A Needs Assessment of Gifted Students at Superior High School

Marilou Parker
A NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF GIFTED STUDENTS
AT SUPERIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Marilou Parker, Ed.S.
Western Michigan University, 1985

The objectives of this study were to identify the needs of 98
intellectually gifted students, grades 9-12; to assess those needs;
and based on the assessment, to recommend action to fulfill those
needs. An opinion survey, based on the North Central Association's
"Secondary Student Questionnaire," was administered.

Approximately a third of the students responded that the faculty
set only mediocre standards and held only average expectations for
student performance.

The results of this study implied a need for the faculty to
evaluate the curriculum considering the needs of gifted students and
to consider changes in teaching methods based on current research to
meet those needs.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Carol Sheffer, my degree adviser.

Marilou Parker
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This project report is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Specialist in Education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The researcher, employed in a southwestern Michigan school district, is the part-time coordinator of gifted and talented high school students. The high school principal and the researcher determined that a needs assessment of the gifted high school students was necessary for future programming. The researcher and her graduate adviser at Western Michigan University agreed that this assessment would be an appropriate area of study, fulfilling the project report requirement.

Throughout this paper, the school district will be referred to as the Superior School District and the high school as the Superior High School to protect the confidentiality and the right to privacy of the school system, its faculty, and students.

The Superior School District with a faculty of 230 in 1984-85 served 4,300 pupils in grades K-12. The high school pupil enrollment in grades 9-12 was 1,350.
The Problem

Gifted and talented youth are a unique population, differing markedly from their age peers in abilities, talents, interests, and psychological maturity. They are the most versatile and complex of all human groups, possibly the most neglected of all groups with special education needs. (Clendening & Davies, 1980, p. 6)

The Superior Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee was formed in 1980. After 2 years of study, it developed a report which included the definition of gifted and talented children and the methods of student identification. One of the recommendations from this report was "that appropriate curriculum efforts explore the needs of gifted."

This study was initiated as part of a broader evaluation of needs assessment for the gifted and talented students at Superior High School. Specifically, this study is concerned with the needs of the gifted students at Superior High School as perceived by those gifted students.

The Superior Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee adopted the following definition of a gifted child from the policy of the state of Michigan:

The "gifted and/or academically talented" means elementary and/or secondary school students who may be considered to be (1) intellectually gifted, (2) outstanding in school achievement, and/or (3) those who have outstanding abilities in particular areas of human endeavor, including the arts and humanities.

For this study, only the intellectually gifted child as defined by the Superior Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee was identified: "[One of] the categories of giftedness is general intellectual
ability [which consists of] broad academic superiority, consistently superior scores on appropriate standardized tests, demonstration of advanced skills, imaginative insight, and interest and involvement."

The answer to the following question was sought: What are the needs of the identified gifted students at Superior High School as perceived by these gifted students? To determine the needs, a student questionnaire was constructed to assess the following:

1. How do these students perceive themselves academically, personally, and socially?

2. How do these students perceive their rapport with peers, teachers, librarians, counselors, and administrators?

3. How do these students perceive the overall school academic program?

4. How do these students perceive the psychological climate of the school?

5. What are the future plans and goals of these students?

The objectives of this study were to identify the needs of the intellectually gifted students; to assess those needs; and based on the assessment, to recommend action to fulfill those needs.
CHAPTER II

THE METHOD

The Subjects

The Superior High School in 1983-84 had a total student enrollment of 1,362, composed of 399 ninth graders, 302 tenth graders, 317.5 eleventh graders, and 343.5 twelfth graders. The students, selected from this enrollment for the study, according to their eighth grade Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, scored 120 or above in the cumulated score of intelligence or scored 90% or above on the 11th grade Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test. Achievement scores and grade point averages were not considered.

A total of 112 students was identified: 37 freshmen (class of 1987), 35 sophomores (class of 1986), 17 juniors (class of 1985), and 24 seniors (class of 1984). The questionnaire was not issued to nine of the identified 112 total because of the researcher's inability to contact these students. Of the 103 students who received copies of the questionnaire, 5 did not return them. The final result was a total of 98 completed questionnaires (87.5% of the total 112 possible, and 95% of the total issued). Of the 98, there were 43 females and 55 males; there were 35 freshmen, 29 sophomores, 14 juniors, and 20 seniors.
The Instruments

The North Central Association's (1976) "Secondary School Student Questionnaire" (p. 100) was used as a base for the survey. (See Appendix for the complete survey with results.) However, not all of the items were used, and those which were used were rearranged to better meet the objectives of this study. The Items 24 and 25 were taken from the ESEA Title IX, 1980-81 Application for Gifted and Talented Program, Project Emerge, of the Livonia Public Schools, Farmington, Michigan. The items in Section I, Number 8 were based on a similar evaluation from the Coronado Unified School District State Program for Mentally Gifted Minors (Renzulli, 1975, p. 161). Additional items were constructed to meet the objectives.

The Michigan State Department of Education coordinator for gifted/talented programs, the county coordinator for gifted/talented programs, and the Superior High School principal were consulted for input.

The Procedure

The researcher made arrangements with the teachers of the identified students, for the students to meet in the library. Not all students came the same day or the same hour. The time depended upon the convenience of the teacher. While seated in the library, the majority of the students completed the questionnaire in approximately 30 minutes. Eleven students with incompatible schedules were contacted individually and were given the questionnaire to be completed
on their own time. The researcher had to prod most of these students to get the questionnaires returned.

Each time the questionnaires were issued, the researcher explained the following: This was an opportunity for the students to have input into their school program. They should not sign the questionnaires. They could freely add comments if the choices of the provided responses did not meet their needs. They would not be timed. They were not to discuss questions among themselves, but the researcher would answer their questions.

As the students returned the questionnaires, their names were checked on a roster so that the researcher would know which students still needed to be contacted.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The analysis of the results of the questionnaire were divided into the five areas of consideration determined by the statement of the problem.

How Do the Gifted Students at Superior High School Perceive Themselves Academically, Personally, and Socially?

Academic

The grade point average for the total responses of 95 was 3.63. The females' mean of 3.7 was higher than the males' mean of 3.6. The lowest reported grade point average of one student was 2.7 and the highest, of which there were 20, was 4.0. Seventy-one of the students responding to this item had a grade point average of 3.5 or better. Twenty-three of the respondents had a grade point average in the range of 3.0 to 3.4. Although not selected for this study for their achievement records, the results indicated that these gifted students were achieving at acceptable levels.

On the item dealing with grade acceleration, 100% indicated that they had never skipped a grade.

In assessing their efforts in school work for the year (Item 17), 66% responded that they were working fairly hard or very hard, while 22% responded that they were taking it easy, and 3% that they were "just loafing." A greater percentage of the females than of the
males responded that they were working "fairly hard" or "very hard," 73% females to 60% males. Twenty-nine percent of the males and 14% of the females responded that they were "taking it easy." Three males and no females responded "just loafing."

To Item 18 dealing with the student's satisfaction regarding his/her academic achievement, 62% responded that they were satisfied or thoroughly satisfied, while 37% responded that they were thoroughly dissatisfied.

