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ABSTRACT

This report examines factors in high and low academic achievement among Hispanic females in public schools, based on three data sources: student interviews, parent interviews, and classroom observations. The first part of the report, Student Interviews, is subdivided into five sections. Section 1, "Cognitive," covers the following: (1) educational background; (2) school attendance; (3) school experience; (4) experience with teachers; (5) academic performance; (6) classroom experiences; (7) academic problems; and (8) ethnic and cultural issues. Section 2, "Affective," covers the following factors: (1) work aspirations; (2) personal aspirations; (3) friendship-peer relationships; and (4) beliefs and values. Section 3, "Familial," covers language background and usage, family responsibilities and relationships, and family support for education. Section 4, "Economic," covers students' work experiences. Section 5, "Physical," covers experiences with drugs and alcohol, neighborhoods, and social or sport groups. The second part of the report, Parent Interviews, reports findings in the following categories: (1) household and typical activities; (2) care of daughter; (3) opinions; and (4) involvement with school. The third part, Classroom Observations, provides comparative information in the following areas: (1) type of classroom; (2) subject area; (3) students in class; (4) instructional activities; (5) classroom organization; (6) response opportunities; (7) materials used in class; (8) observational notes; and (9) campus comparisons. The report presents 14 conclusions based on these data and offers 12 recommendations. The report includes a 19-item reference list, and student sample selection criteria are appended. (AF)

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San Diego City Schools
PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION DIVISION

ED 307 365

**EMPOWERING THE HISPANIC FEMALE
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING
PART II**

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EMPOWERING THE HISPANIC FEMALE
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING
PART II

Prepared by
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February 28, 1989

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EMPOWERING THE HISPANIC FEMALE
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING
PART II

This report is based on three data sources; student interviews, parent interviews, and classroom observations. It consists of five sections. The first two deal with the results from student and parent interviews. The third summarizes information from classroom observations. The last two present conclusions and recommendations for empowering the female Hispanic student.

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

The first part is based on information gathered during personal interviews with ten high achieving and ten low achieving female Hispanic 11th graders. High achieving is defined as having a GPA one step above the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) stanine in reading comprehension and/or mathematics concepts or a stanine of 8 or 9 and a correspondingly high GPA. Low achieving is defined as having a GPA which is two or more steps below the above mentioned stanines (See Appendix A). Results are presented in the following five sections: Cognitive, Affective, Familial, Economic, and Physical.

COGNITIVE

Included in this section are those questions dealing with academic experiences past and present. Emphasis is placed on both positive and negative experiences and factors related to them in order to try to identify factors which distinguish high achievers from low achievers.

Educational Background

No differences were found between high and low achievers in preschool attendance. Thirty percent of each group reported having attended preschool. Slight differences in kindergarten attendance were found. Within the high achieving group 70% had attended while 90% of the low achieving group had. Out of the 20 subjects 19 had been continuously enrolled in school. One high achiever reported a break in attendance(Q.3). Differences were found in how long students had been attending school in San Diego. All but one of the low achievers had been attending school in San Diego since kindergarten with the one having attended through 4th grade in Tijuana. Within the high achieving group 50% reported attending elementary schools outside of San Diego for anywhere from one to six grades. Two girls attended school in Tijuana for three or six years. The other three began their education in Los Angeles or New Jersey. Repeating a grade was experienced by three high achievers only(Q.2). Two of them said they "didn't think about it" while the other who repeated 7th grade expressed very negative feelings about her first 7th grade experience, "teachers were prejudiced and made racist comments against bussed kids." The fact that only high achievers in this sample had repeated grades is interesting and merits further study.

Slight differences were found between the two groups in the number of elementary schools attended(Q.2). Two of the ten high achievers reported attending three schools while this was true

for four low achievers with one having attended five different ones.

Both groups had positive feelings about their lower elementary school years. The girls mentioned having a lot of fun, being involved in many activities, and feeling comfortable. Negative memories were related to not being able to speak English and being in an all English speaking academic environment or not being allowed to speak Spanish in school. In the upper elementary grades three low achievers felt left out or out of place because they were attending predominantly white schools. One high achiever said that she felt better after being put into bilingual classes in the third grade.

Most high achievers also had positive feelings about their junior high years. One girl mentioned being put into advanced and more challenging classes. Two girls who attended schools with a low percentage of Hispanic students said that teachers "resented Mexicans and didn't expect much" and "expected less and didn't push you so hard if you were Hispanic."

Eight low achievers also had positive feelings about junior high school. One mentioned that she was experiencing puberty, therefore, they were "wild and crazy" years. Another said that she spent a lot of time "looking for fights with white people."

High school appears to be a fun and challenging experience for most high achievers. They mentioned having good friends and being involved in sports as a positive aspect. Two girls at schools with less than 10% Hispanic enrollment said that some teachers and students were prejudiced against Mexicans. Low

achievers weren't as enthusiastic about their high school. Five said that it was O.K., two found it boring, two didn't like it, and one said it was fun. Seven of the ten high achievers were attending a high school that was not their school of residence. This was also true of the low achievers. One low achiever said that she had changed schools because there were no Mexicans at her local school.

School Attendance

Marked differences were found in school attendance(Q.4). Fifty percent of the high achievers had been absent less than four days while fifty percent of the low achievers had been absent more than 25 days. None of the high achievers had missed more than 8 days. All of the low achievers had missed 9 or more days of school. About 50% of both groups reported that attendance this year was about the same as last year. In making comparisons to junior high attendance, 50% of the high achievers said they had the same or fewer absences while 90% of the low achievers said they had fewer absences in junior high school. This indicates that poor attendance for low achievers is more a high school phenomenon.

Group differences were also found in average number of times students were late for class during the month of May 1988(Q.5). Averages were 1.7 and 5.8, for high and low achievers, respectively.

School Experiences

When asked what they liked about attending their high

school(Q.6), high achievers generated a longer list than low achievers. More comments(9) were related to learning. The following is a sample of those comments.

- "-- School is challenging.
- I learn a lot.
- I'm getting a good education.
- I like learning opportunities.
- I like the block schedule. There is less pressure."

The following five comments related to teachers.

- "-- Teachers give you lots of help.
- They push me to perform .
- They try to help more.
- They care a lot.
- They care."

Five high achievers mentioned friends as positive aspects,

- "-- Friends who give good advice.
- Great people from all over San Diego.
- I know lots of kids.
- I have friends.(2)"

Most comments made by low achievers related to friends(8) followed by those relating to teachers(3) and learning(3). The following are some of the things they liked which relate to friends:

- "-- I like being with friends.
- There is a variety of nationalities.
- I have a few good friends.
- I like the people.
- I like the students"

Comments relating to teachers are as follows:

- "-- half of the teachers are nice
- counselors and staff are nice
- teachers are really nice."

Finally, positive comments relating to learning follow

- "-- I like learning somethings
- I like my classes
- I like the schedule."

When asked what they didn't like about school, low achievers generated a longer list than high achievers. All comments related to peers and/or prejudice(8) follow:

- "-- big Black girls trying to start trouble
- people making fun of your clothes
- getting in arguments with some students
- rumors really spread easily
- students don't seem too motivated, just going along to graduate
- some White kids feel superior to Mexicans and Blacks
- Latinos don't participate in sports or anything.
- kids' attitudes"

The following six comments related to curriculum:

- "-- subjects are boring
- English, algebra, and history
- boring classes
- I don't like classes you don't need, history and P.E. should be optional
- classes
- always making up some new rule."

Comments about teachers(5) included the following:

- "-- the pressure put on by teachers and people in student services
- other half of teachers
- some of the teachers are prejudiced, put us down
- teachers same as White kids, the other Mexican kids feel it, too
- teachers don't teach here, I could do better."

Finally, low achievers made the following four comments related to physical conditions:

- "-- lockers, ugly
- the food
- this isn't my kind of school, it's a continuation school
- this school isn't pretty."

The majority of comments from high achievers also related to peers and/or prejudice(7). They follow:

- "-- other students talking about you, rumors
- some people are prejudiced, not used to Hispanics
- White kids conceited, treat VEEP kids like they're lower
- sometimes VEEP kids aren't involved in school
- kids from this area leave us alone

-- kids from this area have advantages in extra curricular activities."

While two girls said there wasn't anything they didn't like about school, other comments related to teachers(2) and physical conditions(2)

-- driver's education teacher
-- one of my teachers ignores me
-- cafeteria food
-- school too small."

When asked to remember the best experience they had ever had in school, both groups related experiences which involved special recognition for some academic, artistic, or physical accomplishment(Q.25). High achievers mentioned track medals, art awards, Dean's List, published stories, cheerleading, and special teachers. Low achievers mentioned drama skits, design award, cheerleading, Homecoming royalty, modeling, junior high graduation, and good grades.

When asked about the worst experiences, both groups related mostly negative interactions with teachers or students. High achievers mentioned being talked about, criticized by others, threatened by others, and interacting with pushy or prejudiced teachers. Low achievers mentioned arguing with other students, losing friends, being embarrassed by a teacher, getting kicked out of school, and interacting with a prejudiced teacher.

