother in the family household were represented more in the not-on-track

student group. Further, research participants who had five or more other children and whose family home had other adults, beyond the family, living within the family home were more likely to be in the not-on-track student group. This finding supports previous research. Zvoch (2006) described increased dropouts among dysfunctional families, and Hammond et al. (2007) cited many family risk factors showing that single or no parent households significantly correlated to dropping out. Thus, the not-on-track student group in this study exhibited yet another factor associated with the decision to drop out of school found in the research literature.

The second research question was, "Are there plausible correlations of scores (TAKS 9th grade math and reading and cumulative grade point averages) between on-track (OT) and not-on-track (NOT) potential graduates as identified in student records in a high school in South San Antonio, Texas? There was a statistically significant relationship between the two groups and their 9th grade math and reading scores. Students in the on-track group had higher means on TAKS test results than students comprising the not-on-track group. Thus, the data suggest, this difference places students within the not-on-track group at increased probability of dropping out of school.

Findings from this study parallel prior research showing poorer grades as a main factor leading to increased dropouts (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Dynarski & Gleason, 1998; McNeil et al., 2008; Peng & Takai, 1983). Thus, the not-on-track students in this study face a greater likelihood of dropping out based on previous research and not meeting state exit exam standards.

In addition, there was a statistically significant relationship between the two groups and their cumulative grade point averages. Students belonging to the on-track group had higher cumulative academic success than students comprising the not-on-track group. Thus, the data suggest, this difference increases the not-on-track students' chances of dropping out of school (McNeil et al., 2008; Greene & Winters, 2004).

Implications of the Research

The findings of this research study compared variables and characteristics between the two groups of senior students on-track for graduation versus a group not-on-track for graduation. Research confirms that being in the group on-track for graduation (have required course credits and have passed state exit exams) places a student more within the grasp of a high school diploma.

In the review of literature, Chudowsky and Gayler (2003) suggested that state exit exam requirements for graduation most likely do not cause additional student dropouts. However, the researchers also contend that exit exams may be the "tipping factor" for many students to ultimately cease participation in high school and eventually drop out; thus, exit exams can possibly increase student dropouts. The students in this study not-on-track to graduate due to not passing state-mandated exit exams may be at the tipping point, in regard to their decision to drop out.

As indicated earlier, some research suggests that exit exams do not have a direct impact on increased dropout rates. Although, exit exams have been shown to have a negative and positive effect on graduation rates, no research exists showing that being in the on-track group has an adverse relationship to student dropouts. Therefore, comparing

the analysis of the two groups of students for a better understanding of their differences is essential for high schools working to have all senior students within the on-track group before the senior year of high school. The results from this study show that students in the on-track group have fewer dropout factors associated with their group and higher grade point averages than students in the not-on-track group.

Research confirms that engaged students will ultimately have more success in their school systems and less probability of dropping out. Williams and Cato (2009) suggest that sustainability and holding power may reside in the student's collective needs and thoughts about their school. If schools are genuinely interested about what engages students, what interests students, they (the schools) would include opportunities for students to express their voice. This study endorsed students' perceptions of their academic grade distribution and perception that they will definitely graduate, or not, from the local high school. The on-track group responses were more positive than the not-on-track student group. School leadership should have an interest and mechanism to gauge student perception through student voice along the path of their respective high school experience. Cortez and Johnson (2008) contends that students who are asked what they think, will take a more positive role by becoming active and engaged within their education. The process of engagement could also increase the teacher-student relationship. Poor student-teacher relationships are high predictors of dropping out of school (Wayman, 2002).

This research study indicates and preceding literature review confirms the importance of the mother presence as a determinate of a high school students' success.

According to this study's survey instrument, over 90% of on-track students indicated having a mother or stepmother living in the family home versus the not-on-track students who indicated only 77% having a mother or stepmother living in the family home. Thus, results from this study support the research of Zvoch (2006) and Hammond et al. (2007) indicating not having a mother/stepmother in the home has a relationship to students dropping out.

Additionally, this study supports prior research about family size. In this study, a major difference was found between the on-track and not-on-track groups in regard to other adults living in the family home. Previous research literature shows family size as a contributing factor that reveals a higher probability of a student dropping out of school. Nowicki et al. (2004) and Somers and Pilawsky (2004) showed the family structure, including other adults living in the family home, and family size contributing to student dropouts. The descriptive statistics in this study show a major difference between the two student groups. There were more other adults living in the home of the not-on-track students, thus, indicating a greater possibility of student dropout factors from the not-on-track to graduate group. Many other interrelated variables such as low socioeconomics, surely or most likely play into this problem.

Student academic scores showed a statistical difference between the two student groups. There was a correlation between TAKS math, reading, and GPA for the on-track to graduate and not-on-track to graduate groups. Thus, freshman academic and state test scores could be early indicators of dropping out of school. In addition, analysis of subscale Educational Development analysis indicated that the group of students on-track

to graduate had a more positive outlook on support from the school. This coincides with prior research showing when students do not have voice, they may experience *estrangement,* a student's feeling of separation from other groups. They would rather be by themselves than with others (Brown et al., 2003).