The combination chosen by each respondent to Items 17 and 18 was interesting. The total number of students responding to both questions was 88. Table 1 shows several combinations broken down by males and females as well as by class.

Fifty-two percent of the 88 students were working "very hard" or "fairly hard" and were thoroughly satisfied or satisfied with their achievement. Of concern were the 15% who were "taking it easy" or "loafing" and were somewhat dissatisfied or thoroughly dissatisfied with their achievement. Of greater concern were the 12% who were satisfied or thoroughly satisfied with their low efforts.

In conjunction with these results, the responses to Item 42 were indicative of the importance the students placed on achievement. When asked for what one particular accomplishment at school they wished to be remembered, 53 students responded with an outstanding academic record.

Of the 98 students, 95 rated learning as "usually" or "always" being important to them. Three students rated it as "important about half the time" (Section I, Item 8).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort/satisfaction</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>9th</th>
<th>10th</th>
<th>11th</th>
<th>12th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working fairly hard; satisfied</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working fairly hard; somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working very hard; thoroughly satisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking it easy; somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking it easy; satisfied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working very hard; satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working fairly hard; thoroughly satisfied</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking it easy; thoroughly satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just loafing; somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working very hard; somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working fairly hard; thoroughly dissatisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just loafing; thoroughly dissatisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since 97 students planned to continue their education and the 98th student was undecided upon further education (Item 55), the students were clearly academically oriented.

Personal and Social

Over 50% (52 of the 98 total) of these intellectually gifted students did not begin their education in the Superior Schools. Of these 52 students, 16 entered during the K-3 years; 18 entered during the 4th-5th grades; 16 during the middle school years; and 2 in high school.

Of the 98 students, 53 had jobs. Twelve (34%) of the 35 ninth graders had jobs; 17 (59%) of the 29 tenth graders; 10 (71%) of the 14 eleventh graders; and 14 (70%) of the 20 twelfth graders. They worked from 4 to 49 hours a week, with the greatest percentage (49%) working from 10-20 hours.

Which comes first, the car or the job? Fifty-seven of the 98 students had a car or had free access to a car, while 41 students did not. Seventy percent of the 41 were freshmen, most of whom were only 15 years old and could not get a license.

These intellectually gifted students generally perceived themselves favorably regarding personal characteristics (Section I, Item 8). All 98 of the students felt that they "usually" or "always" got along well with other students. This was an important finding because one of the concerns of people working with gifted is that these students will feel too different or alienated from their grade peers.
They saw themselves as creative thinkers. Ninety-one were "usually" or "always" able to consider more than one solution to a problem. Although 8 students responded that they were curious only "half the time" or "seldomly," 90 students responded that they were "usually" or "always" curious. However, not as many perceived themselves as having original ideas: 75, "usually" or "always"; 19, "about half the time"; and 4 "seldomly."

The results indicated that the greater percentage of students perceived themselves as "leaders" about half the time or more, but that more males than females seldomly or never perceived themselves as "leaders." Fifty-four of the 98 students responded that they "usually" or "always" have leadership qualities; 34 responded that they do about half the time; 9, seldomly; and 1 student, never.

There was no notable difference between males and females in the totals of the first two categories of "always" and "usually" (females 56%; males 54%); a 7% difference in the category "always" with females at 19% and males at 12%; a 5% difference in the category "usually" with females at 37% and males at 42%. However, in the third category of "about half the time," there was a notable difference of 13% (females 42% and males 29%). And, 15% of the males to 2% of the females responded that they were seldom "leaders."

These students responded that they could accept responsibility, 95 "usually" or "always" and 3 "about half the time."

Two weaker areas of personal growth were "time management" and "self-awareness." Although 77 of the students believed they were able to study well alone and budget time, 21 were "good" at this only
half the time or "seldomly." While 73 could estimate their own strengths and weaknesses, 15 could estimate only about "half the time" or "seldomly."

While 7 of the 98 students viewed more than 15 hours of television each week, 91 students viewed 14 hours or less (Section I, Item 6).

They did tend to be moviegoers, with 83 students of the 98 seeing one or more movies a month. However, none went more often than once a week; and 13 never attended. (This finding may increase in succeeding years because of the recent opening of a Quad theater in the area.)

How Do These Students Perceive Their Rapport With Peers, Teachers, Librarians, Counselors, and Administrators?

Peers

As stated above, 98 or all of the students perceived that they "usually" or "always" get along well with the other students. No notable difference existed between the females' and the males' perceptions of their social abilities.

Seventy-nine percent of the ninth grade females responded that the other students in the school were mainly friendly and helpful (Item 31). The 12th grade males followed with 70% of them agreeing with the statement. The 10th grade males responded the least favorably to this statement with only 56% of them agreeing. Overall, the females responded slightly more favorably than the males, 70% to 64%.
However, 33% of the 96 males and females responded that they were either "uncertain" or "disagreed" that the other students were mainly friendly and helpful. These students might have experienced some antagonism from other students.

**Teachers (Section II. Items 1, 2, 9, and 16)**

Although 64 students agreed that most of the teachers cared for students as individuals, 17 were uncertain and 14 disagreed. It is curious that 17 students did not know if their teachers took a personal interest in them. If the teachers did take a personal interest, it would seem that the students would know it. The response of these students, plus the 14 students who responded that the teachers did not take a personal interest in them, may indicate that 31 students were feeling somewhat alienated from the teachers.

This reaction seems to be corroborated by the reaction of the 39 students who were either "uncertain" about their freedom to express themselves in classes (23 students), or who were "afraid" to express what they thought (16 students). Along the same line, there was an uncertainty on the part of 42 students as to whether teachers encouraged students to discuss an issue further after an initial explanation. Nine students disagreed that teachers sought more discussion.

These two areas are of concern particularly for the gifted child who may see another solution or a more creative solution to a discussion problem. A gifted child needs the freedom to explore a non-traditional view and to express his/her views in an accepting atmosphere. Sometimes the gifted child may need the encouragement of a
teacher to pursue issues beyond the traditional view of most other students (Tuttle & Becker, 1983, p. 19).

Also to be considered is that 21 students responded that they "never" or "only occasionally" could get individual help from the teachers outside their regularly scheduled class periods.

Librarians and the Library

Since 93 students responded that they could get help from the librarians usually or whenever they need it, no staff problem seems to exist there. The librarians seemed to be doing a good job, too, of selecting materials for those who read: 42 students could usually find an interesting book and 16 students believed a wide variety of books met their needs.

The students also responded favorably to the librarians' selection of materials for meeting their learning interests and needs: 84 students could usually locate the needed materials or believed that much material was available. Of concern though were the 13 students who frequently found that needed materials were unavailable.

Relevant to the selection process for pleasure reading were the 56 students who read more than five books a year, with 37 students reading more than 10. Of great concern, however, were the 31 of the 98 students who did not look for books; the 6 students who look, but seldom find an interesting book; and the 6 students who never read a book for their own pleasure during the year. Although 33 students were required by teachers to use the library for supplementary study and work, 61 students were seldom required.
Counselors (Items 28 and 29)

Sixty-one percent of the students responded to Item 28 stating that someone was "usually" or "always" available when they needed to discuss selecting courses, getting a job, choosing a college, and so on. However, 34% wanted to talk to counselors more often than they were available.

