2013

Analysis Of Stakeholder Expectations Of Effective Indiana High Schools

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ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS OF EFFECTIVE INDIANA HIGH SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Educational Leadership

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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December 2013

Keywords: School, effectiveness, quality, stakeholder, expectations

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze expectations and perceptions from various groups concerning qualities of effective high schools. This study examined commonalities among groups of people in terms of their relationship to high schools. Stakeholders from Indiana surveyed during this study included: high school parents, high school educators, and state-level lawmakers, both senators and representatives. A total of 329 respondents participated in the study. After an extensive literature review of high school outcomes, characteristics, and purposes, I developed the Quality School Survey to collect the needed data. The instrument gathered data by asking respondents to indicate the level of importance on a four-point scale regarding multiple statements about high schools. The survey also presented the respondents with a list of 12 aspects of high schools and asked them to identify the top three priorities within that list. The data were collected and descriptive statistics were run to describe the level of importance placed on certain items by the overall sample and also the individual stakeholder groups. Frequency of selection within the prioritizing section was also described for the individual groups as well. Finally the data were put through an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine significant difference between the groups. The variation among the expectations of the different stakeholder groups was tested at the alpha level of .01. Based on the results and significant findings of the data analysis of the research, the following conclusions were drawn. There was an alignment between groups and a high level of expectation with regards to the teaching of basic skills, the teaching of problem-solving skills, the development of a safe

environment, the promotion of work ethic, the development of citizenship, and community responsibility. Also, there was significant difference among groups and a high level of expectation with regards to preparing students for skilled employment upon graduation, using a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate individual learning styles, and developing social skills within students. An alignment and a low level of importance was placed on high schools being small in size to ensure a sense of belonging. Lawmakers had a significantly lower expectation level than parents with regards to developing social skills within students and ensuring emotional health of students. Lawmakers had a significantly lower expectation level than educators when it came to positive home–school relationships, having a vision and mission statement to guide decision-making, and teaching an appreciation of the arts within high schools. The highest priority among all groups when asked to select three from the list was promotion of work ethic within high school students. Finally, the lowest priority among all groups when asked to select three from the list was that the high school should have high standardized test scores.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Great appreciation is expressed to several individuals who have substantially supported me in the completion of this research project. First, my deepest gratitude is held for my exceptional wife, Melinda, who has shown me more love and support than I probably deserve. She is the rock who motivates and always shows belief in me. Without her sacrifice, this research study would not have been possible. I would also like to acknowledge our wonderful children, Meredith, Mallory, and Max, who have been understanding and supportive of me throughout this project.

Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Colleen Moran, Superintendent of North Montgomery Schools. Dr. Moran has been a motivating force in the completion of this study. I would like to thank her for believing in me and pushing me to extend my boundaries of leadership knowledge and skills. In addition, gratitude is extended to my fellow building-level administrators, Michael Cox and Matt Merica, who showed patience and support of me throughout my pursuit of the Ph.D. I would also like to thank the North Montgomery School Board, office staff, other administrators, and teachers who supported me through this process.

I am truly indebted to my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Terry McDaniel. His expertise, encouragement, and advice were always well placed when needed the most. Additionally, great thanks go to the other members of my committee: Dr. Steve Gruenert and Dr. Ryan Donlan. Both provided valuable insight to the project. I would also like to thank Dr. Eric Hampton of Indiana State University as well for his invaluable assistance with the statistics

used for this study. In addition I would like to acknowledge Mrs. Judith Barnes, formerly of Indiana State University, for her assistance with the formatting and editing necessary for this research study.