When asked to name things that go on or should go on to make them want to be in school(Q.16), high achievers mentioned friends(50%), activities such as spirit week, trips, drill team, and dances(30%), more discipline(10%), and wanting to get good grades(10%). Low achievers mentioned activities such as spirit

week, lunchtime DJ, and morning breakfast(20%), friends(20%), a more flexible schedule "7 A.M. too early" (10%), more interesting classes and caring teachers(10%), and students who are more used to Mexicans(10%). Three low achievers said they couldn't think of anything.

Things that make students NOT want to be at school(Q.17) were varied. Four high achievers mentioned academic things such as work too hard for some, tests, homework, and poetry. Two mentioned physical things, the distance from home and the graffiti in restrooms. Three comments related to human interactions,

"I wish there were more Hispanics."

"Sometimes, kids gossip."

"Now that I'm older and know what I want to do, no one gives me help in planning my career."

Three low achievers mentioned boring classes or classes in which everyone was failing. Racism and prejudiced teachers and students were mentioned by two students. Fighting or arguing with students was named by two low achievers. Other things mentioned were getting up early and wanting to go to the beach.

Experiences with Teachers

Eighty percent of the high achievers said without reservation that they liked their teachers while 70% of the low achievers felt the same way(Q.12). One girl from each group said she didn't like her teacher. Reasons given by high achievers for liking their teachers included the following: explain the subject well, nice and helpful, caring and friendly, offer extra help, available outside of class, offers encouragement, and believes in

my ability. Reasons given by low achievers included the following: show concern, give good explanations, helpful, understanding, intelligent and know subject, and treat you like a person.

Reasons given for not liking teachers include not caring about how you do, being too strict, not answering questions, acting like questions are dumb, and not giving good explanations that show you why and how something is done. For both groups the affect expressed by teachers mattered most.

All members of both groups felt that most of their teachers liked them. Indicators included smiles, help, conversations, citizenship grades, praise and encouragement, and absence of mean looks, problems, or extreme rules. One high achiever mentioned that one teacher didn't seem to have confidence in her as a person. One low achiever felt that they didn't dislike her, "they just don't like Mexicans."

Differences were found in teacher expectations(Q.13). Within high achievers 50% said they expect "a lot or too much" while no one in the low achieving group said that. The most frequent choice for the low achievers was "not enough or nothing" (40%) followed by "just enough" (30%).

In terms of do teachers care if they understand and are doing well in class(Q.14), 100% of the high achievers said yes, with three qualifying their response to exclude certain teachers. Among the low achievers 30% said no, 50% said yes, and 20% gave a qualified yes.

Teachers' willingness to be helpful and how that is shown was often qualified(Q.15). Among high achievers, 50% said

that some were while others weren't helpful. Helping took the form of extra explanations, making sure things were understood, individual attention, and special consideration for shyness. Among low achievers, 50% also gave a qualified yes response. For them helpfulness was defined differently to include talk to about problems, care about where I'm going, encourage me to stay in school, and send me to the career center.

Academic Performance

When asked how well they were doing in classes (Q.8), 50% of the high achievers reported they were getting a B or better in math classes while this was true for only 30% of the low achievers. Percentages getting a D or lower in math classes were 50% for low achievers and 20% for high achievers. Similar differences were also observed in how well students were doing in English classes. Seven of the ten high achievers reported getting a B or better while this was true for two of the low achievers. The other low achievers reported getting a C or D. Ninety percent of the high achievers felt that their grades fairly represented the level of work they were doing. Half of the low achievers felt the same way while the other half said that their grades reflected absences, lack of motivation, and laziness.

When asked why they were or were not doing well in school (Q.10), 70% of the high achievers said they were doing well because of the influence, push, or encouragement of friends, family, or teachers. The following statement represents the

ideas expressed by them," I push myself and teachers have faith in me and give me incentives I need. I used to not do well -- teachers make the difference. Especially an English teacher who brought out my writing ability And allowed me to learn to take criticism." One of the low achievers said she was doing well and attributed it to more teacher interest.

Ninety percent of the low achievers said they weren't doing well in school. Reasons cited were absences, lack of interest or motivation ("don't see any reason for school"), and laziness. Two of the three high achievers who weren't doing well in school said it was because certain classes were overwhelming, too advanced and too much homework. The other one said it was lack of desire to do well.

In response to "are your grades as good as you would like them to be" (Q.9), all members of both groups said no. Six of the high achievers felt that they could be getting all A's and B's if they worked a little harder. Among the low achievers, three felt that absenteeism was the cause while the rest attributed low grades to lack of effort, motivation, or interest.

Both groups made very similar evaluations of their reading and math abilities. Sixty per cent of each group felt their reading ability was good, 30% okay, and 10% needs improvement. In terms of math ability, 40% of high achievers and 50% of low achievers felt that it was good. Fifty percent of each group felt that their math ability needed improvement.

Both groups were studying American literary works such as "The Great Gatsby" and "Death of a Salesman". When asked to

compare the level of work with other 11th grade classes (Q.22), 30% of the high achievers felt it was higher, 50% the same, and 10% lower. Among the low achievers 50% felt it was lower, 40% the same, and 10% higher.

All but three of the high achievers were taking intermediate or advanced algebra or geometry. Twenty percent felt that their math classes were harder than other 11th grade classes, 50% the same, and 20% lower. Seven of the low achievers were taking business, technical, or consumer math. Sixty percent felt their math class was lower, 20% the same and 10% higher than other 11th grade classes.

When asked if they had to be competitive in order to get good grades (Q.23), 30% of the high achievers and 10% of the low achievers said yes while all others felt that good grades could be obtained through good work regardless of how well other students did.

When asked if teachers assign homework every day (Q.45), all high achievers (excluding one who is on independent contract) said yes, but only in one to three classes. Nine of the low achievers responded in the same manner. Eighty percent of the high achievers said they almost always do their homework every day. The frequency for low achievers was almost always (50%), frequently (30%), and rarely (20%).

All members of both groups felt comfortable helping other students when they needed help (Q.25) as long as they knew enough to help. Thirty percent of the low achievers and 10% of the high achievers did NOT like other students helping them when they had

a question about an assignment.

In relation to how interesting their classes were(Q.27), 90% of the high achievers felt that most of their classes were interesting while this was true for only 20% of the low achievers. High achievers listed mostly elective classes such as French, art, journalism, and cooking as the most interesting. Among low achievers 60% listed academic classes such as biology, math, history, life science, and American literature as most interesting. Other classes mentioned were sewing, reading development, and small business management.

Both groups had similar preferences when asked what type of learning situation they preferred(Q.24). Most preferred was working in small groups(3 or 4 other students) with students of their own choosing, followed by the teacher working with the whole class, working alone on written assignments, and working with small groups formed by the teacher.

Classroom Experiences

When asked to name their most favorite and least favorite classes, both groups had a tendency to name elective classes as favorites and required classes as least favorite(Q.28). The following is a listing of classes named as favorite

High Achievers -- P.E., French, art, drawing and painting, journalism, data entry, history, English

Low Achievers -- P.E., word processing, art, sewing, small business management, life science, math, American literature.

Classes named as least favorite include the following

High Achievers -- English, American history, geometry,
American literature, chemistry, French,
driver's education

Low Achievers -- math, chemistry, French, history (listed by
five girls)

When asked about their liking or disliking the subject, both groups had very similar responses. Forty percent of high achievers and 50% of low achievers said that they hadn't always liked their favorite subject. When asked if they had ever liked their least favorite class, 60% of high achievers and 50% of low achievers said yes.

High achievers felt that the teachers of both their favorite class(70%) and least favorite class(60%) were usually in control of the class. Low achievers felt the same way about control in their favorite class(90%), but only 40% felt that the teacher of their least favorite class was in control(Q.29). How bad behavior was handled in favorite classes was very similar for both groups. Discipling behavior included being warm, friendly, nice, talking and counseling, and asking students not to disappoint the teacher with bad behavior. In least favorite classes both groups mentioned yelling, strictness, referrals, and bad grades as ways that teachers handled discipline(Q.30). All members of both groups felt that the teacher of their favorite class was fair. In least favorite classes 70% of the high achievers and 50% of the low achievers felt that the teacher was NOT fair. The majority of both groups had not been disciplined by the teachers of either class.

When asked about the racial/ethnic mix in these classes, seven high achievers said that both favorite and least favorite classes were mainly white. On the other hand, seven low achievers said that their classes were either balanced or more ethnic.

High achievers usually look forward to getting back papers from both classes(Q.32). In the case of their favorite class it was because they got good grades, feedback was provided, and they wanted to see how they did. In the case of their least favorite class it was because papers were used to prove work was done or to challenge a bad grade. Low achievers also looked forward to getting back papers in their favorite class for the same reasons cited by high achievers. Most low achievers did NOT look forward to getting back papers from their least favorite class because papers often weren't graded or returned or because a bad grade was expected. At least 70% of each group looked forward to getting their report card grade from their favorite class while 50% of each group did not look forward to getting it for their least favorite class. The main reason in each case was the expectation of a good grade in the favorite class and a low grade in the least favorite class. All girls tended to save papers from both classes and used them to study, to show to parents and others, or as proof for grades. Among high achievers 50 - 60% kept notebooks which were usually not graded. Forty percent of the low achievers kept a notebook which was usually graded(Q.33)

Both groups reported participating in their favorite classes (80% of the high and 90% of the low achievers). Conversely, 50% of the high achievers and 70% of the low achievers did NOT

participate in their least favorite class(Q.34). Reasons given by members of each group are as follows

HIGH - "generally I'm lost in what they are talking about"
"fear of ridicule"
"mostly Anglos in class so I'm embarrassed and afraid I'll make a mistake and they'll laugh or teacher won't understand me"

LOW - "teacher says no, not true when I answer a question"
"I never do the work"
"t^he class is very noisy"
"I don't know the material."