This comparison study did not confirm prior literature from Warren and Cataldi (2006) of extensive student employment being a major factor for students belonging to one group and not the other. This study did not find major differences between extensive employment participation between the on-track students versus the not-on-track students, 10% (OT) versus 10.6% (NOT), respectively. Though much research supports extensive student employment as a major factor to dropping out, it was not determined a major difference for this study.

The results found in this study support a 1992 qualitative study conducted by Douglas Steele at Texas A&M University, whereas students' feelings about the student-teacher relationship, a supporting staff, and the role of the school were determined to promote sustainable holding power toward successful completion of high school. The not-on-track student group in this study indicated they did not get the support they needed from their high school. Additionally, Steele's study endorsed many attributes of the family domain as contributors to students graduating or not and recommended that schools should accept the responses of potential dropout student's as relevant indicators of potentially dropping out of school.

School districts may want to implement a mechanism to ascertain the collective voices of their students through a questionnaire. The information gathered through a

questionnaire can be used in quarterly parent meetings designed to map the educational experience of each student in regard to a chosen career pathway. Additionally, school districts may want to focus on early grade retentions as a major factor of future dropouts. Staff development opportunities may focus on enhancements of the school-student relationship that is created through the student-teacher relationship. As districts create enhanced opportunities for student relationships, they may consider additional focus on career and college readiness enhancements at the middle school grade levels. Additional focus on high school internships would also provide focus of the students within their collective high school years.

Recommendations Based on the Study

Leaders and school board members at school districts may work to develop policies, practices, and programs that support gathering and analyzing student responses at the beginning of every grade level and each school year within the local high school. The data gathered from student surveys could be used to monitor student mobility and retention, needs, school experiences (as perceived by the students), and to set expectations for each pending year of high school. The program development could be geared around the data collected and could provide viable information to strengthen student engagement within the student body. Educational development courses strengthening students' relevance for high school education could be the premise of future studies, to further develop academic and coping skills.

Findings from this study and the literature review strongly support the need to include student voice within the confines of the high school of this study. Students in the

study showed different responses about the same high school. The responses differed among the successful on-track to graduate group versus the not-on-track to graduate groups. The differences ranged from the amount of assistance each group perceived they had received from the high school, to variables contributing to potentially dropping out, such as a mother not present in the family home, other adults living in the family home, participation in extracurricular activities, and students' responses of non-success leading to disengagement.

School districts have existing processes of at-risk identification but may lack relevant intervention capabilities beyond identification. The first step of engaging the students is to survey them annually about their respective needs. The second step could include analysis of the student survey data, followed by the third and fourth steps of development and implementation of programmatic support to all identified students based on survey results. A comprehensive support mechanism would create the environment that engages and creates a positive learning environment for all students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, family background, and learning deficiencies.

Through a district expectation that is inclusive of student surveys leading to a better understanding of student needs and enhanced teacher-student relationships, a vast majority of potential dropouts could be redirected and become high school graduates.

The following are this researcher's generalized recommendations for school district leaderships as discerned from this study:

1. Create career pathways and exploration opportunities.

2. Create social/emotional programs for identified students without a mother or stepmother in the family home.

3. Create reading and math intensive programs for students not passing state exams earlier in their school experience.

4. Ensure that each student belongs to an extracurricular activity or club, group or other school-related organization.

5. Meet every family of a previously retained student to introduce an acceleration plan for acceleration to their age appropriate grade level.

6. Create a "home instruction" program for every identified child.

7. Create an "in house" mentoring program to assure that every at-risk student has a caring adult in his or her life.

8. Ensure that every child in the district participate in a District Needs Assessment every year.

9. Ensure that each child counts and that each child is counted.

10. Make promotion power a top priority.

The findings included in this study show a relationship between one group and not the other. Peng and Takai (1983) showed that Hispanic students' dropped out for many reasons other than academic and those usually had to do with family and other issues, but were predominately family related. The student population at the local high school is greater than 86% Hispanic. It is this researcher's conclusion that many of the students who were identified for not-on-track senior group based on the exit exam were due to other reasons beyond academics. Still, this researcher contends: an engaging school

environment could drastically reduce the number of students not-on-track to graduate

before their senior year in high school. The latter could be accomplished by engaging

students in their education through their collective involvement in their future preparation.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Further research that uses a student needs assessment instrument should
   replicate this study but include dropouts who were not included in this study.
   The responses of recent dropouts could enhance the understanding of the
   dropout problem and how to stem it.

2. A study that includes high school students who are identified as at-risk for
   failing a prior grade level could be conducted to ascertain the student
   characteristics of that particular group.

3. A study that concentrates on students' responses of their school can be
   conducted at the middle school grade levels. Implementing engaging programs
   to begin redirecting potential dropouts earlier within the students' educational
   experiences may prevent them from actually dropping out.

4. A study conducted on students who work outside the home, extensively, 20 or
   more hours per week should be conducted utilizing a student survey.

