# A Case Study Analysis Among Former Urban Gifted High School Dropouts

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Abstract: *The dropout social problem has been the focus of researchers, business and community leaders, and school staffs for decades. Despite possessing significant academic high school capabilities, some gifted students drop out of school. The research problem for this study includes how and why former gifted urban high school students chose to drop out. The conceptual framework for this case study is Bronfenbrenner's (1996) human ecology theory. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of what led former gifted urban students to drop out of high school. Using purposive sampling, four participants, two men and two women, were selected for semistructured interviews. The sample included an African American, a Filipino, a Caucasian, and a Haitian/Cuban/Syrian. Their ages ranged from 38–77 years old. The semistructured interviews were analyzed using first, second, and pattern coding. The resulting themes were (a) family discord, (b) school not interesting, (c) no role model, and (d) minimum family participation. The former gifted high school students' dropout experiences were rooted in the microsystem perspective of the human ecology theory. The implications for social change from this study's findings may help inform those who manage and teach gifted programs about the mindsets of students in gifted services.*

Jordan, Kostandini, and Mykerezi (2012) theorized that the key to staying out of low-wage America is staying in school at least through high school graduation. Despite this information, high school students are still leaving school before graduating without understanding the potential negative consequences associated with this decision (Jordan et al., 2012). These negative consequences can range from poor health to earning less money than that of high school graduates (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). The dropout phenomenon is a social problem that induces personal and societal consequences that are negative in nature (Freeman & Simonsen, 2015).

While there is a plethora of research regarding high school dropouts (e.g., Hickman, Bartholomew, Mathwig, & Heinrich, 2008; Hickman & Heinrich, 2011; Song, Benin, & Glick, 2012; Stanczyk, 2009; Suh, Jingyo, & Houston, 2007), dropout rates (e.g., Mishra & Azeez, 2014; Suh & Suh, 2007; Ziomek-Daigle, 2010), and a variety of other topics related to high school dropouts (e.g., Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; Johnson, 2010; Mishra & Azeez, 2014; Patterson, Hale, & Stessman, 2007), there is very little research regarding gifted dropouts. According to Blaas (2014), gifted dropouts have been discouraged with their school experience as early as elementary school. The sources of their frustrations are documented as related to being grouped with lower achieving students, as well as various negative family and environmental issues (Zabloski & Milacci, 2012). However, gifted children often do not encounter the typical negative psychological, sociological, and familial experiences that nongifted dropouts encounter (Blaas, 2014). In other words, gifted children's shared and nonshared environmental experiences control for many of the usual negative experiences associated with typical students dropping out of high school (Zabloski & Milacci, 2012).

Hickman et al. (2008) explained that the culture of a community and manner in which the neighborhood develops influences the ability of a child to succeed and that this pattern should hold true for gifted and talented students as well. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 defines a gifted and talented student as any student who has shown high levels of academic abilities in areas of intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields (Zabloski & Milacci, 2012). Specifically, a gifted and talented student is defined as any student with two standard deviations above the norm of IQ which puts the student at 130 IQ. Additionally, gifted and talented students are creative and use divergent thinking, and they have special talents (i.e., music, art, etc.; Zabloski & Milacci, 2012). The NCLB has since been updated by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, which went into effect October 1, 2016. This act did not change the definitions of gifted and talented students; however, it requires states to disaggregate data in an attempt to identify gifted and talented students (ESSA, 2015).

Hickman and Heinrich (2011) noted that researchers have addressed a number of factors, such as economic, familial, educational, and cultural factors, that have played a role in the emergence of the dropout problem. Ecological frameworks on human development acknowledge the social context within which an individual's life influences one's behavior (Jablonka, 2011). When students are progressing through early adolescence, they encounter many emotional and physical changes (Sawyer et al., 2012). Puberty results in a number of physical changes, which spur students into believing that they have become mature enough to carry out their lives independently (Vijayakumar, Op de Macks, Shirtcliff, & Pfeifer, 2018). Entry into puberty is thus one of the initial push factors that places an individual on the path of deviant behavior (Tsai, Strong, & Lin, 2015). Such conduct is associated with negative engagements that are often incongruent with school standards (Fergusson, Vitaro, Wanner, & Brendgen, 2007). At this stage, peer groups, youth culture, and grown role models assume a high degree of social influence (in terms of values, attitudes, and behaviors) for the adolescents (Brundage, 2013).