Academic Problems

When asked if teachers had ever called home to talk to their parents 80% of high achievers and 70% of low achievers said no. In five out of the six cases(Q.35) where parents were called, it was to report negative behavior or lack of academic progress. Students reported feeling embarrassed and being put on probation by parents. One low achiever said, "They should call to try to get me to try harder." A high achiever expressed the following need, "It might be nice for someone to call and show interest in me."

Eighty percent of each group said that they had gotten behind in class and that the teacher was aware of it(Q.36). Among the high achievers 30% reported that the teacher did NOT try to help her; this was also true for 40% of the low achievers.

High achievers who got behind said they tried to get help from tutor or teachers, worked harder, and tried to do make up work. Low achievers reported trying to get work and working harder. Three of them expressed difficulties with teachers,

- " I talk to teachers, but they don't give you a chance to make up."
- " I go ask for work, but she doesn't give it to me. Says come after school, but I have to catch the bus."
- " I do the best I can. Most teachers don't let you make up work."

One high and two low achievers reported having had a teacher make them feel that they did NOT have the ability to succeed. The teacher made sarcastic comments, was prejudiced, wouldn't help, or put the student down.

All members of both groups said that they had had a teacher or counselor make them feel that they could succeed. Examples given by high achievers include the following:

- "AVID teacher, wants us to succeed and start preparing for college."
- "Volleyball coach, he's like a second father, checks my report card"
- "Counselor, encourages, gives me confidence"
- "Counselor, she's Mexican and has faith in me."

Feelings expressed by low achievers were very similar,

- "My sewing teacher, she's encouraging."
- "My teacher motivates me."
- "My counselor was pushing and calling. It made me mad at first, but it was good, afterwards I got better grades."
- "My counselor told me I had potential, showed me my CTBS."

In most cases when a supportive counselor was mentioned by name, it was an Hispanic surname. Students often said, "He/she is Mexican."

When asked who they go to or would go to if they had a problem(Q.3) both groups mentioned the same persons from whom they receive encouragement to do well in school, specific teachers and counselors. Also mentioned were friends and tutors.

One hundred percent of the high achievers and 70% of the low achievers said they understood what is going on in class(Q.40). The majority of each group said that they asked the teacher questions or to explain more if they didn't understand some thing

in class(Q.41). Two girls from each group said that they asked for help from a friend. When asked if the information they received was helpful, 90% of high achievers and 50% of low achievers selected "almost always".

When experiencing problems with a teacher(Q.42), both groups react in very similar manners, 30% try talking directly to the teacher, 30% talk to a counselor, 10% tell their mother, and 20% try to ignore it. One girl from each group said that she had never had a problem.

Referrals had been given to 30% of the high achievers and 60% of the low achievers(Q.43). High achievers received referrals for talking and ditching class. Low achievers received referrals for talking, ditching, being late, and cheating. One low achiever received hers for "doing good, I got a pep talk from the principal." Two low achievers felt that they had been treated unfairly. One referred for ditching said, "I really wasn't on campus," and one referred for talking said, "the teacher was acting weird." All the other girls felt that they had been treated fairly.

None of the high achievers had ever been suspended or expelled. Three low achievers had for fighting and smoking marijuana. One indicated that it made her dislike the security guard who "busted" her.

Ethnic and Cultural Issues

When asked if they felt that people at school discriminated against them(Q.17a-c), 50% of each group said yes. The following

are the experiences of high achievers:

"Yes, Mexican students tend to not be included in activities here. Mexican girls aren't allowed to be cheerleaders and are not featured in yearbook. Students are prejudiced. They think Mexicans have no ability. They walk away from us. The P.E. teacher here and a reading teacher in junior high were rude to Mexicans."

"Yes, at X Junior High - history teacher said Mexicans are no good, always late. I couldn't believe what she said. Other students were stuck up."

"Yes, some white girls tease and call me Chola and mimic Mexican accents in the bathroom."

"Yes, a teacher wouldn't let me in his art class. Friends say he's prejudiced. Friends have had bad experiences with other teachers."

"Yes, other students treat you different, don't invite you to parties. When I started cheerleading, they had bet I'd quit. No one offered me help. Later they did."

Low achievers made the following comments:

"Yes, 6th grade. A white girl thought I was stupid, dumb, couldn't learn. I got in a fight."

"Yes, Mexicans, Blacks, and Whites don't like the way I conduct myself. I'm a mixture. They roll their eyes and talk crap."

"Yes, other kids called me and other Mexicans names, especially those who were bussed."

"Yes, my 10th grade English teacher was very prejudiced. She ignored me and other Hispanic when we raised our hands. Lots of students and parents complained."

"Maybe. They make jokes about Mexicans, write stuff on the bathroom walls that put down minorities."

Eight of the ten girls who expressed these feelings were at schools where White student enrollment is over 60% and Hispanic enrollment is 10% or 25%.

When asked if they felt that people at school respected them and their culture(Q.20), 70% of each group said yes, some with

qualifiers. Two girls, one from each group, said that some teachers and students are prejudiced. Those who said no made comments about stereotyping, the existence of White racist groups and the fact that teachers don't pay attention to other cultures and races.

Both groups tended to agree with statements that instructional materials included people of their culture and that this made them feel good(Q.21). Examples cited, mostly from Spanish and history classes, included books, posters, and films. Also mentioned were a South of the Border Day and a special assembly for Hispanics. Three members of each group disagreed with the statements and expressed a great desire for more use of ethnically diverse materials.

AFFECTIVE

Although there are many items throughout the interview questionnaire that ask the respondents to verbalize their feelings, some items seem to fit more appropriately under the heading of affective than others. We, therefore, assigned items dealing with work and personal aspirations, friendship and peer relationships and personal beliefs and values to this category.

Work Aspirations

There was an obvious difference between the high achieving students and the low achievers in how they responded to questions(Q.48, Q.53) on what work they would like to do in the future. Over half of the high achievers hope to do the kind of work that would require a college education such as: lawyer, physical therapist, psychologist, veterinarian and marine biologist. Only one low achiever has similar aspirations, although she wasn't sure whether to pursue science, psychology or law. Two high achievers and three low achievers expressed an interest in cosmetology. Other interests were secretarial work, fashion design, early childhood education, computer operator and photography. One high achiever and three low achievers were unsure of what type of work to pursue.

Half of the high achievers and one third of the low achievers have never known anyone who does the kind of work they're interested in doing(Q.53b). So their reasons for pursuing that type of work tend to come from personal interests

"I like working with computers"
"I like doing make-ups and hair"
"I love little kids"

or ideals

"The 70 year old lady next door fell and broke her hip. She went down hill from there and died. I didn't like seeing that. She needed help"
"I'm concerned about animals. They can't say what's wrong when they're hurt. I've always had pets and when they died I wished I could have helped" (Q.53a).

Those who do know people working in their chosen field expressed admiration for those individuals(Q.53c).

When asked specifically what they plan to do after high school(Q.50 & Q.51), 90% of high achievers intend to go to college, seven to 4 year institutions and two to community colleges. Two of the low achievers are interested in 4 year colleges, two in community colleges and only one girl (low achiever) has no current plans to go on to post-secondary education. She's interested in fashion design but feels an obligation to go into a successful family business.

Most of the girls in both groups are depending on their own efforts to pay for their education(Q.51a). They plan to work, obtain loans or grants or to join the military reserve (a high achiever). One low achiever and three high achievers expect help from their parents. All the girls in both groups expect to work full time during their lifetime(Q.52) and expect to advance in their respective fields to relatively high levels(Q.53d).

High Achievers - "I expect to own my own beauty shop"
"I'll go as high as I can get"

Low Achievers - "I want to open more businesses"
"I want to work on the make up and hair of the
movie stars"
"I hope to become a famous designer, like
Calvin Klein"

All the students in both groups are planning to graduate from high school although most of the respondents in both groups are not sure of exactly how many credits they currently have. Interestingly enough, 90% of the high achievers have gone to summer school, averaging two summers each, and all but one student having attended for enrichment purposes. Sixty percent of the low achievers have attended summer school, averaging 1.5 summers each, and five out of the six attended for the purpose of making up classes they flunked.

Half of the students in both groups reported that they are aware of the requirements and opportunities related to their chosen career fields. Most of them received information already or plan to receive information from the counseling office or the career center on campus. One high achiever said that she doesn't have information and doesn't know where to go to get it. Three low achievers plan to get information away from school. One low achiever is expecting to receive information from the UCSD & SDSU outreach counselors.