Finally I owe an extreme debt of gratitude to my parents, Carl and Mary Lou Miller. Their lifelong contribution and belief in education shaped the person I am today. I would not have strived and pursued these new horizons without the loving support of my parents. It is with great love that I say, “thank you” to my mom and dad.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Defining High School Effectiveness

What qualities are present in an effective high school? The answer concerning high school effectiveness is a complex issue. Because of this complexity, accountability of high schools is difficult to establish and define, yet extremely important. Does a test score indicate effectiveness of a high school and, for that matter, student learning or the level of instruction? Ravitch (2010) stated,

> In the 1990s, ACCOUNTABILITY became the watchword of public officials and business leaders. Governors, corporate executives, the first Bush administration, and the Clinton administration agreed: They wanted measurable results; they wanted to know that the tax dollars invested in public education were getting a good return. (p. 149)

The importance of accountability of high school quality was furthered when Daniels, Bizar, and Zemelman (2001) wrote,

> The emerging indictment of high schools in today's media is both familiar and ubiquitous: achievement test scores are disappointing, dropout rates are soaring, misbehavior is rampant, and the widening gap between the official curriculum and the actual workings of our society is both costly and worrisome. (p. 2)

Armstrong (2006) addressed the current state of accountability by writing,

> These are difficult times for educators who believe that learning is worth pursuing for its own sake and that the chief purpose of school is the nurturing of students as whole human beings. Higher test scores seem to be the order of the day. (p. 7)

Rothstein, Jacobsen, and Wilder further addressed the problem associated with high school quality and accountability. Rothstein et al. (2008) began by studying historical expectations or goals of education, and they outlined eight broad categories.

> We should hold schools and other institutions of youth development accountable: basic academic knowledge and skills, critical thinking and problem solving, appreciation of the arts and literature, preparing for skilled employment, social skills and work ethic, citizenship and community responsibility, physical health, and emotional health. (Rothstein et al., 2008, p. 14)

Regarding the eight categories, Rothstein et al. (2008) asserted, "If these are, indeed, the outcomes that Americans have wanted and still want from our schools and other youth institutions, then we must devise ways of holding those institutions accountable for producing all of them in a balanced fashion" (p. 14).

With regard to accountability, test scores, and essential qualities of schools, Kohn (2000) wrote, "Test scores offer a quick-and-easy—although, as we'll see, by no means accurate—way to chart progress." Kohn went on to address pubic interest in test results and stated,

> Any aspect of learning (or life) that appears in numerical form seems reassuringly scientific; if the numbers are getting larger over time, we must be making progress. Concepts such as intrinsic motivation and intellectual exploration are difficult for some minds to grasp, whereas test scores, like sales figures or votes, can be calculated and tracked and used to define success and failure. (p. 3)

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze expectations and perceptions from various groups concerning qualities of effective high schools. This study examined commonalities between groups of people in terms of their relationship to high schools. This study addressed several similar questions: Can the analysis of stakeholder expectations of a high school be used to formulate criteria for effective high schools? Will an analysis between stakeholders of high schools show significant differences in terms of what is expected of effective high schools? Does a level of congruence exist between stakeholder expectations of characteristics within an effective high school? Can a congruence of values and expectations be used to evaluate the success of a high school?

Examining the expectations and perceptions of stakeholders associated with high schools identified keys to high school effectiveness in terms of student achievement. This study provides insight, which when used by school personnel as well as parents and community members leads improvement efforts with regard to high school effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

How is effectiveness measured within a high school? To answer that question, expectations of high schools must be established. All stakeholders associated with the high school must share those expectations. Only after those expectations are agreed upon, a framework for evaluating and assessing a high school's attainment of those expectations can be formed and implemented. The current system of federal and state accountability with regard to high school effectiveness only speaks to a limited or narrowed focus of expectations. The wide range of high school objectives presents a problem of judging the effectiveness of high schools in meeting the expectations of stakeholders. By studying what people expect of high schools,

educators can widen the focus of the objectives. This approach to expectations may not lead to quick and easy test scores but may lead to a wider scope of student outcomes and objectives within high schools.

Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics of an effective high school as identified by stakeholder groups?
2. What characteristics are most important in the beliefs of stakeholders to the effectiveness of a high school?
3. Are there differences in expectations and perceptions among stakeholder groups concerning the effectiveness of high schools?