Within the family unit, adolescents begin looking for more independence as well as opportunities to make personal decisions (Jablonka, 2011). However, the author observed that the changes demand a shift

in responsibilities and roles which prove challenging to the relationships and dynamics at the family level. At the same time, many adolescents transition from junior high school to high school environments (Muscarà, Pace, Passanisi, D'Urso, & Zappulla, 2018). The shift does not, however, match the developmental needs of young people (Modecki, Blomfield Neira, & Barber, 2018).

Demographic characteristics that predisposed students for dropping out of school include poverty, homelessness, sex, and ethnicity (Jeronimus, Riese, Sanderman, & Ormel, 2014). Being a minority contributes largely to the likelihood of dropping out of school (Fry, 2014). Despite being gifted, many gifted students who fall into the above demographics are at a higher risk of dropping out of school (Jablonka, 2011). The association of the demographic risk factors with school dropout is partly explained by their connection to academic factors such as poor performance, low levels of motivation, absenteeism, and behavior problems, among others (Opre et al., 2016). This developmental pathway skews exponentially, albeit in a negative direction, as students enter middle school (Fry, 2014).

Although the aforementioned research regarding high school dropouts illuminates important findings, we have found limited research that has examined the understanding of the factors of why gifted urban students drop out of school from an ecological systems perspective. Given such, further research is warranted that could address this lack of research from an ecological systems approach to address the documented problem of urban gifted students dropping out of school despite having the cognitive ability to succeed (Blaas, 2014; Zabloski & Milacci, 2012).

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand from an ecological perspective how gifted urban high school dropouts identify reasons for choosing to drop out of high school. Also, this case study attempts to identify, despite having the cognitive abilities to succeed academically and eventually graduate from high school, at what point their academic career began a downward spiral. To gain an in-depth understanding of this documented problem from a participant's perspective, we examined each subsystem of the ecological systems theory and the perceived effect it had on the participants throughout their lifetime. The rationale for using Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory was to gain a better understanding of how the various interactions of subsystems influence why the students dropped out of school from their perspectives. Given such, the following research question was postulated: How do gifted urban high school dropouts, from an ecological systems theory perspective, decide to drop out of high school?

## Methods

Qualitative case study design methodology was an appropriate research method and design as the purpose of our study was to investigate how former gifted urban high school students choose to drop out from a human ecology perspective. More specifically, we examined how the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem effect the choices of the participants to drop out of school from their perspectives. Hence, the authors posed the following research question: How do gifted urban high school dropouts, from an ecological systems theory perspective, decide to drop out of high school?

## Procedures

The procedure used to gain an understanding from an ecological theoretical framework how gifted students dropped out of high school was open-ended questions via a semistructured interview process. This form of questioning allowed the participants to tell their stories using their words. For this study, a gifted urban high school dropout was identified as a person who decided to leave high school before graduating or completion. The identified persons could have dropped out of school and returned later to earn their high school diploma or GED, as well as a postsecondary degree. A pool of potential participants was identified using the Walden University Research Pool, email, social media, and word-of-mouth. Potential participants were contacted via telephone, Skype, and/or email.

Once a pool of participants was created, an information letter detailing the nature of the study was delivered to each participant via U.S. Postal Service, by email, or in person. In this letter, we requested an appointment with the potential participant for an informative meeting to present the proposed study, provided a copy of the information letter describing the study, and addressed any questions or concerns of the potential participant. Next, we requested all interested potential participants contact us to schedule the interview. If there was no contact within one week of the informative meeting, a follow-up telephone call was made, as well as a follow-up email. At the time of the interview, each participant was given a copy of the information letter outlining the proposed study. Each participant provided a signed Consent Form prior to the start of the first interview.

Data were collected through one-on-one interviews. Initially, the background of the participant was the focus of each first interview. During the first few minutes of all interviews, the primary intent was to build rapport with the participant, which assisted in providing credibility and getting all necessary documents signed. Also, the interview assisted in gathering all the participants' information about their life, past and current. This information allowed us to put the participant's experience in context. Interview questions were focused on having the participants reconstruct their family, school, friends, neighborhood, and work experiences in phases, which yielded some context of their current situation.