5. A study that compares the responses of students and the responses of the
   faculty/staff could be conducted utilizing a student and staff needs assessment
   survey. The study could enhance the perceptions that students have about their
   faculty and vice-versa.

6. A study that researches prior years of non-success on exit exams leading to non-graduation can shine additional light on the implications of the exit exam on local high school students. Additional analysis can be conducted at all high schools in a set geographical area. This study could confirm whether the exit exams have a minimal or detrimental impact on student dropouts.

7. An additional study involving a student survey can be conducted at a high school with a high pass rating on the state exit exam versus a high school that has a low pass rating on the state exit exam. The survey results could be compared between the two high schools to determine additional analysis of variables between two distinct programs.

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APPENDIX A

DISTRICT CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Southwest
Independent School District

11914 Dragon Lane • San Antonio, Texas 78252-2647
(210) 622-4300 • Fax (210) 622-4301
Velma Villegas, Ph. D. • Superintendent of Schools

"Leading The Way To Excellence"

August 14, 2009

Mr. Lloyd Verstuyft
10190 Aliann Drive
Atascosa, TX 78002

Dear Mr. Verstuyft,

Please accept this official letter of consent and acknowledgement to conduct research with the Southwest Independent School District 2009-10 senior class referencing the ACT Student Needs Assessment Survey..

I have read and agree with the research project as outlined in the attached document titled, SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH.

I wish you well in your continued studies and if I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely,

Velma Villegas, Ph. D.
Superintendent of Schools, SWISD

Southwest High School	Big Country Elementary	Kreiwald Road Elementary
McAuliffe Middle School	Bob Hope Elementary	Sky Harbour Elementary
Scobee Middle School	Elm Creek Elementary	Southwest Elementary
McNair Middle School	Hidden Cove Elementary	Sun Valley Elementary
	Indian Creek Elementary	

An Equal Opportunity Employer

APPENDIX B

PARENT APPROVAL FORM

Version 09/25/09

PARENT PERMISSION FORM

COMPARISON OF POTENTIAL DROPOUT CHARACTERISTICS OF 'ON TRACK' AND 'NOT ON TRACK' SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AN URBAN FRINGE SAN ANTONIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Parent/Guardians of SWHS 12th Grade Student's,

My name is Lloyd Verstuyft and I am a graduate student at Texas A&M University at College Station. I am conducting research about the student dropout issue at Southwest ISD in partial fulfillment of my doctoral program in public education. I am proposing to survey the 12th grade students at SWHS as part of my research. Please read the following Parent Permission form and if you have any questions, please contact me at 210-748-6623.

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you (as the parent of a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to let your child participate in this research study. Also, if you decide to let your child be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your consent.

If you agree, your child will be asked to participate in a research study that will ask each volunteer student to complete a 90 question Student Needs Assessment survey. The information gathered from the collective items of the survey will assist in research to better understand why some students drop out of school while others decide to remain and graduate from high school. The purpose of this study is designed to draw some general correlations to the students responses to the survey questions as compared to a group of SWHS senior students that are "on track" for graduation in 2010 versus a group of senior students who are identified as "not on track" for graduation. Only 12th grade students during the 2009-10 school year will participate in the research and student survey. The survey instrument is comprised of 90 questions and is divided into three categories; 1) Student Background, 2) Student Life Goals and 3) Students Individual Growth, Development and Planning. The student research group was determined based on the fact he/she is a classified 12th grade student during this school year.

What will my child be asked to do?

If you allow your child to participate in this study, they will be asked to voluntarily participate and complete a Student Needs Assessment instrument. The survey will be administered at SWHS and should take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks your child ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The possible benefits of participation are to assist research that may provide insight and contribute to intervention programs geared toward connecting with students who have the potential to dropout of school. Research findings may shine a light on essential programs that connect with students but are absent in the school today. Student participants will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, their participation will potentially assist school leaders to better understand and ultimately reduce the number of future student dropouts at SWISD thus, contributing positively to our surrounding community, state and the nation.

Does my child have to participate?

No, your child doesn't have to be in this research study. You can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty. If your child does participate and later changes their mind and wants to be withdrawn from the study they just need to complete the Student Withdrawal from Survey form that will be available in the SWHS counselor's office.

Version 09/25/09

This research study (survey instrument) will take place during regular English IV classroom activities; however, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternate activity will be available. Students not wanting to participate will be allowed to exit the English IV class and report to the library to continue working on the daily assignment outlined by the teacher. Student participants will not receive extra points for participating or not in the student survey.

What if my child does not want to participate?
In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study. If your child does not want to participate they will not be included in the study and there will be no penalty. If your child initially agrees to be in the study, he/she can change their mind later without any penalty. The student who changes his/her mind not to be included in the research study may fill out the Student Withdrawal from Survey form specific to this research. The form is located at the reception office of the counselor's office. Once the form is completed by the student it will be routed to Building 302 c/o Lloyd Verstuyft, research investigator. The student's survey will be pulled from the research study and housed confidentially in a separate file not to be included in the research findings.