Of the 98 students responding to Item 29, 69% felt that the counseling and guidance they had received were either somewhat helpful (56%) or very helpful (13%). Of the 19 students who had received no counseling and guidance, 8 were freshmen, 10 were sophomores, and 1 was a senior. One student commented that she used the counseling services more as she got older. Perhaps more upperclassmen seek out the counseling service. However, freshman and sophomore gifted students also need individual counseling for guidance in course selection and preparing 4-year plans.

Administrators (Items 43, 44, 45, and 46)

Although 97 of the 98 students knew the name of the high school principal, 40% did not know the correct spelling. One junior thought the principal was one of the assistant principals. Nine students knew the name of only one of the two assistant principals. The 20 seniors knew the names of all three administrators.

Perhaps the 36% who were uncertain if the administrators were approachable and helpful, and the 28% who were uncertain if the administrators were interested in providing a good learning
environment, indicated a lack of interaction with the administrators.

A greater percentage of the females (67%) than the males (51%) perceived the administrators as being approachable and helpful. However, the 9th grade females' and males' perceptions were the same (57%). While 78% of the female seniors agreed that the administrators were approachable and helpful, only 30% of the male seniors agreed.

Eighty-eight percent of the freshmen and sophomores perceived the administrators as being interested in providing a good learning environment; while only 44% of the juniors and seniors responded favorably to this item. This may indicate that the college preparatory curriculum for the freshmen and the sophomores was more structured and obvious than for the upperclassmen. Or, it may indicate that the underclassmen were not as sophisticated in judging the learning environment and the administrator's role in providing it.

How Do These Students Perceive the Overall Academic Program?

The students regarded the content of most classes in meeting their present and future needs as "fairly important" to "important" (Item 3). The mean response was 2.5 with 3.0 the value of "important," 2.0 the value of "fairly important," and 1.0 the value of "not important." The senior mean response was the lowest, 2.35; and the freshman mean response was the highest, 2.9. The mean response of the males and females was the same.
They perceived most classes as being "somewhat interesting" with a mean response of 2.97 with 4.0 the value of "very interesting" to 1.0 the value of "dull" (Item 4). The mean response of each grade level declined slightly with each grade advance: 9th graders, 3.2; 10th graders, 2.9; 11th graders, 2.8; and 12th graders, 2.79.

Although 67 of the 98 students responded that most teachers used a "teacher-lecture" method of teaching (Item 7), only 20 students preferred it. While 13 students responded that most teachers used a class discussion approach, 43 students responded that they preferred this method of instruction. The students checking the "other" category, described combinations of the teacher-lecture and group discussion methods, or other combinations. The responses to Items 7 and 8 were fairly consistent in all the grade levels as indicated in Table 2. Although the students preferred one method for learning, they were consistently getting another.

Perhaps the method of teaching explains why the students responding to Item 10 either believed that the teachers were not making a strong effort to get students to think through and defend their opinions (32%), or were uncertain if they were (29%). With limited group discussion the students may not have had many opportunities to express opinions.

The students' mean response of 2.6 to Item 15 was that the teachers' expectations were between "somewhat easy" and "about right." (The values ranged from 5.0, "much too difficult," to 1.0, "much too easy.") The responses were consistent at each grade level.
### Table 2

**Teaching Methods (in percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Method most used</th>
<th>Method preferred</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Teacher-lecture</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher-lecture</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Class discussion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Class discussion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

between males and females except for seniors. The senior males' mean response was 2.9: the teachers' expectations were "about right." However, the senior females' mean response was 2.1: the teachers' expectations were "somewhat easy." The freshmen's mean response of 2.79 was the highest; the juniors' mean response of 2.14 was the lowest.

Somewhat in conjunction with Item 15 is Item 26: "... which best describes how you feel about the total amount of work you are expected to do outside of class for all your classes this year." The point values for this item are:

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1 = less than I feel I could do.

2 = about what I feel I can comfortably do.

3 = amount of work has been excessive, but I have completed it without any great problem.

4 = amount of work has been excessive, but I have completed it with great difficulty.

5 = amount of work has been so great that I have been unable to complete it.

The students' mean response was 2.26, slightly over the comfortable work-level. The mean responses definitely varied between the males and females for each grade level (except sophomores) as described in Table 3.

Table 3
Mean Responses of Homework Load for All Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 24 asked the students to rank their overall experience for the year in the academic courses of English, social studies, mathematics, science, and foreign languages.
English

Ninety-six of the 98 students were enrolled in an English course. The total students' mean response was 3.8, slightly "less than satisfied." The mean responses by grade level are given in Table 4.

Table 4
Mean Responses for Overall Experiences in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 5 = very satisfied; 4 = satisfied; 3 = neutral; 2 = dissatisfied; 1 = very dissatisfied.

Social Studies

The 50 students' mean response of 3.68 for social studies was between "neutral" and "satisfied." The mean responses by grade levels are given in Table 5.

The low enrollment in social studies courses was of concern to the researcher. However, it was hoped that the recently instituted course, "Rights and Responsibilities," open to freshmen and sophomores would increase the overall enrollment. Also, a recently
instituted increase in social studies graduation requirements might result in an increased enrollment.

### Table 5
Mean Responses for Overall Experiences in Social Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** 5 = very satisfied; 4 = satisfied; 3 = neutral; 2 = dissatisfied; 1 = very dissatisfied.

**Mathematics**

Ninety-four of the 98 students were enrolled in mathematics classes. The mean response of the 94 students was slightly "better than satisfied," 4.2. The mean responses by grade levels are given in Table 6.

**Science**

The responses of 95 students enrolled in science courses resulted in a mean of 4.1. The students were satisfied with their overall experiences in these courses. The mean responses by grade level are given in Table 7.
Table 6
Mean Responses for Overall Experiences in Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  5 = very satisfied; 4 = satisfied; 3 = neutral; 2 = dissatisfied; 1 = very dissatisfied.

Table 7
Mean Responses for Overall Experiences in Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  5 = very satisfied; 4 = satisfied; 3 = neutral; 2 = dissatisfied; 1 = very dissatisfied.

Foreign Languages

The enrollment in foreign language courses was 66. The mean response of 3.7 for these 66 students was slightly "less than satisfied." The mean responses by grade level are given in Table 8.
Table 8
Mean Responses for Overall Experiences in Foreign Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 5 = very satisfied; 4 = satisfied; 3 = neutral; 2 = dissatisfied; 1 = very dissatisfied.

Two factors should be noted regarding the results in foreign languages: (a) the low enrollment for this group of gifted students, and (b) the mean responses of "neutral" for the sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

Perhaps the students' lack of satisfaction in the foreign language courses resulted in the lower enrollment. Since all of these students planned to attend college, it seems to this researcher that they should be taking foreign language courses.