Sixty percent of the high achievers do not foresee any barriers preventing them from achieving their ultimate work goals(Q.55) while only 20% of the low achievers saw no barriers. Some of the barriers given include: lack of money (one high achiever and three low achievers), lack of success (one high achiever and two low achievers), distance to college that offers

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chosen profession (one high achiever), and discrimination against women (one high achiever). Three low achievers saw boyfriend related issues possibly interfering with their career goals

"If I don't have someone by my side, I don't think I can make it."

"If I get married, I may not make it."

"My ex-boyfriend could have interfered, but I broke up with him."

Anticipated rewards for reaching their career goals (Q.56) tended to fall into the category of personal satisfaction and success for the majority of students in both groups. Two low achievers and no high achievers mentioned financial rewards, and one respondent from each group mentioned being able to provide a good life for their families.

Most of the students in both groups indicated that they'd experience disappointment or unhappiness if they were not to achieve their ultimate career goals(Q.57). However, four of the high achievers but only one of the low achievers volunteered that they would not give up, but continue to strive for their goals.

Personal Aspirations

Eighty percent of the high achievers and all of the low achievers expect to get married(Q.58). The high achievers expect to marry between ages 25 and 30 while the low achievers range from ages 18 to 30, only 40% saying it will probably be after 25. Most of the students in both groups expect to have children(Q.59). Only one high achiever expects none, and one low achiever isn't sure. One from each group plans to adopt them, sometime after

age 28. Here again, high achievers tend to expect to have their children later in life, most indicating age 25 as the earliest age. One high achiever expects to have a child at around age 21, and another already has three children, her oldest having been born when she was 15 years old. Five of the low achievers indicated that they expect to have their children after age 25; one said 22, one 23 and one young woman said that she'll probably have her first child at age 19, but that she'd actually prefer to wait and have children later. This is the same student who expects to marry at 18. (The interviewer got the impression that this young woman was receiving outside pressure from her boyfriend to marry and start a family soon.)

There were no differences between the two groups with respect to their educational aspirations for their own daughters (Q.60). Only one student from each group indicated that she wouldn't try to influence her daughter to go to college, the remainder expected their daughters to do so.

While 70% of the high achievers said that their hopes and dreams for their daughters are similar to their own right now, only 20% of the low achievers had similar hopes(Q.60a & b). Only 20% of the high achievers said that their hopes and dreams would be different, each wanting more opportunities for their daughters while 70% of the low achievers said they wanted more for their daughters. Some of the wishes for their daughters include "be a better student", "be more positive about grades and herself", "have a more understanding mother", and "have her father around more."

When asked if they want their children to grow up the way they did, only 30% of both groups said yes(Q.61). When asked what they'd want different, the high achievers said

- "A better life, more material things"
- "Not this environment, no drugs"
- "Have love like I do, but a more settled family life"
- "No family problems"
- "Better surroundings, more money"
- "Always get good grades".

Answers from the low achievers were often similar:

- "Better environment, better schools, more money"
- "Do better in school"
- "More stable family"
- "Go to school, have both parents"
- "Have a more understanding mother and father around more"
- "Have two parents and be able to talk to them"
- "Nct be as spoiled, lazy as I am"
- "Do better at school, get more help from their mother".

When asked about the occupations they'd choose for their daughters(Q.62), the two groups tended to respond in similar ways. One student from each group said she'd like her daughter to be a doctor while three from each group said that they'd support their daughters in doing whatever made them happy. Other high achievers said they'd like their daughters to be a nurse, a teacher and a pharmacist. One said she'd like her daughter to have a satisfying, high paying job, and one said she didn't know what she'd want. One low achiever said she would like her daughter to be a lawyer or to have a "big computer job", two wanted their daughters to be fashion designers, and one said she'd like for her daughter to be Miss America. Therefore, it seems that there's a slight trend for more high achievers to want their daughters to have jobs in the professions.

Friendship/Peer Relationships

Seventy percent of the high achievers and 80% of the low achievers indicated that they have a best friend(Q.78). Two from each group saying that they have two best friends. Fifty percent of the high achievers and 30% of the low achievers said they have several best friends(Q.78a). Only three of the high achievers and one of the low achievers said they have a group of friends(Q.78b).

When asked if their friends go to the same school(Q.79), 80% of each group said yes while the other 20% of each group said that some of their friends go to the same school. Fifty percent of high achievers and 70% of low achievers said their friends are in the same grade(Q.79a). The other respondents said that some or most of their friends are in the same grade except for 20% of the low achievers who said that they have no friends in the same grade. Interestingly, no low achievers said they had friends who had dropped out of school while one of the high achievers has a "few" friends who have done so(Q.79b).

Ninety percent of the high achievers have friends who plan to go to college after high school while 50% of low achievers do so. [This almost duplicates the number of high (90%) and low (40%) achievers who said they plan to go to college]. Thirty percent of high achievers, and 40% of low achievers have friends who plan to work after high school. One high achiever has friends who plan to join the service after high school, and one low achiever has friends who plan to marry. One high achiever

and one low achiever are not sure what their friends plan to do, and one low achiever says her friends have no plans that she is aware of for when they finish high school(Q.80).

When asked what they looked for in a friend(Q.81), no apparent differences emerged between the two groups. Both groups want friends who are "nice", "trustworthy", "listen to you", "are there when you need them", "understanding", "don't put you down", "friendly", "outgoing", "have common interests", "honest with you", "kind", "caring", and "have goals".

No apparent differences emerged between the groups in the gender of their friends(Q.82). Forty percent of high achievers and 50% of low achievers said that most of their friends are female while 40% of high achievers and 20% of low achievers said that half their friends are female and half male. The others indicated that most of their friends are male.

No obvious differences emerged between the groups in the ethnicity of their friends(Q.82). Although 70% of the high achievers and 50% of low achievers said that most of their friends are of Mexican descent, all the respondents indicate that they have friends from ethnic groups other than their own.

More of the high achievers said that most of their friends are their own age (50% vs. 30%) or close to their age than do the low achievers who report a greater span in the age of their friends(Q.82).

Some differences exist between the two groups in the kinds of activities they engage in with their friends (Q.83). While 40% of the high achievers said they go shopping with their friends,

10% of the low achievers do so. Twenty percent of high achievers go to the park with their friends while none of the low achievers do so, and 20% of high achievers do homework with their friends while no low achievers do so. On the other hand, low achievers reported going to parties or dances (60% vs. 40%), to the movies (70% vs. 40%) and to the beach (20% vs. 0%) more often with their friends than do high achievers. Other activities both groups participate in equally is visit in each others' homes, talk on the phone and hang out together at school.

When asked if their friends influence them(Q.84), 50% of high achievers said yes and another 20% said somewhat while only 30% said no. Among low achievers, however, 70% said no and only 30% said yes. When asked how their friends influence them(Q.84a), even more interesting differences emerge. While 50% of high achievers said that their friends encourage them to do well in school, no low achievers said the same. Of the 30% of low achievers who said that their friends influence them, two said their friends influence them in ditching school and one in doing "crazy, dangerous things" together. However, when asked how their friends influence their behavior(Q.84b) and their plans (Q.84c), most of the students in both groups said their friends don't influence them in these areas.

Students were asked what "kids your age call students who study a lot" (Q.85). The most common terms appear to be "nerds", "eggheads", or "school boy/girl." Fifty percent of high achievers and 10% of low achievers said they've been called one of those names (Q.85a), that they'd been called that more than once(Q.85b) and

that it was by a friend, sibling, or fellow student(Q.85c). While 20% said this made them feel angry, another 20% said it made them feel happy, and 20% said that it didn't bother them (Q.85d). Most students said they ignored and laughed off the whole thing(Q.85e).

Only two high achievers and one low achiever said they've ever lost friends for doing well in school(Q.86). This apparently didn't disturb them very much(Q.86c). Only one high achiever and no low achievers said they've lost friends for not doing well in school(Q.87).

One area in which there is an obvious different between the groups is on item 88, "Do you have a boyfriend?" While 80% of high achievers responded that they DO NOT have a boyfriend, 90% of low achievers DO.

Beliefs and Values

The majority of both groups (60%) indicated that they believe that "who you know" will determine part of their future schooling or work(Q.93). They see these individuals as providing information or connections.

On item 95, "Do you think if you were Anglo you would have a harder or easier time finding a good job?", high achievers tended to say "easier" more frequently (40% vs. 20%). One young lady said that "It would be easier because my English isn't good, and I get nervous." Another said "It's the same now, but it used to be much harder for Mexicans to get good jobs." Two students said that there's lots of discrimination against Hispanics now while

another felt that "It's easier for minorities now."

When asked if it would be harder or easier to get ahead if they were Anglo(Q.95a), 60% of high achievers vs. 40% of low achievers believe it would be easier if they were Anglo. Most high achievers cited anti-Mexican discrimination. One young lady said that "People assume whites are more intelligent, responsible and honest." Another, however, said that there are currently lots of college prep classes for Hispanics. Low achievers gave mixed responses. While one said that being Hispanic has given her more opportunities, others said, "Whites have better scholarship marks and run most of the world." and "Whites think they're better, so do other people, so they don't have to face discrimination."