Who will know about my child's participation in this research study?
This study is confidential. Research findings will be presented in group format and will not specifically identify any one student's response to the survey. The information obtained from the survey will be aggregated into statistical methods that protect the individual's identity and individual responses to the survey questions. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you or your child to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Lloyd Verstuyft (research investigator) will have access to the records.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Lloyd Verstuyft at 210-748-6623 or lverstuyft@swisd.net.

Whom do I contact about my child's rights as a research participant?
This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Signature
Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to allow your child to participate in this study.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Printed Name of Child: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Permission: _[signature]_ Date: September 25, 2009

Printed Name: Lloyd Verstuyft

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICPATING STUDENTS

COMPARISON OF POTENTIAL DROPOUT CHARACTERISTICS OF 'ON TRACK'
AND 'NOT ON TRACK' SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AN URBAN
FRINGE SAN ANTONIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction
The purpose of this form is to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information
that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research.

You have been asked to participate in a research study by completing the ACT Student Needs
Assessment Questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three main components and asks your
opinion about your life goals and you're whether or not you want additional information from your
school about individual growth, development and planning for the future. The purpose of this study
is research whether or not any of the collective responses to the survey questions have any
commonality to reasons why some students may decide to not complete high school and graduate.
You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a 2009-10 senior class member. If
you are under 18 years of age your parent must have signed a consent form for you to participate in
this study.

What will I be asked to do?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the ACT Student Assessment
Questionnaire. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.

What are the risks involved in this study?
The risks associated with this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily
encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?
You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, your participation may
assist school leaders to better understand the reasons students may choose not to continue high
school toward graduation and that information may prove valuable to help create programs to
reduce the number of student dropouts in the future.

Do I have to participate?
No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time
without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University or Southwest ISD being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?
The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included
in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the
researcher, Lloyd Verstuyft, will have access to the records.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact. Please contact Lloyd Verstuyft at 210-622-4330 or lverstuyft@swisd.net.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?
This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Participation
Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. If you would like to be in the study please return the Parent Consent Form to your English IV teacher.

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH PARTICPANT RECRUITMENT FORM

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

COMPARISON OF ON-TRACK AND NOT-ON-TRACK SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS: AN ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT NEEDS AND SOCIAL
CHARACTERISTICS

Upon IRB approval, Parent Permission Forms will be disbursed to all English IV students age 17 and below. The Parent Forms will be collected within a three day window and a student roster indicating such will be developed.

The survey will be disseminated through all English IV classes by the research investigator. Only students who have returned the signed Parent Permission form will be allowed to participate. All non-participating students will be allowed to report to the school library. (The survey plan will consist of distributing the Parent Permission form on a Monday with direction to return by Wednesday. The survey will be conducted on the Friday of the same week).

The Research Investigator, Lloyd Verstuyft, will meet with all English IV classes and explain the purpose and parameters of the survey dissemination. Upon collection of the student surveys, the research investigator will place all completed and non-completed (student choice) surveys in a sealed envelop and secure until all senior students have completed the Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire.

Script:
Requirement #1
"Hi my name is Lloyd and I am a graduate student at Texas A&M University conducting a Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire. Today I will disseminate and collect the ACT Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire to all voluntary participants in this research study".

"You have been asked to voluntarily participate in a research study by completing the ACT Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire. The 90 question survey consists of three main segments and asks your opinion about your life goals; whether or not you want additional information from your school about individual growth, development and planning for the future".

"The purpose of this study is to gather your opinions through your responses to the survey questions and see if any commonality exists to reasons why some students may decide to not complete high school and graduate. You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a 2009-10 senior class member. If you are under 18 years of age your parent must have signed a Parent Permission form for you to participate in this study. The Parent Permission forms were disbursed earlier in the week and if you returned the signed form to the teacher and if you voluntarily agree to participate in the survey today, please remain for more directions before the

survey is handed out. If you do not want to participate at this time you may accompany your teacher (outside in the hall) to the library to either work on the assignment or have library time while the survey is disseminated and collected in this class".

"If you participate today and later change your mind to not participate, you may stop by the reception area of the counselor's office and complete a STUDENT WITHDRAWAL from Survey form. Complete the Withdrawal form and submit it to the counseling receptionist who will scan the form to the research investigator. When the research investigator receives the Student Withdrawal Form, the research investigator will match the student ID number to the survey ID number and pull that survey from the collected instruments and place it in another secure file not to be included in the research study findings".

"At this time any student who did not return a Parent Permission form or does not want to participate in the study may exit to the library"

[For students remaining and participating]
"Please read over the information sheet again and if you have any questions please let me know. Are you ready to begin?

"The survey is a four page document that includes the following sections; 1) Your background; 2) the importance of life time goals; 3) your degree of perceived need for additional information on certain growth, development and planning questions".

"Please complete the Background section and then darken one oval for the appropriate choice to each of the questions in sections II and III"

"Remember, you can decide that you want to voluntarily participate in the survey now, and change your mind later. If you decide later that you don't want to be in the study, you can complete a Student Withdrawal from Survey form located in the counselors office."