Once the interviews were conducted and transcribed, the data were organized, which allowed us to obtain a general understanding of what type of information the data provided. To gain further meaning from the data, we used Dedoose qualitative data collection software program to assist us in coding and identifying themes.

The first step in analyzing the data was reading each transcript in its entirety (Ivey, 2012). By reading each transcript completely, we attained a general sense of the participant's experiences (Blake, Robley, & Taylor, 2012). Also, the data analysis process was concluded by creating individual as well as group descriptions of the lived experience of the phenomenon. The purpose of this step was to create a narrative of what it meant for each participant to be a former gifted urban high school dropout from an individual and group aspect (Lessard, Contandriopoulos, & Beaulieu, 2009; Valiee, Peyrovi, & Nasrabadi, 2014; Yilmaz, 2013).

## Results

All four participants dropped out of high school, were over 18 years old, and resided in an urban area at the time they dropped out of high school. For this study, it was important to verify the students were gifted and that they dropped out of school. All four participants met both requirements of the study.

Shaun: Shaun is a 43-year-old African American male from the South. He left home at the age of 14, shortly after dropping out of high school. During the early years on his own, he ran into legal trouble that resulted in a felony record. Shaun is a Master-at-Arms in the Navy Reserve, with Level 1 clearance. He holds a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies; he states, "It is basically elementary education with a concentration in reading" and a master's in education. He is now in school earning a second master's degree and gearing up for a PhD program.

Kelli: Kelli dropped out of high school at age 15 when she was in the 10$^{th}$ grade. Kelli describes her upbringing as constant chaos. She was born and raised in a major city on the East Coast and constantly moved around, with and without her mother. Both of her parents are immigrants, so she is part of the first generation of family members to be born in the US. She identifies as Haitian/Cuban/Syrian. This 44-year-old mother of three had goals of becoming a corporate lawyer and loved going to school when she was able to attend. She soon dropped out and later became pregnant at the age of 16. Later, Kelli earned a bachelor's degree in history and had no plans on returning to the classroom.

Jason: This 37-year-old Filipino participant is one of two participants who belongs to an IQ Society. Although not truly active, he peruses the websites and blogs for pure entertainment. Jason grew up in one of the poorest neighborhoods on the west coast. At the age of 14, he dropped out of high school. He talks about how everyone would tell him he very intelligent and smart, but that he was not living up to his potential. Like Shaun, he grew up in a single parent household without the perceived benefit of a father or positive male role model as a guide. Similar to Shaun, Jason turned to the streets and found himself in legal trouble. Due to his legal trouble, Jason was forced to obtain his GED as a condition of his probation, which he did.

Sonya: While each of the participants of this study is unique, Sonya may be the biggest surprise of them all. This participant is a 77-year-old Caucasian female who grew up in a tough Midwest city. At the age of 17, she dropped out of high school to pursue an academic career at Stanford University in Berlin, Germany. Sonya describes how during her junior year of high school she took correspondence courses to graduate early but fell short due to not having the necessary physical education credits to graduate. Her voice reflects anger as she refers to her principal as a "complete ass." Sonya talks about how disappointed she felt and decided to drop out. However, this was not the only reason she dropped out of high school.

After completing the interviews, we used the following data analysis strategy. First, we transcribed each telephone interview into a Word document to combine with the recorded interview data. Once all interviews were transcribed, we used the qualitative analysis program Dedoose to begin coding the data collected. According to Saldana (as cited in Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014), there are two major stages of coding, First Cycle and Second Cycle. Each of these stages can employ a variety of methods. With this understanding of cycle coding, we carefully perused the interview syntax to obtain analogous keywords, and phrases used by the interviewees began to emerge.

## Microsystem

Family. Family, as depicted by societal norms, is usually comprised of parents and the children they are rearing (Powell, 2017). This definition has evolved over the years, as the nuclear family is forever changing. In this study, each of the four participants were raised in a single parent home. The two male participants, Jason and Shaun, were raised by their mothers only and neither participant's father was involved in his life. Kelli's and Sonya's, the two female participants, fathers were involved in their rearing to some extent. In the case of Sonya, her parents divorced when she was 12 years old, while Kelli's parents never divorced; however, they separated at a very critical period in her life. Kelli, Shaun, and Sonya all had older and younger siblings with whom they were very close while growing up.