When asked if it would be harder or easier to find a good job if they were male(Q.96), no obvious differences emerged between the groups. Forty percent of both groups think it would be easier while only 10% of both groups think it would be harder to get a good job if they were male. The rest see no differences. While most of the respondents who think that there's a difference believe that men are favored, one young lady (high achiever) believes that women have the advantage of being able to rely on their looks to get a job.

Differences between the groups were slight on item 96a, "Do you think if you were male you would have a harder or easier time getting ahead?" Forty percent of high achievers think it would be easier vs. 30% of low achievers. Only 10% of each group think it would be harder if they were male saying that women can use

their looks or their "feminine touch" to get ahead. Respondents who think that men have it easier blame sexist discrimination.

When asked what kinds of things worry people their age (Q.99), only slight differences were evident between the groups. Concerns cited by both groups include grades, doing well in school, not having future goals, family problems, worries about drugs and alcohol, suicide, and loneliness. Seventy percent of high achievers believe that people their age worry about friends and socializing while only 40% of the low achievers agree. On the other hand 20% of low achievers vs. no high achievers said that kids worry about pregnancy, and 30% vs. 10% say that money and material things (or lack of) are a concern.

No differences emerged in beliefs about the availability of opportunities for a good education and a good job regardless of the social and financial position of one's family(Q.101). Both groups tended to be neutral and to moderately agree that such opportunities exist. Both groups also tended to agree that such opportunities are available to women as much as to men(Q.102). Both groups more strongly agreed that not doing well in high school restricts opportunities(Q.103). Examples given of how opportunities are restricted include difficulty in getting into college and competing for jobs.

When asked if they think that not going to college restricts, increases or has no effect on your opportunities(Q.104), 90% of both groups agreed that it restricts opportunities.

Comments from high achievers were:

- "You need a college education to make money."
- "Your job opportunities would be limited."
- "You'll know less."

Only one said, "There's lots of jobs that don't need a college education."

Comments from low achievers included

- "You won't be qualified for many things."
- "Everything goes by diploma."
- "You'd be more competitive than non-college people."

On question 105, students were asked to rank order the following list in order of importance for getting ahead in life. Next to each item is given the average ranking each group gave the item.

High	Low	
8	10	money in the family to give you a start in life
10	9	connections of family and/or friends
2	3	a drive to succeed
4	7	emotional support from your family
9	8	role models of success to imitate
1	1	a willingness to work hard
7	5	practical knowledge about education and job opportunities
11	11	personal attractiveness
3	6	the ability to get along well with people
6	2	finding a goal to work toward early in life
5	9	high achievement in school

As can be seen, there are more similarities than differences between the two groups. Both groups agreed that a willingness to

work hard is the most important quality and that personal attractiveness is least important. There are four items on which a 3 point or greater span emerged. High achievers seem to believe that emotional support from your family, the ability to get along well with people and high achievement in school are more important than do low achievers. Low achievers believe that finding a goal to work toward early in life is more important than do high achievers.

When asked what they would say are the things that count most in life(Q.106), no big differences appeared between the groups. Both tended to agree that happiness, education and a close family are important, with the high achievers placing somewhat more emphasis on family (40% vs. 20%). The high achievers also named success as important (20%) more than do low achievers (0%).

When asked what makes life good(Q.106a), a good, strong family once more emerged as the top value given by both groups. Friends, love, a good job and success were also mentioned. One high achiever who is completing her education at a continuation high school because she has three children said that "I was going to drop out of school until I had my first child and realized that I now had someone else depending on me. Now I'm planning to go to college and have a professional career so I can provide for my family. My kids turned my life around."

No obvious differences occurred between the groups in their beliefs about what makes life meaningful(Q.106b). Achieving one's goals, having a job one likes and being able to develop and

express one's creativity were mentioned by individuals from both groups.

Ideas on how one achieves this meaning in life (Q.106c), however, differ between high and low achievers with high achievers expressing a belief that education, planning ahead and personal drive are necessary and low achievers believing that one achieves this through hard work.

Students were asked if their lives are good today (Q.107). Ninety percent of high achievers said yes while only 50% of low achievers did. When asked what makes it good or bad, high achievers named family, a job, doing well in school and having friends as contributing to their satisfaction with their lives. Low achievers named poor grades, not going out and not having parents living with them as making life difficult. However, friends and especially boyfriends contribute to a good life. One young lady was ambivalent about her boyfriend's contribution to her life saying, "He makes my life good, but also distracts me from doing my school work."

Upon being asked if school helps make life good or bad (Q.107b), a striking difference emerged between the groups. One hundred percent of high achievers reported that school contributes to a good life for them, but only 30% of low achievers agreed. When asked how school helps make life good or bad, high achievers said that school helps them to learn, brings out their abilities, and helps them to set goals. Thirty percent of low achievers say that school makes their lives bad "but it's my own fault." Another says that "rude people in school make it bad."

However, individuals from both groups said that school has given them initiative to strive and has taught them to work with other people.

FAMILIAL

Five of the ten high achievers interviewed were born in San Diego, four were born in Mexico and one in central California(Q.63). Seven of the ten low achievers were born in San Diego, two in Mexico and one in another state of the U.S. Six high achievers and five low achievers said that both parents were born in Mexico. The remainder of the parents were born in the U.S. with the exception of two high achievers whose mothers are from other countries (Guatemala & England).

Five of the ten high achievers live with two parents, three live with their mothers and the other two with siblings. Four of the low achievers live with two parents, five with their mothers and one with siblings. High achievers tend to live in somewhat larger families averaging 5.4 persons per household while low achievers live in families that tend to have 4.1 persons per household. Members of their extended families live in four of the high achievers' families and one low achiever's family. Larger family size, therefore, seems to be related to higher student achievement based on this sample.

Language Background/Usage

When language background is examined, some interesting data

emerge. Four of the ten high achievers said that the language spoken currently in the home is Spanish while another five said both Spanish and English are spoken. Only one said that the only language used is English. Low achievers on the other hand, more frequently come from homes in which English is the only language spoken, with four out of ten responding thus. Three said both languages are used and, three said that Spanish is the only language used. This information contradicts assumption commonly held that speaking a language other than English in the home handicaps a student.

All the high achievers said that the language(s) currently used are the same ones with which they grew up, and only one low achiever said that she grew up with Spanish and now uses both languages at home(Q.64a & b). Nine out of ten students in each group speak English exclusively in the classroom while the other two speak both languages in class. Only four of the ten high achievers speak English exclusively outside of class compared to seven of the ten low achievers(Q.64d). One high achiever and two low achievers speak Spanish, and the remainder of the students speak both languages.

When asked if they had been in English-speaking classes all through school(Q.65), six of the high achievers and seven of the low achievers said yes. Interestingly, high achievers who answered "no" have been in English-speaking classes less time than have low achievers, having entered between 5th and 7th grades vs. 3rd to 5th grades(Q.65a).

Three students from each group have been in ESL classes, all

for two years (Q.65b), while two high achievers and one low achiever have been in content classes taught in English and Spanish(Q.65c).

Family Responsibilities and Relationships

High achievers tend to have somewhat more responsibility at home than do low achievers. Fifty percent of high achievers take care of younger siblings vs. 20% of low achievers(Q.67), and the high achievers tend to do so more frequently. All young ladies, however, only take care of their younger siblings for a few hours at a time.

Most high and low achievers help clean house and do other chores, but high achievers also help with cooking, translating for their parents and paying bills more frequently than do low achievers(Q.67c).

Contrary to commonly held assumptions, then, the family responsibilities of many Hispanic students do not interfere with their success in school assuming this sample is representative of the larger population.

When asked what kinds of things the students do with their parents(Q.72), no great differences emerged between the two groups. Students from both groups said they work together with their parents, although high achievers report doing so more frequently. Both attend family gatherings together, although high achievers do so more frequently, and both go out to dinner together, with high achievers, again, doing so more frequently.

Low achievers tend to go shopping with their parents more often and reported that they talk to their parents more often. Two low achievers and one high achiever said they don't do much with their parents. This high achiever has been living with her sister for the past five and a half years while her parents live in Mexico. (She said this is very difficult for her, and she misses them a great deal.) One of the low achievers said that her family used to go out together every Sunday until her parents started a family business, and the other student currently lives with her sister and only sees her mother occasionally. Two of the other low achievers, however, said that they do "almost everything" together with their parents.

Students were asked if there are other people in their lives who are as important or more important to them than their parents (Q.77). Four high achievers and five low achievers said yes. When asked to identify this person(Q.77a), three low achievers and one high achiever said it's their boyfriend. One high achiever named her mother's boyfriend who she considers a stepparent, and one low achiever named herself as being as important as her parents. The other students named other family members including her children (high achiever), siblings (both), and a grandmother (high achiever).

Family Support for Education

70% of the high achievers and 80% of the low achievers do their homework in their bedrooms(Q.68) while the others in other

rooms. Only one (low achiever) has no special place to do her homework. Most students from both groups said that there are other things going on in the room where they're doing their homework(Q.68a). Only 40% of the high achievers and 30% of the low achievers have no other activities taking place as they do their homework. However, while 70% of low achievers have the radio or stereo playing, only 20% of high achievers do. Other activities both groups reported are television being on (20% of high achievers, 10% of low achievers) and other people moving about the room (20% of high achievers, 10% of low achievers). Only 30% of the high achievers said they are distracted by the other activities. The remainder of the respondents said they are not distracted.

low achiever - "The radio helps me concentrate."

high achiever - "I like others in the room. I don't like to be alone."