APPENDIX E

AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING

STUDENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (SNAQ)

STUDENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please use a soft (No. 1 or 2) lead pencil to darken the oval indicating your response to each item; **DO NOT** use any other type of pen or pencil. If you want to change a response, erase your first mark completely and then darken the correct oval.

The information you supply on this questionnaire will be held in confidence. If any question requests information you do not want to provide, feel free to leave the answer blank.

SECTION I—BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Begin by printing the information requested on the lines in block A. Then, in items B and C, write the requested numbers in the large boxes at the top and darken the corresponding oval under each box. Answer the remaining questions (D-O) by darkening the oval matching the one, most appropriate answer for each question.

A. NAME AND SCHOOL (Please print.)

Your Name

Your School's Name

B. SOCIAL SECURITY/IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

C. YOUR DATE OF BIRTH

Month / Day / Year

- Jan.
- Feb.
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- Aug.
- Sept.
- Oct.
- Nov.
- Dec.

D. SEX

- Male
- Female

E. CURRENT GRADE LEVEL

- 7th Grade
- 8th Grade
- 9th Grade (freshman)
- 10th Grade (sophomore)
- 11th Grade (junior)
- 12th Grade (senior)
- Other/Unclassified
- Does not apply

F. BEST DESCRIPTION OF GRADES YOU HAVE RECEIVED IN HIGH SCHOOL

- A- to A (3.50-4.00)
- B to A- (3.00-3.49)
- B- to B (2.50-2.99)
- C to B- (2.00-2.49)
- C- to C (1.50-1.99)
- D to C- (1.00-1.49)
- Below D (0.00-0.99)

G. WHICH *ONE* OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PLANS FOR YOUR FIRST YEAR AFTER GRADUATING/LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL?

- Obtain a full or part-time job
- Operate a farm or business
- Serve in the armed forces/military
- Care for a home/family
- Attend a vocational or technical school
- Attend a 2-year community or junior college
- Attend a 4-year college or university
- Other
- Undecided

H. IN EACH ROW BELOW, INDICATE THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU WERE INVOLVED DURING THE PAST YEAR.

	0	1-2	3+
Out-of-class extracurricular activities (band/chorus, forensics, athletics, etc.)	○	○	○
Community activities (hospital volunteer, 4-H, church choir, Boy/Girl Scouts, etc.)	○	○	○

I. FOR HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN A JOB *OUTSIDE* YOUR HOME?

- None or only occasional jobs
- 1 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- 16 to 20 hours
- More than 20 hours

J. FOR HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR SPECIFIC JOBS (such as child care, lawn care, etc.) *IN* YOUR HOME?

- None or only occasional jobs
- 1 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- 16 to 20 hours
- More than 20 hours

K. WHICH *ONE* PHRASE BELOW BEST DESCRIBES YOUR RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP AS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED BY YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS?

- Afro-American or Black
- Native American (Indian, Alaskan, Hawaiian)
- Caucasian or White
- Mexican-American, Mexican Origin
- Asian American, Oriental, Pacific Islander
- Puerto Rican, Cuban, Other Latino or Hispanic
- Other
- I prefer not to respond.

L. IS ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE MOST FREQUENTLY SPOKEN IN YOUR HOME?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond.

M. HOW MANY CHILDREN (including yourself) LIVE IN THE HOME WHERE YOU LIVE?

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five or more

N. DO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE LIVE WITH YOU IN YOUR FAMILY'S HOME?

	YES	NO
Mother or stepmother	○	○
Father or stepfather	○	○
Foster parent(s), guardian(s), etc.	○	○
Brother(s) and/or sister(s)	○	○
Grandparent(s)	○	○
Other children	○	○
Other adults	○	○

O. HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT YOU WILL *COMPLETE* HIGH SCHOOL?

- I definitely will complete high school.
- I probably will complete high school.
- I might not complete high school.
- I probably will not complete high school.
- I definitely will not complete high school.
- I haven't thought about it one way or another.
- Other (GED, special program, etc.)

I.C. XXX XXX XXX

IM-37388-001:654321

Printed in U.S.A.

SECTION III—INDIVIDUAL GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND PLANNING

The three Categories (Career, Educational, and Personal) in this section contain development, planning, and growth items with which you may want some help. Each Category is divided into two parts. In Part A, darken the oval that matches your feelings about the item. In Part B, write the numbers of the three items in Part A with which you most want help.

This item is NOT IMPORTANT or DOES NOT APPLY to me.
I want NO FURTHER help with this item.
I want a LITTLE more help with this item.
I want a MEDIUM AMOUNT of added help with this item.
I want MUCH MORE help with this item.