Parents. What was found in the data is three out of four of the participants were raised in completely single parent homes led by the mothers while one participant lived with both parents until the age of 12 when her parents divorced. In analyzing the data associated with women and their parents, it was revealed that both of the women participants had a strained relationship with their mothers and that their mothers were directly responsible for their dropping out. The two male participants seemingly had a good relationship with their mothers. However, unlike their female counterparts, they did not have a relationship with their fathers before the age of 18. Jason did not know his father at all, nor does he know that side of his family. According to Shaun, "I knew of my father after his death, through

family members on his side." He goes on to state his father was an imam at a mosque.

Peer Group. For this study, a peer group is considered both a social and a primary group of people who have similar interests, age, background, or social status (Ellis, Dumas, Mahdy, & Wolfe, 2012). Within these groups, individuals tend to influence a person's beliefs and behaviors (Ellis et al., 2012). In this study, the participants identified as individuals with friends. Each participant talked about being his or her own person and not being influenced by friends, whom they considered associates. The participants spoke about making life-altering decisions without consulting with their associates/ friends. Each participant's actions and statements differ from the definition of a peer group.

Community. Loosely defined, community can be described as the geographical area in which a person lives. In addition to the geographical location, people, places, and things make up the community. All the participants describe their community as low-to-middle income with not much to do. Each participant speaks about the lack of activities for children not interested in athletics or the lack of activities for children interested in learning outside of school hours. Shaun saw his community as being those who looked like him and who were the low-income families while those who did not look like him were the middle-income families. He believes, regardless of the labels, that they all were experiencing some form of poverty. Kelli's view of community differs from the other participants' from an exposure point of view. Growing up as a Haitian American, her sense of community was centered around her family, which she had at an early age while living with her aunt. She talked about knowing other children and families in the area but was not allowed to go out and play with them. Kelli remembers most of her interaction with her community centered around attending church. According to Jason, his community became smaller when he dropped out of school. While in school his community was broad and included a vast array of people from different backgrounds. Once he dropped out of school and moved out on his own, that vast array of people became much more concentrated. It is at this time he became fully engulfed with the negative aspects of his community. For example, he was drinking, selling drugs, and robbing people. Sonya describes her community a little differently than the other participants. She saw her community as diverse and socially structured. Sonya believed the social structure was based on respect and not race, religion, ethnicity, or socio-economic status.

School. While the participants attended schools in various parts of urban areas in the United States, they each talked about the lack of school support. Each participant describes feeling isolated at times. Shaun cannot remember visiting a guidance counselor to strategize about his future while Kelli talks about having feelings of disconnect. She states she did not have much in common with her peers and those she did hang around were nothing but trouble. Then, there is Jason, who had a simple, emphatic one-word response, which was "no." Jason believed his strongest social support was his first long-term relationship.

## Mesosystem

Interrelationships. At first glance this researcher viewed the data obtained as showing no or minimum interrelationships; however, after greater analysis, relationships came in different forms. These interrelationships can be viewed as positive or negative, cordial or adversarial. The data obtained show that each participant's parents did not have a positive relationship with their student's teachers. The interrelationship described by the participants was that of addressing negative behaviors versus attending positive events being held at the school. None of the parents of the participants attended "Back to School Nights" or other things of that nature. This experience could also be said for the interrelationship with their children's peers.

The experience of having a very minimal relationship with their children's peers is true for all the participants except Kelli. Kelli reports that her mom allowed the "bad" neighborhood kids to hang at their house. During our interview, Kelli acknowledges that her mother did not like the kids she was hanging with and believed they were trouble but did nothing to stop the interaction. Jason's story is like that of Kelli's. Each was hanging around the "wrong" crowd, which caused them to get into some trouble. Jason talks about moving out at age 15 and getting his own place. He admits participating in illegal activity to support himself and his girlfriend.