Seventy percent of students in both groups said they ask for help with a homework assignment when they need it(Q.69). Help is most commonly sought from teachers, mothers or friends. One high achiever goes to a local elementary school that provides an after school tutor to help neighborhood students. Unfortunately, she said that, "sometimes the tutor makes me feel that he's not interested in helping me." The rest of the respondents said that the individuals they go to for help are usually willing and able to help(Q.69b). One student from each group said that although their mothers want to help and try to do so, they often can't understand the work. Therefore, 20% of high achievers and

10% of low achievers said the assistance they receive is only helpful sometimes(Q.69c).

When asked how involved their parents are with their schooling(Q.70), 30% of low achievers and 10% of high achievers said that their parents are not very involved. However, 90% of low achievers and 100% of high achievers said that their parents know what subjects they are taking(Q.70a). Most parents of students from both groups (80% of the high achievers and 70% of the low achievers) have not met their child's teachers(Q.70b). Ninety percent of high achievers and 70% of low achievers said that they have discussed their educational plans with their parents(Q.70c), and 90% of students from both groups say that their parents know their most recent grades and credits(Q.70d). Students were asked if their parents help or encourage some of their brothers or sisters more than they help or encourage the respondent and, if so, why they think this is true(Q.71). Sixty percent of high achievers answered affirmatively as did 70% of low achievers. Reasons given were

High achievers -"They expect A's from me, so they help the others more."

- "My little brother needs more help."

Low achievers -"My brother is a better student so they encourage him more."

Students who do not work were asked how they buy the things they want(Q.73). With two exceptions, they all depend on their parents for money. Both of the exceptions are high achievers; the one who has three children depends on welfare, and the one who lives with her sister depends on her for financial support.

A rather general question, "In what ways do your parents help you?" was asked. Responses varied but failed to show any identifiable trends to differentiate the groups. Thirty percent of students from both groups said their parents "provide what I need" while 10% from both groups say they receive spending money. Two high achievers said their parents help in everything, one of them saying, "My parents help in everything except they can't help with homework, but they're willing." Only one high achiever and three low achievers gave no answer to the question.

Forty percent of high achievers and 50% of low achievers get rewarded for good grades(Q.75) Two from each group said they receive money. Two other low achievers said they receive material things like clothes or a car, one of the high achievers said she gets special privileges, and one said she receives praise and hugs.

Forty percent of high achievers and 30% of low achievers said they are punished for poor grades(Q.75a). Most of them are put on some form of restriction such as not being allowed to use the phone or go out. One low achiever and two high achievers said they receive a lecture from their parents; the low achiever said, "She makes me feel guilty because I get everything I want. All I have to do is go to school."

Comments from high achievers are:

- "If I get a C my parents encourage me to do better."
- "They ask me what's wrong if I get a poor grade."

All the high achievers and 80% of the low achievers said that they have someone who encourages and supports them to do well in their education(Q.76). Parents were identified by most students

in both groups as being that "someone." Others mentioned include siblings, aunts, uncles, teachers (20% of low achievers, no high achievers), close friends (30% of high achievers, no low achievers) and boyfriends (10% of low achievers, 20% of high achievers).

Comments on how they are supported or encouraged are:

- High achievers - "My parents encourage me a lot."
- "My sister and brother tell me to stay in school."
- Low achievers - "My mother supports me in every way."
- "My parents tell me to do my best." (2 students)
- "My boyfriend says I should graduate."
- "My mom talks to me and encourages me to get good grades."

ECONOMIC

The work experiences of both groups were very similar(Q.46). Seventy percent of the high achievers and 80% of the low achievers had held paying jobs. Most of the girls had been between the ages of 14 and 16 when they had first started. One low achiever started when she was 13 and one high achiever when she was 17. Most of the girls had worked part time for periods ranging from one month to two and one half years. The type of work done included secretarial, sales, cashier, washing dishes, bussing tables, and food service. Three high achievers reported having summer jobs at Sea World. Two low achievers said that the jobs had been part of REGY, STEP, or ROP. The modal hourly wage was \$4.00 for high achievers and \$3.35 for low achievers.

When asked what was it like working(Q.47), most comments were positive. "Great, fun, or O.K." was said by four of the seven high achievers and six of the eight low achievers. One high achiever found her job as a cashier very stressful because she had to be very fast and accurate. Four girls from each group reported that they were employed when they were interviewed.

PHYSICAL

Experiences with Drugs and Alcohol

When asked about their experiences with drugs and alcohol, four high achievers and one low achiever said they hadn't tried either(Q.89). Three from each group had tried one or the other. Three low achievers said that they only drank at parties. Current use of drugs and alcohol was reported by three low achievers.

Only three high achievers reported that they knew some one who uses alcohol a lot while six low achievers said that they did(Q.90). Two of the high achievers said that it affected them because in one case it was disturbing to her mother and in the other case it was her sister whom she tried to discourage from drinking. Three low achievers were affected by male members of the household who drank too much and in one case became belligerent.

No one from either group has ever had a problem with drinking(Q.91). One low achiever said that she has a problem with drugs. She said that she sometimes skips class in order to "do a line" of cocaine.

Neighborhoods

The racial/ethnic mix of the neighborhoods in which they live were very similar for both groups(Q.92). Thirty percent of each group reported living in a mixed (Black, Hispanic, and Asian) neighborhood. One high achiever and two low achievers live in

a predominantly White neighborhood, and two high achievers and one low achiever live in a Black neighborhood. Thirty percent of the high achievers and 10% of the low achievers reported living in a Mexican area. One member of each group lives in an Asian neighborhood.

Seventy percent of the high achievers and 20% of the low achievers liked where they lived. Feeling unsafe was expressed by 20% of the high achievers and 30% of the low achievers. An additional 30% of the low achievers expressed negative feelings about their neighborhoods. When asked directly if they liked their neighborhood 80% of the high achievers said yes or it's O.K. while 50% of the low achievers said no. Sixty percent of high achievers and 30% of low achievers said it is important to them who lives in their neighborhood. They mentioned that it was important to trust neighbors and not to have drug dealers or child molesters near by.

Social or Sport Groups

High achievers are much more involved in organizations and sport teams than low achievers(Q.100). Two high achievers are involved in Upward Bound, MECHA, and cheerleading while none of the low achievers is similarly involved. Four high achievers and one low achiever are involved in sports, and two high achievers used to be involved. Sports in which they participate are softball, track, volleyball, and drill team.

PARENT INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted in the homes of eight high achievers and seven low achievers, for a total of fifteen parent interviews. In twelve of the cases the mother was interviewed. The older sister of one high and one low achiever was interviewed because the subject lived with her since the mother was residing out of town. The parents of one low achiever were interviewed together, with the father responding more, because the mother requested it. In four of the other five cases interviews were not possible because of inaccessibility or refusal of the parent. In one case the student is the head of house hold and does not live with her parents.

Household and Typical Activities

When asked to name the members of the household, the information given by the mother verified that given by the girls during their interviews and presented in the first section of this report.

An examination of a typical weekday for each subject showed more similarities than differences between the two groups. Most girls from both groups usually spend the time between the end of the school day and dinner, approximately 3:00 to 6:00 P.M., watching TV, doing homework and chores, and snacking. Most families eat dinner prepared by the mother between 6:00 and 6:30. All high achievers have an opportunity to converse with adults during dinner, and in all but one case this is done with the TV

being off. Similar opportunities are only available to three low achievers. The three hour period after dinner is usually used to complete homework and chores and watch TV if the former have been completed. Most subjects from both groups go to bed between 9:00 and 10:30 P.M.

High achievers tend to get up a half hour to an hour earlier than low achievers and ride the bus to school more often. This is probably a function of the distance from home to the school of attendance. Four of the eight mothers of the high achievers work outside of the home during the day while this is also true for four of the seven mothers of low achievers. In the households of three low achievers dinner is prepared and eaten on an individual basis. The sister of one low achiever reported that she typically goes to bed at midnight.

Weekend activities for both groups include attending church, going out to dinner, going shopping, visiting relatives, and attending parties and sporting events. Church attendance was mentioned by seven mothers of high achievers, but by only three mothers of low achievers.

Summer activities for both groups include outings such as going to the beach or Disneyland and going on vacation usually to Mexico. Seven high achievers and two low achievers usually go on a vacation with their families. The mothers of three high achievers said that their daughters usually work during the summer.

The amount of time that their daughters spend watching TV is slightly more for high achievers. Most girls from both groups watch from one to two hours a day, but two high achievers watch TV

three hours a day. Program preferences are very similar for both groups with situation comedies and soap operas (often in Spanish) being the most popular. Three high achievers watch TV news while none of the low achievers does. Most of the subjects do not do anything else while watching TV.

Care of Daughter

Mothers were asked who is usually responsible for awakening their daughter. Approximately half of each group is awakened by the mother with the others awakening themselves. Transportation to school is provided by parents for two girls in each group. All others rely on the bus. In both groups the care of clothing is the responsibility of the mother with the girls sometimes helping with ironing. In one case from each group the daughter takes complete responsibility for the care of her clothing. For both groups mothers are generally responsible for keeping track of the whereabouts of their daughter, taking her to the doctor, and shopping for items she might need. In the majority of families from each group, shopping for clothing is done jointly by mother and daughter.