PART A—Career Development & Planning (Items 1-15)

1 identifying careers or jobs that fit my skills, abilities, and interests
2 exploring a number of different careers that might be of interest to me
3 learning how and where to find good information about different careers
4 identifying the specific types of jobs in my career interest areas
5 meeting and talking with people who have jobs or careers of interest to me
6 understanding how different careers could affect my lifestyle
7 identifying careers that will not conflict with my personal values
8 learning about the future demand for workers in career areas or jobs of interest to me
9 learning more about the training or education necessary for jobs or careers of interest to me
10 gaining some practical or general work experience
11 obtaining part-time or summer work while I'm still in high school
12 finding out how and where to start looking for a job
13 learning how to apply for a job
14 learning how to prepare for and what to do during a job interview
15 finding out what types of jobs will be available locally when I finish high school

PART B

From items 1-15 above, select the 3 career areas with which you MOST WANT ADDITIONAL HELP. Write the item numbers of those three in the circles to the right.

SECTION II—LIFE GOALS

Eighteen life goals are listed in Part A below; for each goal, darken the oval that indicates how important it is to you to accomplish that goal. In Part B, write the number of the three goals in Part A that are of greatest importance to you.

This goal is . . .
of NO IMPORTANCE to me.
of LITTLE IMPORTANCE to me.
of AVERAGE IMPORTANCE to me.
of GREAT IMPORTANCE to me.

PART A

1 being the one to supervise and/or lead others
2 staying physically fit
3 working with and/or helping people
4 continuing my education throughout my life
5 being independent and self-reliant
6 making a lot of money
7 creating or performing artistic or literary work (writing, painting, acting, singing, etc.)
8 being active in my community (civic, political, or other groups/programs)
9 working with my mind to explore, create, and/or use ideas
10 travelling and seeing new places
11 being recognized as an expert or one of the best at something I do
12 having my own family (getting married, having a long-term relationship, and/or having children)
13 working with facts, numbers, and/or other data (such as, records, files, etc.)
14 having time for recreation, relaxation, and leisure activities
15 practicing my religious/spiritual beliefs
16 helping to preserve and improve the environment
17 having a steady, secure job I can always count on
18 working with things such as machines, instruments, tools, and/or technological equipment

PART B

From items 1-18 above, select the 3 life goals that are MOST IMPORTANT to you. Write the item numbers of those three in the circles to the right.

PAGE 2

DO NOT FOLD OR STAPLE THIS FORM

SECTION III—Continued

PART A—Educational Development & Planning (Items 16-36)

Response options (columns left to right):
- This item is **NOT IMPORTANT** or **DOES NOT APPLY** to me.
- I want **NO FURTHER** help with this item.
- I want a **LITTLE** more help with this item.
- I want a **MEDIUM AMOUNT** of added help with this item.
- I want **MUCH MORE** help with this item.

Item	Statement
16	better understanding what I read
17	increasing my reading speed
18	improving my writing skills
19	improving my mathematical skills
20	developing proficiency in a foreign language
21	developing my ability to speak in front of others
22	better understanding computers
23	improving my study skills and study habits
24	scheduling time to do my homework
25	better understanding my scores on achievement and ability tests
26	improving my test-taking skills and strategies
27	selecting high school courses that fit my plans and goals
28	getting more help outside of class from my teachers
29	getting more help from my counselor and/or advisor
30	becoming more involved in school activities
31	learning what high school courses are required for jobs of interest to me
32	learning more about my educational options after high school (vo-tech, college, military, etc.)
33	choosing the type of educational or training program that will be right for me after high school
34	learning about requirements for and how to apply to schools I might attend after high school
35	learning about the types and sources of financial aid for my education or training after high school
36	learning how to apply for financial aid for my education or training after high school

PART B

From items 16-36 above, select the **3** educational areas with which you **MOST WANT ADDITIONAL HELP**. Write the item numbers of those three in the circles to the right.

○ ○ ○

PART A—Personal Growth & Development (Items 37-72)

Response options (columns left to right):
- This item is **NOT IMPORTANT** or **DOES NOT APPLY** to me.
- I want **NO FURTHER** help with this item.
- I want a **LITTLE** more help with this item.
- I want a **MEDIUM AMOUNT** of added help with this item.
- I want **MUCH MORE** help with this item.

Item	Statement
37	budgeting and spending money more wisely
38	learning how to better manage my time
39	improving my decision-making skills
40	setting goals and making plans to achieve them
41	being more self-reliant (doing things for myself)
42	learning how to stick up for myself
43	deciding what I want to do with my life
44	identifying my personal strengths and abilities
45	developing more confidence in myself
46	expressing my own ideas and opinions
47	getting my parents, teachers, and others to treat me as a responsible, independent person
48	learning how to do what I think is right even if my friends don't agree with me
49	getting along with people from different cultures, races, backgrounds, etc.
50	getting along with my job supervisor and others where I work
51	getting along with people whose values and opinions are different from mine
52	learning more about prejudice and how it affects people
53	learning how to make more friends
54	handling pressure from my friends or other kids
55	dealing with kids who give you a hard time if you try to do your best in school
56	getting my parents or guardians interested in me and what I do
57	improving the relationship I have with my parents or guardians
58	getting along with my brother(s), sister(s), and/or other kids who live with me
59	dealing with major changes in my family (new stepparent(s), death of parent, adoption, etc.)

PART A CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.