## Exosystem

Indirect forces. For the participants in this study, the indirect forces are numerous. These indirect forces stem from the lack of family-school, school-community, family-community types of relationships. However, the lack of these relationships is not evident with all the participants. The data show that indirect forces play a major role in the decision-making of these participants. For example, while Shaun and his family had strong ties in the community, he did not know his father nor his father's side of the family until the father passed away when Shaun was an adult. Shaun states that he learned that his father was an imam in the Nation of Islam, established several mosques, and was extremely intelligent with a photographic memory. This experience is very different from Kelli's. Her interview revealed a sense of loneliness, once her home life became unstable. As a child of immigrants, the family-community relationship was important; however, the community was that of other Haitian immigrants her parents knew prior to migrating to the United States. Kelli spoke of how her mother would rather work than volunteer at her school. She states the order of importance for her mother was her job, her boyfriends, putting on fronts, and then her children, which was the same for Jason and Sonya. Jason's story is very similar to Shaun's, while Sonya's is very similar to Kelli's. Sonya, like Kelli. had both parents involved her life, but neither of them had any connection to a family-school relationship. She states her mother was

very unstable emotionally and her father was a traveling salesman who lived in a different part of the state. Jason's mother knew very little English; therefore, she stayed away from school.

### Macrosystem

Ideological and organizational patterns. Here the data show a distinct difference between male and female acceptance of cultural values and societal laws. Shaun, an African American male, and Jason, a Filipino American male, do not remember any sense of cultural values being instilled in them while growing up. At the same time, they adapted to the societal laws of the streets. While Kelli, a Haitian American female, and Sonya, a Caucasian American, remember having cultural values pounded into them daily. They also mentioned how they were given an understanding of societal laws and how they may change dependent upon community makeup.

### Chronosystem

Life changes. The data show that despite dropping out of high school, each participant has achieved success, according to societal norms. For example, Shaun has a master's degree and works with special needs children in an urban school district. Jason works as a software engineer at Microsoft. He describes most of his colleagues as Ivy League educated, which makes him somewhat of an outsider. Sonya dropped out of high school to enroll early into Stanford. Although she did not graduate from Stanford or another college, she went on to own a very successful secretarial services business. Kelli, despite having two children by the age of 18, went on to earn her college degree and works at a state university on the east coast. Also, Kelli has had only one job for the past 20 years, which speaks to her desire for stability in contrast to her upbringing.

## Discussion

This study offered an in-depth view of the lived experiences and understanding of former gifted urban high school dropouts. Emerging from a theoretical framework based in Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1996) human ecology theory, one research question was used to guide the study: How do gifted urban high school dropouts, from an ecological systems theory perspective, decide to drop out of high school? A qualitative case study analysis was conducted using a conceptual framework.

The results of this study confirmed prior research regarding why and how high school students choose to drop out from a microsystems perspective. Also, this study has confirmed why there is a lack of data associated with the remaining human ecology theory subsystems. Span and Rivers (2012) theorized boredom, lack of parental and guardian engagement, and a variety of psychosocial factors contribute to why and how high school students choose to drop out. Some of the psychosocial factors are, but are not limited to, motivation and personality (Span & Rivers, 2012). This research provided an understanding as to why and how former gifted urban high school students chose to drop out.

The microsystem of the ecological systems theory is shaped by the activities and interactions in the person's immediate surroundings: parents, school, friends, etc. (Fehler-Cabral & Campbell, 2013). Each participant had some family discord, whether caused by the relationships in the home or the lack of relationships outside the home. For example, Jason and Shaun did not have a male role model in their lives and did not feel as though they fit in at school. This experience differs from that of Kelli and Sonya, who had both of their parents involved in their lives; however, this did not prevent dysfunction and chaos.

Minimum family participation is directly tied to the mesosystem. The mesosystem of the ecological systems theory is shaped by relationships among the entities involved in the child's microsystem (Ahlin & Lobo Antunes, 2015). The lack of meaningful interaction by the parents with the school of their children may have played a direct role in the decision of the participants to drop out.

The exo, meso, macro, and chronosystems of this study went mostly unanswered, although the participants were asked direct, open-ended questions associated with these subsystems, which presented itself as an unintended limitation of this study. Several reasons may account for this lack of data. At-risk youth, adolescent egocentrism, and epistemic reasoning are a few realities associated with this lack of data (Abbate, Boca, & Gendolla, 2016; Apostu, 2017). While the participants were asked open-ended questions in an attempt to answer the research question, it was hoped that their responses would develop into themes for each of the subsystems, not just the microsystem. Based on the analysis of the data collected it appears that the lack of findings, as they would relate to the remaining four subsystems, may be the results of what is commonly known as adolescent and/or adult egocentrism (Piaget, 1973).