Pace in Classes

The pace in classes for the year (Item 25) was rated by the students as slightly less than "about right," 1.89 mean response. The point values for this item are: 3.0, too fast; 2.0, about right; and 1.0, too slow.
The mean response for the pace by subject area was as follows: English, 1.9; social studies, 1.6; mathematics, 1.9; science, 2.0, and foreign languages, 1.8. These results seem to indicate that the pace could be accelerated in all subject areas.

**Thinking Skills**

The results of tabulating Item 3 suggest that thinking skills need to be taught. The students were to check the skills that they had been taught. The 98 students responded as follows: 53 brainstorming; 92 problem-solving; 54 critical thinking; 76 decision-making; and 56 creative thinking.

Although 58 students responded that the school offered all the subjects they wanted (Item 27), 33 students responded that it did not. The suggestions for additions included specialized computer courses (different types of basic programming); a wider selection of high level social studies courses, such as 20th-century history, Renaissance history, Medieval history, world history, world culture, European history, government, and geography; British literature, an honors American literature, Shakespeare; and philosophy. Although at the time of this study the curriculum offered four foreign languages, additional ones were suggested: Greek, Russian, Dutch, and Italian. (However, Item 24 indicated that only 66 of the 98 students were enrolled in a foreign language class.) Music courses and art history were mentioned as desired classes. Advanced placement courses in science and mathematics, honors courses in mathematics and English,
and permitting students to take more courses at the local college were recommended.

The students rated the educational opportunities offered by the school in regard to preparation for further education (Item 54). The point values from which the mean response was calculated are 5.0, excellent; 4.0, very good; 3.0, good; 2.0, inferior; and 1.0, very inferior. The mean response of the 98 students was 3.5, between "good" and "very good."

How Do These Students Perceive the Psychological Climate of the School?

The students characterized the general psychological climate of the school as "somewhat friendly" with a mean response of 3.1 for Item 30, with the point value of 4.0 for "warm and friendly" and the point value of 1.0 for "cold, restrictive." The majority of the students (66%) perceived the other students as being mainly "friendly and helpful" (Item 31).

Although 16 students felt that few cliques existed, others felt that conflicting groups did exist (Item 32). The three conflicting groups designated most frequently by the students were social class (65%), academic ability (44%), and economic level (33%). Twenty percent of the students designated race and 17% designated neighborhoods as determining factors for conflicting groups. Nineteen students pointed out other ways that groups were bonded, such as athletic ability and drug-taking.
The students responding to Item 33 saw alcohol abuse as the number one in-school problem (66%), followed by drug abuse (49%), thievery (36%), and vandalism (32%). Smoking and cheating were both mentioned as additional problems. However, 18 of the 98 students did not see any of these as a major problem.

The problem of cheating had previously surfaced in Item 14. Fifty-two percent of the students agreed that students cheated on tests or in daily work, 14% disagreed, and 29% were uncertain if students cheated. One of the seniors stated that cheating was widespread in the required classes, but not as prevalent in the college-preparatory classes.

Apparently, the cheating was not encouraged by an overemphasis on marks (Item 13). The mean response (with 4.0 as the point value for excessive emphasis on marks and 1.0, too little) was 2.3, slightly more than "about right." A student who felt that there was too much emphasis on grades stated that there was "not enough emphasis on actually learning and understanding."

What did the students believe was emphasized in this school (Items 34 and 35)? Table 9 shows the results to these two items.

The results seemed to suggest that some of these students preferred the school to emphasize sports less and to increase the emphasis on cultural events and academic work. Fifty-three percent perceived the emphasis on each area as "about right," which conflicted with their response to Item 35 with 34% stating that the emphasis was about right.
Table 9
Emphasis in the School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Too much emphasis</th>
<th>Too little emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social affairs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural events</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic work</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Government and Activities

There was an almost even split of the students agreeing with (53%) and disagreeing with (47%) the statement that the student government deals with matters of real importance to the students (Item 36). Forty-eight students were uncertain which seems indicative of a negative response. If the student government dealt with important matters, it seems that these students would be aware of it.

Again, an almost even split developed between those agreeing (54%) that it was possible for students to make meaningful changes (Item 37), and those who disagreed (42%). Twenty-five students were uncertain which, as above, seemed to be a negative response.

An even more negative response was suggested in the finding that 61% perceived that a small group of students controlled the student activities (Item 38). Twenty-three students were uncertain, four upperclassmen and 19 lowerclassmen.
The majority of the students at all grade levels did participate in some student activity (Item 39): 91% of the 9th graders, 96% of the 10th graders, 93% of the 11th graders, and 90% of the 12th graders. Of those participating, 92% considered their participation in student activities to be of some value or very valuable.

**Student Responsibility**

Did these gifted students perceive a restricted school environment? Of the 94 students responding to Item 12, 86% responded that they were either permitted some self-direction or much self-direction, apart from classroom work. Although 7% responded that too much freedom existed for students to accept responsibility for their own learning (Item 5), 20% responded that too much regimentation existed. Sixty-eight percent responded that the right amount of freedom was provided for election of courses, selection of teachers, unsupervised study, long-range assignments, and so on.

However, 36% of the 95 students responding to Item 6 responded that too little unscheduled time was provided for such activities as using the library, leisure-time pursuits, consulting with teachers, and socializing with other students. Fifty-four percent responded that the right amount of time was provided; 11% responded that too much unscheduled time was provided. Only two upperclassmen responded that too much unscheduled time was provided.

The majority of the students perceived a school environment that allowed them self-direction, freedom and responsibility for their own
learning, and about the right amount of unscheduled time to pursue activities outside the classroom.

School Climate

The school spirit was rated at average or above by 85% (Item 41). While 51 students usually looked forward to going to school each day, four always did. (Three of the four were freshmen and one was a junior.) It seemed reasonable that the eight students who often dreaded going to school and the one who always dislikes it should be cause for concern. Twenty-nine students were frequently indifferent about going to school.

It was disturbing that 11 of the 20 seniors were uncertain if Superior High School was a good school for a young person to attend (Item 47). This researcher tends to believe that these perceptive, gifted students should know if it is a good school or not. Perhaps the 30 students who responded "uncertain" to this item were wavering between agreeing and disagreeing with the statement that it "is a good school for a young person to attend," or felt they had no basis for an opinion. Sixty-one percent agreed that Superior is a good school, and 6% disagreed.

However, to Item 54, 93% of the students responded that the preparation for further education was good, very good, or excellent. Seven percent indicated that it was inferior. The favorable response to this item seemed somewhat in conflict to the negative response to Item 47.
What Are the Future Plans and Goals of These Students?

An outstanding academic record at Superior High School was the one particular accomplishment for which 54% of the students wished to be remembered. Twenty-two percent of the students wished to be remembered as an outstanding student leader.

All 98 of the students planned to continue their education after high school (Item 52). Ninety-two students stated that they planned to attend a 4-year college or university (Item 55). Only one student was undecided upon further education and two planned to continue their education, but were undecided upon the type of school. Three planned to attend a junior college, business college, or technical institute.