Definitions

The following terms are defined for clarification and understanding this study:

High school. For the purpose of this study, a high school encompasses those schools that are configured for Grades 9 - 12.

Stakeholder. For the purpose of this study, a stakeholder is considered anyone who has an interest in the school. This could include but is not limited to students, parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, and business owners.

Limitations

Generalizations from the study were limited.

1. The schools located in the population of this study are representative of high schools containing Grades 9 - 12.
2. Surveys presented to stakeholders within high schools are a sample of all stakeholders. Stakeholder participation is voluntary and could skew the data received.

Delimitations

1. Surveys were sent to stakeholder groups consisting of parents, educators, and lawmakers.
2. Stakeholders were only surveyed from the state of Indiana.

Summary

This study is organized into five chapters. In Chapter 1, the topic was examined with an introduction, purpose of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, definitions, and limitations. Chapter 2 contains an extensive literature review focused on the purpose of secondary schools including a brief history of schooling and the development of goals of education. The literature review also examined different perspectives with regard to qualities of effective schools and how schools are judged leading to emerging characteristics. Chapter 3 describes the research design and the methodology to be utilized within the study. Data collection and data analysis plans are also discussed within Chapter 3. Chapters 4 and 5 present the analysis of data as well as conclusions regarding the qualities of effective high schools. The conclusions speak to the priorities of expectations of effective high schools from stakeholders involved with this study. The conclusions lead to a common understanding and better focus for high school leaders as school design decisions are made.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

History

In order to begin a study centered on expectations of qualities within effective high schools, a background of the purposes of high school is essential. Elements from this background have shaped the expectations of the current stakeholders with regards to high schools. The expectations of high schools throughout history have played a role in the current beliefs of stakeholders—a premise that was vital to this study.

The idea of the American school began with Thomas Jefferson. Under his plan for Virginia in 1782, the "state would cover the expense for three years for those unable to pay tuition" (Bracey, 2009, p. 17). Jefferson believed schooling existed for one goal: to "sustain democratic government" (Bracey, 2009, p. 18).

Horace Mann was another primary figure in the design and purpose of the educational system. In the middle of the 19th century, he expanded on Jefferson's idea of education by including not only the ability to make wise decisions but also the need to have education make people "morally fit" (Bracey, 2009, p. 19).

By the late 1800s, there were questions about the purpose of the American high school. In order to address the issue, the National Education Association (NEA) appointed a Committee of Ten in 1892 (Weidner, 2004). The primary goal of this committee was to establish a standard

curriculum that addressed both college-bound students as well as students who would end their education at the high school level. The overall outcome of the Committee of Ten was the development of the goal of high school as "preparing all students to do well in life, contributing to their own well-being and society's good, and to prepare some students for college" (Weidner, 2004, para. 3).

The 1900s saw a new configuration to the outcomes of high schools and further shaped expectations of stakeholders. In 1918, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education issued the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education. These principles included

1. Health: High schools should "encourage good health habits, give health instruction, and provide physical activities."
2. Command of Fundamental Processes: These processes consist of "writing, reading oral and written expression, and math."
3. Worthy Home Membership: High schools should develop qualities that enable an individual to be a "worthy member of a family."
4. Vocation: This principle called for a high school student to understand himself or herself and a "variety of careers so that the student can choose the most suitable career."
5. Civic Education: A high school student should "gain knowledge of social organizations and a commitment to civic morality" in order to accomplish the objective of developing "an awareness and concern for one's own community."
6. Worthy Use of Leisure: This principle was centered on the idea that "education should give the student the skills to enrich his/her body, mind, spirit, and personality

in his/her leisure." Included in this principle was the idea that the high school "should also provide appropriate recreation."