Egocentrism is a term first introduced and defined by Jean Piaget in the mid-1920s, which was later interpreted and extended by Eklind (Martin & Sokol, 2011). Piaget (1973) defines egocentrism as the inability of one to differentiate self from non-self. Galanaki (2012) posits "egocentrism is a differentiation failure between the subjective and the objective, a negative by-product of any emergent cognitive systems" (p. 457). While the concept of adolescent egocentrism began to draw the attention of researchers and psychologists in the mid to late 1970s (Cohn et al., 1988), it is here that this researcher sought an understanding as to why the responses provided by the participants of this study were as such.

Research by Enright, Lapsley, and Shukla (as cited in Krcmar, van der Meer, & Cingel, 2015) defined adolescent egocentrism as one being self-centered and only concerned with addressing his or her own needs. At the same time, the authors theorized that adolescent egocentrism is made up of two distinct concepts: imaginary audience and personal fable ideation. While Rai, Mitchell, Kadar, and Mackenzie (2016) posited the additional concepts of the illusion of transparency, simulation theory of mind, audience ideation and personal fable exist during adolescence.

According to Rai et al. (2016), the illusion of transparency is a concept where there is a tendency for individuals to have the belief that their lived experiences are more transparent to others than the actual case. This concept, while nurtured during adolescence, rears itself in adulthood as well, more specifically in the manner of how adults overvalue the ability of others to detect their varying feelings and emotions (Savitsky & Gilovich, 2003). Endo (2007) posits that adults misjudge how people can discern their preferences during face-to-face communication while Kruger, Epley, Parker, and Ng (2005) theorized that regarding written communication, adults misjudge their counterpart's ability to discern humor, sarcasm, sadness, and anger over email. Therefore, the participants in our study may have believed, while responding to the questions, that we may have been able to infer their true meaning behind their responses.

How does one develop the illusion of transparency? According to Artar (2007) this is accomplished through the concept of simulation theory of mind, namely the mind is a concept defined as one's own cognitive ability to understand others as intentional agents. Thus, simulation theory of mind is one's ability to mirror on the contents of not only one's own mind but that of others' minds as well (Artar, 2007). Based on our research, it appears the participants of this study should have been able to mirror the contents of our minds when the various questions were posed. Better, they should have been able to understand our intentions when posed with the questions. This did not happen, as the participants, when responding to questions regarding other subsystems, continually inferred to their microsystem. Both of these concepts might offer an explanation as to the difficulty participants had in identifying factors outside their own microsystem associated with the decision to drop out of high school.

Adult egocentrism mirrors that of adolescent egocentrism even though it is believed adults typically can overcome egocentrism (Thomas & Jacoby, 2013). Although it was believed that the participants of this study would be able to differentiate their responses to adequately answer each question, as they relate to the specific subsystem, this was not the case. According to McDonald and Stuart-Hamilton (2003) the various facets, emotional and social self-centeredness, contributed to their deviated responses, thus creating a lack of data.

## Conclusion

As parents, scholars, teachers, policymakers, and community leaders, we all can do more to recognize and respond to the needs of all at-risk youth regardless of their documented or perceived academic abilities. This study explored how four former gifted urban high school dropouts decided to drop out of school. The four themes that surfaced throughout our interviews with these four participants were family discord, school not interesting, no role model, and minimum family participation. It is salient, from a microsystem perspective, that former gifted urban high school dropouts are faced with the same challenges as students not deemed gifted. Also, it is clear that the participants had a difficult time explaining how the various subsystems, other than the microsystem, played a role in their decisions to drop out. Although we attempted to gain an understanding of the decision-making process from all aspects of the human ecology system, the data obtained from the participants focused primarily on the microsystem.

The results of this case study along with the increasing evidence from prior and current research on high school dropouts indicate there are many challenges that still need to be addressed regarding our understanding of high school dropouts. It is important that no student is ignored or deemed "all right" or "fine" because the student has high cognitive ability. Through meaningful collaborations between parents, educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders, strategies can be developed to better assist gifted high school students at risk for dropping out of school. Moreover, such efforts can promote awareness and understanding that dropping out of school is not endemic to those with less intelligence and/or cognitive skills.

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