The mean responses of the females and males to Item 51 indicated that these women, as with tradition, see their future roles as somewhat more altruistic than the men. The women by a slight difference were also willing to receive less income. However, the senior women gave high income a narrow edge over the senior men. The senior women also regarded high income as more important than the women in the lower three grades regarded it. Interestingly, job security became progressively less important for the men, but more important for the women. An exciting job despite its pressure remained the highest goal of each level. Table 10 shows these results.
Table 10

Mean Responses in Terms of Importance for Future Work
(1 = Most Important; 6 = Least Important)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9th</th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<td></td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security of</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Easy job,</td>
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<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>High income</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>despite its</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M = male, F = female, and T = total.
Seniors

Each of the 20 seniors planned to attend school full time in the fall of 1984. Four of the seniors were undecided about their future occupational goals, but the other 16 had set specific goals. Thirteen planned for professional careers, one in a technical field, one in farming, and one in management.

Undergraduates

If classes were offered outside the usual school day schedule of 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., the undergraduate students indicated that they would be willing to enroll in these classes as shown in Table 11.

Table 11
Willingness to Take Classes Outside the School Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday morning class</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening class</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m. class</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 p.m. class</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College class</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total respondents = 78.
CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

Gardner (1961) in *Excellence* stated: "Standards are contagious. They spread throughout an organization, a group or a society. If an organization or group cherishes high standards, the behavior of individuals who enter it is inevitably influenced" (p. 86).

Almost a third (31%) of the students surveyed were not certain or disagreed that the administrators were interested in providing a good learning environment. Over a third of the students (38%) described the standards set by their teachers as somewhat easy or much too easy. Another 10% responded that although some of the teachers expected a great deal, others expected very little. Over a third (38%) of the students responded that they were uncertain or disagreed that the school was a good one for young people to attend. Fifty-one percent rated the educational opportunities offered by the school in regard to preparation for further education as only "good" or as "inferior." Twenty-one percent of the students responded that the amount of homework assigned was less than they could do. There were 74 responses of "too slow" for the pace in the academic classes. It seemed obvious that the gifted and talented students need a clear message that the faculty of Superior High School have high standards for them.

The essence of the analysis of results reflected this need. It seems appropriate for the Superior High School faculty to analyze
their present standards, to determine appropriate levels, and to support high standards through its actions in meeting the individual needs of all students. The recommendations resulting from the survey are, therefore, offered with this goal pervasive throughout.

In addition to raising the standards, the analysis of results also suggested a need to evaluate the curriculum and teaching methods in terms of meeting the gifted students' needs.

Research studies provide support for the concept that students learn more easily and enjoyably when they are taught in a manner that is consistent with their preferred style of learning. Preferences may vary within the individual according to content area and interest in certain topics, however, if some effort is not made to identify and accommodate these preferences, a valuable opportunity to improve both student achievement and enjoyment for learning will be wasted. (Renzulli & Smith, 1979, p. 20)

The analysis of results also suggested that the students have a need for positive feedback inside and outside the classroom from teachers, counselors, administrators, and peers.

The following recommendations are based on these three needs which were identified in the analysis of results: the need to raise the standards, the need to evaluate the curriculum and teaching methods, and the need to seek methods for intensifying positive feedback. The recommendations are offered to better meet the individual needs of the gifted students at Superior High School.

Recommendation 1

Evaluate the curriculum in terms of what is presently offered for the gifted and academically able students and consider modifications to better meet their needs. Consideration should be given to
honors classes, advanced placement classes, acceleration, college courses, and mentorships.

Recommendation 2

Focus on teaching strategies and learning styles.

1. Consider the use of Renzulli and Smith's (1978) *Learning Styles Inventory* which is designed as a tool for teachers to evaluate their own teaching methods and to consider the styles to which students respond most favorably.

2. Infuse Bloom's (1954) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* into the curriculum.

Recommendation 3

The guidance staff presently consists of three professionals and one secretary. The North Central Association recommends in its exemplary criteria that each counselor have a case load of 300 students; however, each Superior counselor has a case load of 455 students. (NCA recommends in its regular standards a 1:450 ratio.) It is unlikely that with their present case loads the counselors can meet the unique needs of gifted students. Therefore, a counselor with educational background and experience in working with gifted students should be hired. Some of his/her responsibilities could include:

1. Identifying the gifted and academically able students.

2. Arranging growth plan meetings with the students, teachers, and parents.
3. Helping students develop independent study projects.

4. Coordinating the courses and scheduling for gifted students.

5. Arranging for appropriate learning experiences outside the school.

6. Suggesting appropriate colleges and universities based on the student's unique talents and gifts.

Recommendation 4

Gifted children need opportunities to interact socially with their intellectual peers. One channel for this interaction is through clubs and organizations. Clubs and organizations provide avenues not only for interaction, but also for the practice of leadership skills.

1. Reestablish the foreign language clubs.

2. Organize a cultural events club to encourage attendance at concerts, plays, poetry readings, art museums, and so on. Perhaps this could become a goal of the National Honor Society.

3. Develop, once again, an active theater department.

Recommendation 5

Since administrators set the tone for the educational climate, students must know who the administrators are, what they do, and what they represent. Administrators should develop methods for the students to interact with them. For example, each administrator might occasionally visit a homeroom for 10 minutes to discuss the school program goals and expectations, and to seek input from the students.
The principal has identified frequent classroom observations as one of his goals for the 1984-85 school year. Hopefully, students and teachers will recognize his greater visibility as an expression of his concern for the learning environment.

Recommendation 6

Consider ways for the teachers, librarians, counselors, and administrators to express their concerns for students as individuals. The student should receive clear messages that the staff cares for him/her.

Consideration should also be given to ways for the student to receive help from a teacher outside the regularly scheduled class period.

Recommendation 7

Consider schedule options to the regular high school schedule. Gifted students have full class schedules, but are willing to put in additional time in order to take all the courses that they want and/or need (p. 32). Many gifted 9th and 10th graders enroll in both a music class and a foreign language class in addition to the four basics of mathematics, science, English, and physical education. Therefore, their options are closed for such classes as typing, computers, and social studies.

Flexible scheduling should be considered. For example, perhaps a typing or computer class could be offered at 7:00 a.m., or as an evening class. Perhaps community education class options could be
considered for evening or Saturday classes.

Area colleges offer a viable acceleration route for the 11th and 12th graders. But access to the college courses becomes complicated because of a local Board of Education policy. In order to be considered a full-time high school student, the policy requires that the student enroll in four high school courses. Not only is arranging schedules between the college and the high school difficult, but also the student with four high school classes is almost limited to only one college course because of course workload.

An appeal to the Board of Education should be made to consider exceptions to the full-time student requirements.

Concluding Remarks

Through this study, the researcher understands in an empirical way, what she has known theoretically: that gifted students truly have special needs which are unique from other students. The greatest need that became apparent was the gifted child's need for a concerned listener and advocate.

The researcher was surprised to learn that models of needs assessments for gifted secondary students were not available in the literature. Neither is a learning styles inventory for secondary students available.