SECTION IV—ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

If an additional set of multiple-choice questions is included with this form, please record your responses to those items in the space below. Twelve ovals are provided for each question, but few questions will have that many answers from which to choose—simply ignore the extra ovals. If no additional questions are included, leave this section blank.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

SECTION V—COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

If you wish to make any comments or suggestions, please write them on the lines below.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE.

SECTION III (Continued)

This item is **NOT IMPORTANT** or **DOES NOT APPLY** to me.

I want **NO FURTHER** help with this item.

I want a **LITTLE** more help with this item.

I want a **MEDIUM AMOUNT** of added help with this item.

I want **MUCH MORE** help with this item.

PART A—Personal Growth & Development (Continued)

60) dealing with the problems of divorce and/or parent separation in my family

61) dealing with pregnancy and/or being a parent while still in high school

62) learning how to stay mentally healthy

63) handling things that worry me

64) handling pressure from my parents, teachers, and other adults

65) dealing with feeling lonely and/or depressed

66) controlling the stress or fear I feel before or when I'm taking a test

67) learning more about suicide—the causes, warning signs, and intervention techniques

68) knowing where I can go to get help with my personal problems

69) maintaining and/or improving my physical health (exercise, nutrition, etc.)

70) understanding my own sexual development

71) learning more about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases

72) dealing with the effects of alcohol, nicotine, and other addictive drugs

PART B

From items 37-72 (on pages 3 and 4), select the **3 personal areas** with which you **MOST WANT ADDITIONAL HELP.** Write the item numbers of those three in the circles to the right.

PAGE 4

DO NOT FOLD OR STAPLE THIS FORM

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH DATA SHEET

	ID #	#	Last Name	GPA	TAKS R (9)	TAKS M (9)
		396		1.52	2411	2227
		4114		2.87	2071	2031
		1765		2.48	2059	1917
		3390		4.32	2411	2632
		8379		3.41	2441	2260
		5589		3.07	2441	2239
		4391		1.53	2116	1865
		6809		2.28	NT	NT
		9400		4	NT	NT
		571		2.19	2197	2015
		7382		2.64	2552	2306
		7392		2.65	NT	NT
		1342		2.33	1853	1980
		8857		2.23	1869	1882
		906		2.62	2197	2031
		5853		3.14	2313	2163
		6096		2.07	NT	NT
		9851		2.17	2116	2000
		6907		1.36	2071	1807
		2668		2.54	2230	1950
		2318		2.54	2071	1917
		4807		2.3	2116	2050
		8121		2.13	2230	1846
		8119		2.86	2197	2112
		7338		3.36	2313	2181
		5335		3.16	2230	2100
		8409		4.29	2604	2632
		5380		2.53	2400	2318
		3946		2.81	2313	2146
		7654		2.67	2441	2050
		3487		2.73	2197	2000
		2500		1.28	1917	1672
		3488		3.79	2230	2100
		9836		3.57	2313	2129
		2278		2.4	2197	2129
		1062		1.84	2230	2100
		3865		3.99	2167	2423
		9713		1.77	1559	2063

1097		2.65	2167	2015
9244		2.54	2400	2260
4289		2.04	2197	2129
9444		1.56	2154	NT
8117		2.26	2100	1900
1291		2.46	2197	2200
5485		2.4	NT	NT
1045		2.63	2167	2100
6855		2.49	2552	1900
4031		2.14	2185	1932
8750		2.82	2230	2200
14		2.65	2552	2163
6270		2.28	NT	NT
9383		3.87	2267	2000
8115		3.86	2552	2282
3203		1.92	2071	2112
2698		2.14	NT	NT
1571		2.54	2140	1950
2375		1.79	2313	2129
4174		2.76	2268	2015
6199		2.08	2197	2079
2746		2.96	2230	2163
9275		3.1	2313	2647
20 5		2.76	2441	2400
4602		2.36	2167	1983
9916		1.28	2268	2063
8424		3.2	2441	2400
8104		4.23	2230	2509
3245		3.2	2400	2079
8132		3.59	2140	2129
9177		3.37	2441	2181
3124		1.22	NT	NT
8605		3.05	2400	2129
5198		1.47	2140	1827
6976		2.97	2230	1983
7505		1.9	2267	2208
3324		3.47	2441	2359
1511		1.5	NT	NT
5100		3.67	2313	2306

7624		3.3	2197	2050
550		2.28	1992	2063
2431		2	2313	1882
7065		1.88	2007	1804
1297		3.11	2400	2050
9513		4.15	2400	2306
1033		3.37	2470	2315
3184		2.09	1830	1889
4321		2.88	2140	2359
1995		2.25	2059	2000
9399		2.71	2197	2000
37		1.88	2268	1983
4152		2.23	2268	2181
8351		1.28	2150	2010
		1.68	1977	1920
5889		1.36	2112	1882
5122		1.99	1921	1765
6626		4.26	2313	2509
5349		2.5	NT	NT
2661		3.16	2441	2163
3451		2.97	2268	2239
7032		2.22	2140	1900
3715		2.27	2268	2031
3960		2.73	2230	2239
667		2.7	2197	2306
3593		3.5	2268	2423
7400		2.9	2167	2163
7749		2.25	NT	NT
6075		2.2	1985	1837
1059		2.91	2140	2129
7993		3.55	2230	2200
1518		3.21	2313	2181
4619		2.56	2197	1950
7748		1.9	2167	2163
61		2.7	2400	2112
6907		3.97	2400	2359
5033		2.95	2230	2031
5459		0.95	1738	1934