Opinions

When asked to respond to a variety of statements using a five point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, and strongly disagree), differences were found between the two groups of mothers.

Given two statements delegating the responsibility for a

household chore and the adherence to a regular schedule, 100% of the mothers of high achievers agreed or strongly agreed that such activities took place in their homes on a regular basis. Among the mothers of low achievers three of seven disagreed or strongly disagreed. This is congruent with findings from the student interview. Low achieving students tend to have fewer family responsibilities and a less structured schedule at home.

All but two mothers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "school work and reading come before play, TV or even other work. The mother of two low achievers strongly disagreed with the statement. Identical responses were given to the statement "I praise my child for good school work, sometimes in front of other people."

All, except one mother from each group, agreed or strongly agreed that members of her family talk about hobbies, games, news, books, movies, and TV programs. The others disagreed. With the exception of one mother of a low achiever, everyone strongly agreed that they encourage good speech habits, helping with correct usage and learning. Responses to a statement that at dinner or some other occasion there was a chance for everyone to speak and be listened to support the finding that in the homes of three low achievers such an opportunity does not exist.

Three statements dealing with the degree of parent knowledge about the school experiences of their children have different group responses. One hundred percent of the mothers of high achievers agree or strongly agree with having knowledge about current teachers, what is going on in class, and which learning

materials are being used. Three of seven mothers of low achievers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements.

All parents agreed or strongly agreed that they expected their daughter to maintain a B average. A question related to the educational expectation for their daughters shows that mothers of low achievers have lower expectations. Four mothers expect them to graduate from high school with only one expecting a bachelor's degree for her daughter. By contrast, five of the mothers of high achievers expect their daughters to receive a bachelor's or master's degree. All mothers agreed or strongly agreed that they expected quality work and good grades from their daughter and that they knew their strengths and weaknesses, and gave encouragement and special help.

Responses to the statement, "My daughter's high school grades don't really reflect what she can do" were evenly split with half of each group agreeing while the other half of each group disagreed. The researcher believes that since this was the only negatively stated item it may have been misinterpreted by some respondents.

All, except one mother from each group, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they expect their daughter to encounter racism at her school. Interestingly enough, as reported in a previous section ten of the twenty girls did say that they had experienced some form of discrimination.

All mothers agreed or strongly agreed with three statements that said they talked to their daughter about the future, planning for high school and college, and aiming for a high level

of education and vocation.

Involvement with School

Questions asking mothers if they had had contact with administrator, counselors, or teachers yielded information congruent with that given by the students. Most mothers had met with a counselor to discuss a problem or check on academic progress. The majority of mothers had been to school for an open house or an extra curricular activity and had felt welcomed.

Those mothers who had daughters involved in sports or other activities were supportive of the involvement by providing transportation and money and attending the activities. Mothers did comment that it was expensive to participate with one saying that cheerleading cost her about \$400.00.

Most mothers said that their daughters were generally well behaved. Disciplining behavior often consisted of talks and in some cases putting them on restriction.

Finally, when asked to rate their daughter's school, most mothers rated it with an A or B, both academically and socially.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Type of Classrooms

The low achievers were all observed in regular classes except for one student who was in a GRAB class (Getting Reluctant Attenders Back). Six of the high achievers were also observed in regular classes and three in Advanced or GATE classes. One is on home study, therefore, a class observation could not be made.

Subject Area

The low achievers were observed in a variety of classes including: one in American Literature, one in Small Business Management, two in U.S. History, one in the GRAB class, one in Business Math, two in Algebra and one in Algebra 2. The high achievers were observed in the following classes: one in Chemistry, one in American Literature, one in Driver's Education, two in Advanced American Literature, two in Geometry, one in Pre-Algebra, and one in Advanced U.S. History.

Students in Class

There was a significant difference between the high and low achievers in the ethnic make up of the classes in which they were observed, while 60% of the low achievers were in classes where the majority of students are people of color (Black, Hispanic, Asian) only 30% of the high achievers were in similar classes. When the percentage of Hispanics in their classes is examined, however, no

differences emerge between the groups, 50% of both high and low achievers were in classes where less than 25% of the students were Hispanic. When gender was examined, some difference between the groups is evident, with 50% of the low achievers and 30% of the high achievers in classes where over half of the student are female. How significant these gender and ethnic differences are in affecting academic performance remains unclear and needs further study.

Research seems to indicate that teachers tend to pay most attention during class to students seated at the front of the classes or along the center of the class, front to back, the so-called "Golden T." It was noticed that while 50% of the high achievers were seated within this "Golden T," only 20% of low achievers were.

There was no evidence of ability grouping within the classes although some of the classes such as Advanced American Literature are composed of high achieving students.

Instructional Activities

In none of the observed classes did the teacher include an Introduction of the lesson for the day, an explanation of the Purpose or Objectives of the lesson or a Conclusion to the lesson. Most classes started with the taking of attendance and/or the handing out of papers followed by the main activity for the day. These activities varied and included mini-lectures by the teacher, student presentations, movies, filmstrips, working out problems on the chalkboard, using compasses and

straight edges for geometric constructions, test-taking, seatwork and studying for future tests.

When the type of activities observed are analyzed, some differences between the two groups become evident. High achievers were more frequently seen in classes in which the main activity for the day's lesson was a mini-lecture by the teacher followed by questions and answers or problem-solving (80% vs. 40%) or the presentation of a film, filmstrip or videotape (30% vs. 10%). Low achievers, on the other hand, more often engaged in doing seatwork (60% vs. 30%). These differences may have a bearing on why low achievers often labeled classes as boring or uninteresting.

Classroom Organization

There was no obvious ethnic, gender or ability grouping of students in most of the classrooms. The only exception is that in two of classes of high achievers there was a noticeable tendency for students to be seated among other students from their own ethnic groups. In both cases, Anglo students were more frequently seated in the front of the room.

No noticeable differences were seen between the groups in whether the students sat surrounded by others or isolated from their classmates. No students sat apart, all were either partially or totally surrounded by their peers.

With the exception of the GRAB class, all the classes were organized into the whole group for instruction for all or part of the class period. Ten percent of the classes for both groups also

included some time spent in small groups and 10% for both groups included individual student conferences. However, as previously stated, 60% of the low achievers vs. 30% of high achievers engaged in seatwork during the class periods observed.

Again with the exception of the GRAB class, all the students were engaged in the same tasks, rather than working on different tasks in small groups or individually.

Response Opportunities

Some interesting differences emerge between the groups when patterns of teacher questioning and response opportunities are examined. In 70% of the high achievers' classes vs. 50% of the low achievers' classes students responded individually to teachers' questions. In another 20% of high achievers' classes students responded some of the time individually and some of the time as a group while 20% of low achievers' classes used the group method of response exclusively. In another 20% of the low achievers' classes no teacher questioning of the students as a group took place.

While 70% of high achievers' classes exclusively allowed the students to respond voluntarily only 30% of the low achievers' classes did so. Forty percent of low achievers and 20% of high achievers were observed in classes in which students volunteered responses part of the time and were obliged to respond by being called on by their teachers part of the time.

Materials Used in Class

A variety of materials were used in both groups' classes, including chalkboards, worksheets, SDUSD textbooks and teacher materials. Straight edges and compasses were used in one high achiever's class, and hand calculators were used in two classes, one low and one high. The only slight difference observed in the type of materials used in class was that 40% of the high achievers vs. 10% of the low achievers had teachers who used filmstrips, videotapes or overhead projectors during their classes.

Observational Notes

Both consultants took notes on the events taking place in the classes being observed and on the behavior of the students being observed. An examination of these notes reveals that, as would be expected, more of the high achievers were highly or moderately verbal and involved during their classes than were low achievers, 70% vs. 50% respectively. The remainder of students in each group were silent during class or spoke only to other students and not the teacher. High achievers also tended to stay on task somewhat more so than did low achievers, although the differences were not great with 30% of high achievers vs. 20% of low achievers being totally on task and 50% of high achievers vs. 70% of low achievers alternatively being off and on task during the classes observed.

Campus Comparisons

A total of seven high schools were visited in the process of making classroom observations. One of the seven schools was an alternative school. In five of the schools the ethnic composition was somewhat balanced. Hispanic student enrollment varied from 14% to 43% and that of Whites varied from 26% to 44%. Hispanic students seemed to interact freely and comfortably with other student groups. Differences in atmosphere seemed to be tied to variations in administrative style and scheduling. The other two schools' White student enrollment was over 60%.

Although this was not systematically researched, an interesting difference in the environment of the two White majority schools was noticed by the evaluator assigned to these schools. At one of the campuses, there appeared to be much more social ethnic mixing of students during lunch periods and between classes than at the other campus. This seemed especially true with respect to Hispanic-White interactions. In the first school Hispanic student enrollment is 25% while it is 10% at the second. It would appear that a greater number of Hispanics leads to greater interaction between them and White students. There may be other factors at play which are not apparent without more in-depth study. Nevertheless, this may support a need to bus students into a school in sufficient numbers to create a "critical mass" to encourage their acceptance by and of the other students.