After completing this study, the researcher would reconstruct the survey for future use. Several questions in the study obtained interesting information, but not useful information.
The study has already produced some important changes for the gifted secondary students at Superior High School. Some of the changes were a direct result and others an indirect result. An Advanced Placement English course has been added to the curriculum. The process for acceleration has been more clearly defined. The teachers of English, social studies, foreign languages, and science have been taught the method of infusing Bloom's (1954) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives into the curriculum. A recommendation for a counselor to work with gifted secondary students has been made to the superintendent. A tutoring program for all students is being organized. A proposal for short-term, after-school classes is being considered by the superintendent. A proposal is being drafted for considering exceptions to the full-time student requirements. A curriculum study will be a year-long faculty project for the 1985-86 school year.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of the study was the researcher's immersion with the subject. The researcher focused on the needs of the gifted and directed her thinking to seek ways of meeting those needs.
APPENDIX

The Student Questionnaire and the Results

SUPERIOR HIGH SCHOOL

June, 1984

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Section I.

Circle one in each line:

Grade: 9 (35) 10 (29) 11 (14) 12 (20)
Sex: F (43) M (55)

What is your grade point average?__________

1. Did you begin as a kindergartner in the Superior Public Schools? yes (46) no (52)

2. If your answer was "no" to the above question, in what grade did you enter Superior? K-2nd Sem (1) 1st (4) 2nd (7) 3rd (4) 4th (11) 5th (7) 6th (5) 7th (10) 8th (1) 9th (0) 10th (1) 11th (1)

3. Did you ever skip a grade? yes (0) no (98) If yes, which grade?_______

4. Do you have a job? yes (53 + 3 summer jobs); no (41); NA (1)

   If yes, how many hours a week do you work? 4 - 8 (8); 10 - 20 (26); 21 - 30 (12); 49 (1)

5. Do you own a car or have free access to a car? yes (57) no (41)

6. Approximately, how many hours of television do you watch a week? (Check one)

   a. (7) More than 15 hours a week c. (54) 1-7 hours a week
   b. (32) 8-14 hours a week d. (5) 0

7. Approximately, how many movies at a theater do you see in a month? (Check one)

   a. (0) More than 5 a month c. (43) 1 a month
   b. (40) 2-4 a month d. (13) 0
   e. (2) Other (3 or 4 a year)
8. Please rate yourself according to the following scale below. Place the appropriate letter a, b, c, d, e on the line following each item.

- Always (a)
- Usually (b)
- About half the time (c)
- Seldom (d)
- Never (e)

A B C D E

I know how to use books and research materials to get information.......................................32 59 7

I am able to study well alone and budget my study time............................................... 36 41 16 5

I get along well with other students.............30 68

I am able to consider more than one solution to a problem..................................................38 53 6 1

Learning is important to me.................................................75 20 3

I am curious...............................................................56 34 7 1

I am able to accept responsibility...............43 52 3

I think of original ideas..............................................22 53 19 4

I can estimate my own strengths and weaknesses..................................................27 56 13 2

I am a leader..........................................................15 39 34 9

Section II.

Please furnish information about your experiences in and reactions to this school by placing an X in the blank opposite your response to these questions. Make only one mark for each unless otherwise directed.

1. Most of the teachers in this school care for students as individuals, apart from their work in class.

a. (64) Agree  b. (17) Uncertain  c. (14) Disagree  d. (3) Other

2. In most classes in this school it is possible to express what you think without fear.

a. (57) Agree  b. (23) Uncertain  c. (16) Disagree  d. (2) Other
3. The content of most classes you have had in this school, as you now view your present and future needs, has been:
   a. (51) Important  b. (45) Fairly important  c. (2) Not important

4. Most classes you have had in this school have been:
   a. (15) Very interesting  c. (14) Somewhat dull  e. (8) Other
   b. (60) Somewhat interesting  d. (1) Very dull

5. To what extent are students in this school given freedom and responsibility for their own learning (election of courses, selection of teachers, unsupervised study, long-range assignments, etc.):
   a. (7) There is too much freedom
   b. (68) About the right amount of freedom is provided.
   c. (20) There is too little freedom, much regimentation.
   d. (3) Other

6. To what extent are students in this school given unscheduled time in which to choose from a wide variety of activities (using the library, leisure-time pursuits, consulting with teachers, socializing with other students, etc.)?
   a. (10) Too much unscheduled time is provided.
   b. (51) About the right amount of unscheduled time is provided.
   c. (34) Too little unscheduled time is provided.
   d. (3) NA

7. Which of these statements best describes the method of teaching used in most classes:
   a. (67) Teacher-lecture
   b. (13) Class discussion
   c. (1) Student investigation
   d. (0) Small group work
   e. (17) Other (describe) [See p. 17 & 18 for responses.]
8. The method of teaching that I prefer is:
   a. (20) Teacher-lecture
   b. (43) Class discussion
   c. (3) Student investigation
   d. (7) Small group work
   e. (25) Other (describe) [See p.17 & 18 for results.]

9. In most classes, when a student explains something to the class, the teacher is likely to invite him/her to discuss it further.
   a. (45) Agree  b. (42) Uncertain  c. (9) Disagree  d. (2) NA

10. In most classes, strong effort is made to get students to think through and defend their opinions.
    a. (36) Agree  b. (28) Uncertain  c. (31) Disagree  d. (2) other

11. I have been taught the skills to (check those that apply):
    (53) Brainstorm  (92) Solve problems  (54) Think critically
    (76) Make decisions  (56) Think creatively

12. Which of these statements best describes your opinion of the degree of self-direction permitted students in this school, apart from classroom work:
    a. (19) Students are permitted much self-direction.
    b. (62) Students are permitted some self-direction.
    c. (13) Students are permitted little or no self-direction.
    d. (4) NA

13. In this school the emphasis on marks is:
    a. (7) Excessive, heavy  c. (34) About right
    b. (35) Somewhat excessive  d. (20) Too little
    e. (2) Other

14. Most of the students in this school cheat on tests or daily work.
    a. (51) Agree  b. (29) Uncertain  c. (14) Disagree  d. (4) Other
15. How would you describe the standards (expectations) set by your teachers?
   a. (0) Much too difficult  d. (31) Somewhat easy
   b. (7) Somewhat difficult  e. (4) Much too easy
   c. (46) About right  f. (10) Other

16. To what extent are teachers available and willing to give you help on your studies outside the regularly assigned period?
   a. (19) Whenever it is needed  c. (19) Occasionally
   b. (57) Usually when needed  d. (3) Seldom or never

17. How would you characterize your own effort in your school work this year?
   a. (18) Working very hard  c. (22) Taking it easy
   b. (47) Working fairly hard  d. (3) Just loafing
   e. (8) Other

18. How satisfied are you with your academic achievement in school?
   a. (2) Thoroughly dissatisfied  c. (42) Satisfied
   b. (34) Somewhat dissatisfied  d. (19) Thoroughly satisfied
   e. (1) Other