	918		3.57	2441	2462
	4057		1.95	2116	1846
	6169		1.95	2313	2129
	7891		2.07	2116	2129
	4950		1.59	1962	1785
	6259		1.91	1970	1853
	6846		1.8	2116	1900
	2389		1.98	2197	2050
	6830		4.12	2197	2331
	4380		2.45	2167	2100
	1050		2.64	2167	2031
	3598		3.77	2140	2200
	8073		1.73	2054	1881
	8722		3.37	2400	2331
	8074		3.07	NT	2063
	3553		2.01	2100	2015
	7975		2.65	2167	2112
	9789		2.17	2071	1807
	493		1.29	2021	1839
	3378		2.59	1900	2007
	3010		2.92	2230	2079
	8199		2.44	2400	2112
	6706		1.51	2059	1950
	7665		1.53	2116	1983
	1691		3.46	2268	2100
	806		3.23	2441	2260
	346		2.69	2021	2129
	6634		2.39	2100	1865
	3331		2.19	2140	1983
	9370		2.14	2167	1917
	1504		3.07	2400	2282
	1690		3.5	NT	NT
	2112		1.9	2313	2306
	9737		2.85	NT	2423
	7059		2.14	2230	2063
	4218		1.69	2089	1956
	1882		1.98	1834	1865
	4604		3.15	2262	2011
	4848		1.65	2100	2000

		2.74	2167	1900
4173		2.74	2167	1900
5912		1.71	2268	1900
2031		3.57	2117	2145
2873		3.33	2071	2100
2895		2.68	2230	2079
2449		2.08	1974	1807
1440		1.57	2198	2100
9525		2.55	2197	2000
9674		1.9	1747	1848
4734		1.8	2030	1742
1773		3.76	2552	2260
3632		1.4	2140	1846
9640		2.64	2268	2100
4216		3	2059	2146
5237		2.49	2100	1934
200		1.88	2167	1865
9075		3.14	2268	1983
1030		1.85	1992	1934
9398		2.59	2400	2129
3846		2.3	2140	1934
5193		1.57	2268	1934
4802		1.52	2268	2129
5430		2.21	2268	2050
233		1.44	2268	1765
3415		3.06	2268	2129
2861		1.7	2128	1928
1581		2.85	2313	2129
2330		3.52	2262	2076
995		4.6	2267	2494
1449		2.47	2268	2306
2731		3.49	2441	2260
6568		1.86	NT	NT
7350		1.7	1954	1908
5491		3.31	2167	2062
5351		1.65	1974	1917
3545		2.12	NT	1967
3756		3.86	2313	2509
6256		2.72	2197	2015
2693		3.43	2268	2423

9391			1.55	2116	1807
9516			3.45	NT	NT
3988			3.76	2400	2112
6996			2.9	2230	2031
5928			3.6	2866	2509
254			3.46	2230	2112
			3.7	2306	2171
9964			2.29	2313	1983
8831			1.96	2197	1967
4973			2.41	2167	2146
4382			2.6	1921	2000
1417			2.63	2268	2079
7920			3.96	2441	2509
3121			2.52	2140	2015
6365			3.08	2400	2158
552			2.14	NT	NT
6083			1.5	2021	1900
7726			3.46	2400	2260
2734			3.86	2313	2282
504			3.59	2441	2219
4119			1.87	2268	2031
7016			2.9	2268	1983
9466			3.43	2313	2146
7520			3.77	2441	2146
8011			2.23	2045	1908
6560			2.57	2197	2031
8132			1.45	2000	1920
1812			1.25	2233	1882
9436			1.79	2268	1983
241			2.47	2268	2063
4501			2.94	2400	2071
3748			3.94	2313	2567
2833			2.01	2230	1983
6865			2.85	2400	2015
8739			2.01	1970	1881
5417			1.92	2157	2030
5481			1.73	2116	1900
674			2.41	2230	2015

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Major: Public Education Administration
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Master of Science – 1993
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Major: Physical Education
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CERTIFICATION   Superintendent (Standard)
Professional Mid-Management (Life)
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EXPERIENCE

1989 – Present   SOUTHWEST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
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2005- Present   Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Human
Resources

2004-2005   Executive Director for Administration and Pupil Services

2000-2004   Principal, Southwest High School

1994-2000   Principal, McAuliffe Junior High School

1992-1994   Assistant Principal, McAuliffe Junior High School

1989-1992   Teacher and Coach, McNair Junior High School

This Record of Study was typed and edited by Marilyn M. Oliva at Action Ink, Inc.