CONCLUSIONS

Although any number of conclusions can be drawn from the wealth of information in the previous sections, attention is focused on findings which allow for some action or intervention rather than on events or practices which are out of the control of the school district.

1. The things that both groups like and dislike about attending their school focused greatly on relational/human interaction aspects with positive ones being valued and negative ones being disliked. Since the traditional Mexican culture values personalism, that is, warmth, expressions of personal interest, and connectedness with others (Murrillo, 1976), this finding is not surprising. The quality of teaching, subject matter knowledge, and opportunities to learn were mentioned more often by high achievers.
2. Absenteeism among low achievers increased greatly from junior high school to high school. Oftentimes there are greater opportunities for providing feedback about attendance at the junior high level (Fiorzaliso et al., 1977).
3. Best school experiences for both groups were related to special recognition of a talent or skill while worst school experiences were related to negative human interactions. Research has found that Mexican American females respond more positively to positive reinforcement than do Anglo females and

males in general (Mason, 1979; Fisher, 1974). Arias (1986) found that Hispanic dropout rates are related to negative interactions with teachers and other school personnel.

4. Most girls liked their teachers and mentioned personal qualities such as helpfulness, caring, and personal regard as the reasons why they liked them. Helpfulness for high achievers included academic and personal aspects. For low achievers helpfulness was defined more as a personal interest and concern on the part of the teacher. Again, this finding supports the importance of personalism when working with Hispanics (Murrillo, 1976).

5. When counselors were mentioned as being instrumental in making a positive difference to the students, in each case the counselor was Hispanic. Research has found that Hispanics are more likely to go to Hispanic counselors than to non-Hispanics (Sanchez & Atkinson, 1983). Also, Hispanic counselors are more likely to give Hispanic students help and encouragement to succeed in the educational system than are non-Hispanic counselors (Ramirez & Soriano, 1982).

6. Academically, all girls wanted better grades than they were getting. Low achievers attributed their low grades to lack of attendance, motivation, or interest. Several students said that they did not understand the purpose of learning some of the subjects and/or topics they were studying. Both groups felt that they were good readers, but could improve their math skills.

Low achievers felt that less was expected of them in their math and English classes. The negative effects of low expectations on achievement are well documented (Haycock & Navarro, 1988; Good, 1987; Rodriguez, 1985).

7. In terms of learning environments, most members of both groups felt that they did NOT have to be competitive in order to get good grades. They preferred working in small groups of 3 to 4 students with students of their own choosing. Most classes observed consisted of whole class instruction. The case for cooperative learning to produce more positive educational outcomes especially for ethnically diverse learners is very effectively presented by Kagan (1986) and Slavin (1983).

8. High achievers tended to be in more advanced classes where the majority of students were White. Based on data from the 1980 High School and Beyond Survey, Hispanic high school seniors were the least likely to participate in honors mathematics and English courses (National Council, 1986).

9. High achievers were more likely to speak Spanish both at home and at school. This contradicts popular assumptions and the works of Matuto-Bianchi (1986), who states that Mexican Americans are disadvantaged because of their Spanish speaking background, and supports the findings of Vigil and Long (1981) that Spanish speaking Hispanic females had higher school achievement than non-Spanish speaking students. The financial benefits of being bilingual plus the positive effects on self-respect and self-

esteem establish the case for prizing the Spanish language in public schools (National Commission, 1984).

10. When experiencing academic problems, low achievers tended to have less favorable results when seeking help from teachers. Buriel (1983) found a difference in teachers' expressions of encouragement to Mexican American students based on their achievement, affirming high achievers more than low achievers, while they made no such distinctions with Anglo students. Personal support or help with any type of problem was most often given by a teacher who seemed to go out of his or her way for the student or by an Hispanic counselor.

11. Fifty percent of each group had experienced discrimination at school. Nine of the ten had experiences at schools with 60% or more White and 10 to 25% Hispanic enrollment. Yet, most of the mothers interviewed did NOT expect their daughters to experience racism at school. High achievers tended to be somewhat more aware of barriers related to discrimination in the world of work than did low achievers. Discrimination of Hispanic students is well documented in a U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1974) report and in the research of Buriel (1983).

12. Low achieving students came from families where there are fewer family responsibilities, less structure, less family interaction, and more personal problems. Their parents tended to be less involved in their education. They tended not to like their neighborhoods. They were more likely to have a boy friend

and to consider marriage at an early age. Kagan (1986) stated that children from single parent families generally have lower grades, are less motivated, and more disruptive than those from two parent families.

13. High achievers were more involved in extra curricular activities which were often supported by their parents. Some of these activities were rather expensive. This finding is congruent with those of Matute-Bianchi (1986).

14. Although both groups had relatively high expectations, low achievers had career expectations which require less higher education than those of high achievers. The parents of low achievers had lower educational expectations for their daughters than did those of high achievers. Hispanics are enrolled in greater percentages in courses which are preparatory to low-level occupations. They tend to be directed more toward futures in lower socioeconomic positions (Goodlad, 1984).

15. High achievers were in classrooms with more interaction, more opportunities to participate, a greater richness of materials, and more varied activities than those of low achievers. These findings are consistent with other research (Good, 1987).

16. Differences in the interactions among ethnically diverse groups, classroom control, and general atmosphere were noticed among the schools visited.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Greater emphasis should be placed on the role that teachers can play in empowering the under achieving Hispanic female. These students express a need for teachers that are willing to deal more with their affective needs. They want teachers who are very caring, have concern for individuals, treat all students fairly, are interesting and inspiring, express a great deal of personalism, are competent, and have high expectations. The SDUSD should seek to develop these qualities in their teachers either through recruitment or inservice activities. Workshops on effective listening skills, cross-cultural communications, and motivational techniques should be offered for school personnel.
2. The SDUSD should develop intervention programs focusing on attendance and exposure to career options for Hispanic females at the junior high level.
3. Teachers and administrators should be encouraged to develop more ways of recognizing positive accomplishments at school and communicating them to parents rather than only making contact when something is wrong.
4. The crucial role of the counselor must be emphasized. More counselors who are Hispanic and can serve as role models or have a particular interest and personal commitment to working with Hispanic students are needed. They must have a reasonable work load and the freedom to provide special program for Hispanic

students. This is especially important for students having achievement problems because often they are also having difficulties at home. Personal and family counseling programs similar to the family counseling program being conducted at Taft Junior High School in conjunction with the Counselor Education Department of SDSU should be implemented in the schools.

5. Teachers should be encouraged to focus more on the purpose and utility of what is being taught and to convey that information to students, particularly in math classes. Teachers should also be encouraged to explore the use of cooperative learning groups more when planning their lessons. They should also convey a high level of expectation for all students. Cooperative Learning and WESA workshops should be offered by the district for all teachers.

6. Given the fact that high achievers tend to speak more Spanish and the realities of a global society, the speaking of Spanish should be more prized in the schools at all levels.

7. The problems of racism and discrimination need to continue to be addressed. More inservicing of teachers and staff is needed as well as making this a topic of discussion for students. This is especially crucial in schools with high White and low Hispanic enrollment. Perhaps the Race-Human Relations Team needs to be expanded to more effectively meet this need.

8. The SDUSD should develop more programs to help educate Hispanic parents and their children about opportunities for higher

education, career options(focusing on other options for women besides early marriage), how to be informed consumers of the educational system, and how to work as partners with the school in the educational process.

9. Systematic efforts should be made to encourage Hispanics to participate in extra curricular activities. Needs such as funds for equipment and/or materials and transportations should be provided for without having students appear to be deficient or different.

10. Career education and counseling programs need to focus more on the needs of Hispanic females. Including more Hispanic females as career center staff to serve as role models is recommended.

11. The differences which exist between classes attended by high and low achievers with regard to opportunities to interact, types of activities, variety of materials, and response opportunities need to be studied and changes made when warranted.

12. Desegregation efforts should include an attempt, whenever possible, to bus students to a school in sufficient numbers that would allow for a "critical mass" of each ethnic group to exist in the school. This would help students feel less isolated and alienated in their new environment.

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APPENDIX A
STUDENT SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA

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STUDENT SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA

In Component B of Part II of the study, subsets of the sample will be chosen for study. A subset of 10 low achieving Black males and a subset of 10 low achieving Hispanic females will be chosen. A subject will be deemed low achieving if his or her grade point average is two or more steps below his or her CTBS stanine score in reading comprehension and/or mathematics concepts, where steps of the GPA and stanines are as follows:

<u>GPA Steps</u>	<u>Stanine Steps</u>
.44	1
.88	2
1.32	3
1.76	4
2.20	5
2.64	6
3.08	7
3.52	8
3.96	9

This process will, in effect, prohibit labeling students with CTBS results of stanines 1 or 2 as low achievers.

Likewise, subsets of 10 high achieving Black male students and 10 high achieving Hispanic female students will be chosen for study. A student will be deemed to be high achieving if he or she has a GPA one step above his or her CTBS stanine in reading comprehension and/or mathematics concepts, or if he or she has a stanine of 8 or 9 and a correspondingly high GPA.