19. How adequate is the supply of supplementary materials in the library for serving your learning interests and needs?
   a. (25) Much material is available
   b. (59) Usually the needed materials can be located
   c. (13) Frequently materials are not available.
   d. (0) Library resources are very inadequate.
   e. (1) NA

20. About how often do teachers require you to use the school library for supplementary study and work?
   a. (1) Practically every day  d. (61) Very seldom
   b. (11) Once a week  e. (3) Other
   c. (21) Two or three times a month  f. (1) NA
21. How adequate is the library book collection in serving your reading interests and needs (not for class assignments)?

a. (16) A wide variety of books are available.
b. (42) Usually an interesting book can be located.
c. (6) Seldom find an interesting book.
d. (31) Don't look for books.
e. (1) NA
f. (2) Other

22. How many books did you read for your own pleasure this year (not a class-related assignment)?

a. (37) More than 10 b. (9) 8-10 c. (10) 5-7 d. (34) 1-4
e. (6) 0 f. (2) NA

23. To what extent are the librarians available and willing to give you help with your research or book selections?

a. (60) Whenever it is needed b. (33) Usually when needed
c. (3) Occasionally d. (0) Seldom or never
e. (2) NA

24. How satisfied are you with your overall experience this year in:
(Circle one for each course)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>(41)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>NA (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>(44)</td>
<td>(31)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>NA (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>(31)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>NA (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>NA (32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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25. What has been the pace in your classes this year? (Circle one for each course)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Too Fast</th>
<th>About Right</th>
<th>Too Slow</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>(52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<td>(12)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(76)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(38)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. Check the one statement among the following which best describes how you feel about the total amount of work you are expected to do outside of class for all your classes this year.

a. (21) The amount of work has been less than I feel I could do.
b. (36) The amount of work has been about what I feel I can comfortably do.
c. (28) The amount of work has been excessive, but I have completed it without any great problem.
d. (6) The amount of work has been excessive, but I have completed it with great difficulty.
e. (2) The amount of work has been so great that I have been unable to complete it.
f. (1) NA
g. (4) Other

27. Does the school offer all the subjects you would like the school to offer? yes (58); no (33); NA (3); Other (4)

(If your answer is no, list the courses you would like this school to offer.) [See p.24 & 25 for results.]
28. To what extent do you feel the need for more personal attention in such matters as selecting courses, getting a job, choosing a college, etc.?
   a. (33) I would like to talk to someone more often than I can now.
   b. (46) Someone is usually available when I need to discuss such matters.
   c. (14) Someone is always available when I need to discuss such matters.
   d. (1) NA
   e. (4) Other

29. To what extent has the counseling and guidance you received in this school been helpful to you?
   a. (13) Extremely helpful
   b. (55) Somewhat helpful
   c. (9) Not helpful at all
   d. (19) Have not received any
   e. (2) Other

30. How would you characterize the general psychological climate in this school?
   a. (26) Warm and friendly
   b. (54) Somewhat friendly
   c. (15) Indifferent
   d. (0) Cold, restrictive
   e. (3) Other

31. The other students in this school are mainly friendly and helpful.
   a. (63) Agree
   b. (20) Uncertain
   c. (12) Disagree
   d. (3) Other

32. Conflicting and hostile groups exist in this school, based on the following:
   a. (20) Race
   b. (64) Social class
   c. (17) Neighborhood
   d. (6) Father's work
   e. (32) Economic level
   f. (43) Academic ability
   g. (19) Other (please name)
   h. (16) Not important; few cliques exist.
33. The following are problems in this school: (Check as many as apply.)
   a. (49) Drug abuse
   b. (66) Drinking
   c. (36) Theft
   d. (32) Vandalism
   e. (13) Violence
   f. (18) Other (please name)
   g. (18) None of these is a major problem.

34. Too much emphasis in this school is placed on: (Check all that apply.)
   a. (29) Sports
   b. (10) Social affairs
   c. (1) Cultural events
   d. (5) Academic work
   e. (53) Emphasis on each of these is about right

35. Too little emphasis in this school is placed on: (Check all that apply.)
   a. (5) Sports
   b. (12) Social affairs
   c. (34) Cultural events
   d. (42) Academic work
   e. (34) Emphasis on each of these is about right
   f. (1) Other

36. The student government in this school deals with matters of real importance to the students.
   a. (26) Agree
   b. (48) Uncertain
   c. (23) Disagree
   d. (1) Other

37. It is possible for the students in this school to make meaningful changes in the student government, student activities, and student affairs in general.
   a. (39) Agree
   b. (25) Uncertain
   c. (33) Disagree
   d. (1) Other

38. Student activities in this school are controlled by a small group of students.
   a. (61) Agree
   b. (23) Uncertain
   c. (12) Disagree
   d. (2) Other

39. How valuable and useful to you do you consider your participation in student activities to be?
   a. (33) Very valuable and useful
   b. (51) Of some value
   c. (7) Of little or no value
   d. (7) Have not participated in any
40. Which of these statements best describes your feeling about going to school each day?
   a. (4) Always look forward to it with enthusiasm
   b. (51) Usually look forward to it with enthusiasm
   c. (29) Frequently am indifferent about it
   d. (8) Very often dread going to school
   e. (1) Always dislike going to school
   f. (4) Other

41. How would you characterize the spirit of the students in this school?
   a. (24) Above average school spirit
   b. (59) Average school spirit
   c. (13) Poor school spirit
   d. (2) Other

42. If you could be remembered here at school for one particular accomplishment, which would you prefer?
   a. (22) Outstanding student leader
   b. (8) Outstanding athlete
   c. (53) Outstanding academic record
   d. (5) Most popular student
   e. (8) Other
   f. (2) NA

43. What is the name of the principal of this high school? [See p. 15 for results.]

44. What are the names of the assistant principals? [See p. 15 for results.]

45. The administrators of this school are approachable and helpful.
   a. (56) Agree
   b. (35) Uncertain
   c. (5) Disagree
   d. (2) Other

46. The administrators of this school are interested in providing a good learning environment for me.
   a. (68) Agree
   b. (27) Uncertain
   c. (3) Disagree

47. This is a good school for a young person to attend.
   a. (61) Agree
   b. (30) Uncertain
   c. (6) Disagree
   d. (1) Other
48. Describe the two things you like most about this school.

The responses to this item fell into four categories: The psychological climate of the school, the academic program, the extracurricular activities, and the lunch program.

The psychological climate

The greatest response to this item was "the teachers" with 56 of the 98 students mentioning some characteristic or quality of teachers in general. Friendly, helpful, demanding, and interesting were mentioned. Several specific names of teachers were also mentioned.

The next most frequent response with 13 was the friendly and helpful people. Students/friends were named ten times. Along with this, the understanding and friendly atmosphere was named seven times. The administrators were mentioned six times with comments such as friendliness and helpfulness.

Additional comments included: school spirit (5), freedom of selection of courses (3), freedom of choice with no strict dress codes, etc. (2), the custodial staff (1). One student stated, "[I like most] the encouragement by students and faculty, and how we are proud of the students with great accomplishments." And another student responded, "It's just a nice place to grow up in."

The academic program

Fourteen students responded that a good academic program is offered. Challenging courses and the variety of courses were also mentioned; specifically: science (3), English (3), industrial arts (1), computer courses (1), and German (1).
48. Describe the two things you like most. (con't)

The extra-curricular program

The sports or athletic program was mentioned 14 times. The (new) lunch program was mentioned 9 times. Eight students responded with the extra-curricular program in general. SADD, student council, dances, and the pep band each received one response.

49. Describe the two things you like least about this school.

The responses to this item were more varied than for item 48 above. No one response approached a majority.

The academic program

Not a learning environment (6).
Lack of high standards (6).
No advanced placement or honor courses offered (4).
Middle school program (3).
Too many requirements (2).
Not enough requirements (1).
Need more writing in all courses (1).
Drudgery of day after day doing the same thing (1).

The teachers

In general (9).
Specific (9).

The counseling department (7).

The administration (2).
49. Describe the two things you like least. (con't)

The restrictive environment (4).

Lack of senior privileges (3).
Difficult for students to make changes or express views on  
    needed changes (4).
Closed campus (4).

The physical environment (10).

The extra-curricular program

Too much emphasis on sports (6).
Lack of clubs, activities (3), theatre (3).

Discipline

Too much freedom in the classroom (2).
Not enough disciplinary action (1).

Problems with students

Drugs (7).
Poor attitudes of students (6).
Cliqués (6).
Smoking (4).
Alcohol (3).
Vandalism (2).
Cheating (1).
Stealing (1).
Poor language (1).
50. Describe the one change you would make in this school if you could do so.

The responses to this item can be divided into the following categories: physical environment; extra-curricular activities; discipline; students; teachers and counselors; and the academic program. These students placed the most emphasis on the academic program and the competences of the teachers and counselors.

The physical environment

Improve the general appearance (3).
Paint the lockers (2).
Improve the climate control (2).
Put doors on the bathrooms (2).
Improve the lounges to provide a more pleasant atmosphere (1).
Provide more light in the classrooms (1).

The discipline

Enforce stricter discipline (3).
Eliminate the drugs (6); the drinking (3); the smoking (3); and the skipping of classes (1).

The extra-curricular activities

Develop more extra-curricular activities (3).
Provide one day off for seniors (2).
Develop a strong theatre program (1); and build a performing arts center (2).
50. **The extra-curricular activities. (con't.)**

Promote the extra-curricular activities in order to get more students involved (1).

Organize a senior trip (1).

**The students**

Provide more avenues for student input and involvement (5). Provide a seat on the school board for a student representative K-12.

Allow more student freedom (2).

If seniors were receiving good grades, they should not be required to take examinations (1).

**The teachers and counselors**

Replace incompetent teachers or help them to improve their teaching skills (8).

Hire competent teachers (4).

Hire enthusiastic, knowledgeable counselors (2).

Improve the counseling department (2).

Schedule counseling appointments for each student twice a year (1).

**The academic program**

Develop more emphasis on academic excellence (3) and more emphasis on grades (1).

Evaluate the curriculum for college-preparatory courses (1). Initiate honors and advanced placement courses (1). Provide for acceleration of courses (2).
50. The academic program (con't.)
Promote a learning environment that looks to the future (1).
Allow students to work at their own pace. Set minimum standards so
that the students do not progress too slowly, but that allow
others to continue at a faster pace (1).
Raise the minimum graduation requirements (1).
Require four years of English, mathematics, science, and social
studies; a minimum of two years of a foreign language (1).
Make physical education optional for students who participate in after-
school sports (1). Give a pass/fail credit in physical education
(2).
Teach study skills (1).

51. Rank the six items below in terms of their importance to you for your
future work: (1 = Most important; 6 = Least important)

a. _____ Security of steady work 
   b. _____ Chance to help other people 
   c. _____ Exciting job despite its pressures 
   d. _____ Easy job, little pressure 
   e. _____ Opportunity for rapid rise 
   f. _____ High income 

[See p. 31 for results.]

52. Are you preparing for a full-time job immediately after graduation or
for further education?

a. _____ Job 
   b. (98) Further education

53. If you marked "a" in the preceding question, how would you rate the
educational opportunities offered by this school in regard to prepara-
tion for a full-time job?

a. _____ Excellent 
   b. _____ Very good 
   c. _____ Good 
   d. _____ Inferior 
   e. _____ Very inferior 

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54. If you marked "b" in question 52 above, how would you rate the educational opportunities offered by this school in regard to preparation for further education?

   a. (12) Excellent  
   b. (36) Very good  
   c. (43) Good  
   d. (7) Inferior  
   e. (0) Very inferior

55. Upon completion of high school do you plan (Check one)

   To attend 4-year college or university  (92)
   To attend junior college  (1)
   To attend other post-secondary school, e.g., business college or technical institute (2)
   To continue education but undecided on type of school (2)
   To enter an apprentice program
   To continue education in the military
   To stop formal education upon graduation
   Undecided upon further education (1)

56. Add any additional comments or reactions which are not covered by the prior questions.

The academic program

   Eliminate examinations for those with a 3.0 or better grade point average (3).
   Develop an acceleration plan (2) and advanced placement courses (1).
   Add science courses (1).
   Require a foreign language (1).
   Require only one year of physical education.
   Institute a 12 point grading scale (1).
56. Add any additional comments or reactions. (con't.)

The extra-curricular activities

Have more dances (2).
Develop a theatre program (1).
Reinstate the clubs that were eliminated, particularly the academic-cultural ones (1).

The counseling department

Improve the counseling department (5).

The teachers and administrators

Improve the teaching skills of the teachers (9).
Excellent teachers (3).
Excellent administrators (1).
Poor administrators (1).

The learning environment

Poor (3).
Good (2).

The library

Provide a quieter library (1).

The students

Provide avenues for more student input and involvement (2).
FOR UNDERGRADUATES ONLY

1. Would you take a Saturday morning class in an area of your interest? 
   yes (37); no (22); maybe (9)

2. Would you take an evening class (one night-a-week) in an area of your 
   interest? yes (47); no (12); maybe (11)

3. Would you take a 7:00 a.m. class? yes (34); no (29); maybe (7)

4. Would you take a 2:30 p.m. class? yes (39); no (22), maybe (7)

5. Are you interested in taking a college class or classes while still in 
   high school? yes (43); no (4); maybe (10)

FOR SENIORS ONLY

For the year immediately following high school, do you plan: (Check one) 

To attend school full-time (20)

To attend school part-time/work part-time

To work full-time

To enter the military

To be a homemaker

To travel/work part-time

Undetermined at present
**What is your future occupational goal?**

- **Professional**  
  - (13)
- **Technical**  
  - (1)
- **Farmer**  
  - (1)
- **Manager, official, or proprietor**  
  - (1)
- **Clerical/Secretarial**
- **Craftsperson**
- **Sales worker**
- **Service worker**
- **Laborer**
- **Military service**
- **Homemaker with no other career plan**
- **Undecided**  
  - (4)
- **Other**
BIBLIOGRAPHY