7. Ethical Character: High schools should instill within the student "the notion of personal responsibility and initiative." (Scherer, 2004, paras. 1-7)

In 1938, the NEA assembled an Education Policies Commission in order to reexamine the purposes of American education. The commission established four basic groups of objectives for public education. Those groups included "self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency, and civic responsibility" (Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2007, p. 36). The report from the committee not only focused on basic math and literacy as goals of schooling but also stated that educators develop "students' morality, justice and fair dealings, honesty, truthfulness, maintenance of group understandings, proper respect for authority, tolerance and respect for others, habits of cooperation, and work habits such as industry and self-control, along with endurance and physical strength" (Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2007, p. 36).

The next major report on public education that shaped expectations of high schools was issued in 1983 under the title *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This report was submitted by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which had been convened by Secretary of Education, Terrel Bell. Within this report many strong statements were made about the state of public education.

> Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. . . . The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. . . . If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational

> performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5)

At the time "the report was an immediate sensation. Its conclusions were alarming, and its language was blunt to the point of being incendiary" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 24).

An additional report about the status of education in the United States was written in 1991 and then published in 1993 by the Sandia National Laboratories. This report did not feed the idea of a crisis in education with all public schools like other reports that had been previously published. In the preface of the report it stated,

> Our most detailed analyses to date have focused on popular measures used to discuss the status of education in America. Where feasible, we looked at the data over time to put the performance of the current system in proper perspective. To our surprise, on nearly every measure we found steady or slightly improving trends (Carson, Huelskamp, & Woodall, 1993, p. 259).

This report (often referred to as the *Sandia Report*) analyzed historical performance of schools in terms of drop out/retention rates, standardized test results, college and university data, expenditure for education, international comparisons of proficiency, and status of educators (Carson et al., 1993). At the end of each section of analysis the authors offered perspectives outlining their findings in terms of the illustrated data. These areas addressed are all critical in the development of expectations of high schools and the outcomes desired.

In terms of dropout/retention rates the *Sandia Report* concluded,

> The U.S. on-time high school completion rate has been steady for over 20 years. The percentage of young adults with a high school diploma of GED is approaching 90%. The "fine structure" indicates that the most significant dropout problems are among disadvantaged urban and rural students. Immigration may mask the true dropout rate picture. (Carson et al., 1993, p. 265)

The Sandia Report offered the following conclusions with regards to standardized tests.

> Declining average SAT results underscore that a more diverse mix of students is taking the test. Performance on standardized tests is steady or improving. Average performance of minority and urban students remains low despite improvements over the past 20 years. (Carson et al., 1993, p. 272)

Addressing the college and university data, the Sandia Report stated,

> Entrance and completion rates are increasing for traditional students. The college population is increasingly more diverse: age, gender, race/ethnicity. The supply of U.S. graduates with technical bachelor's degrees generally increased during the 1980s. The technical degree attainment for females and racial/ethnic minorities remains considerably below that of White males. (Carson et al., 1993, p. 278)

Conclusions of the Sandia Report in terms of expenditures for education included,

> The lack or readily available budget data at the national level prohibits precise determination of where the nation's increasing investment is going. Although education budgets have increased over 30% in constant dollars since 1976, spending on "regular" education has remained steady. Much of the increase in expenditures over the past two decades has been for special education. Roughly 25-30% of the current expenditures are directed to 10% of the students. Compared to other industrialized nations, the U.S.

> investment in education is average when adjusted for purchasing power. (Carson et al., 1993, p. 282)

For the topic of international comparisons, the Sandia Report concluded, "Average performance of U.S. students on international standardized tests remains low. Relative to other industrialized countries, U.S. technical and non-technical completion rates are unsurpassed at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Comparisons of technical workforces reflect well on U.S. education" (Carson et al., 1993, p. 288).

The Sandia Report also studied the status of educators and concluded,

> Direct measures of teacher status are difficult to obtain. Indirect measures (interviews, salary comparisons, opinion polls, etc.) indicate the status of elementary and secondary education professionals is quite low. The combination of low status and lack of confidence from the public raises the specter of a downward spiral in future educational quality. (Carson et al., 1993, p. 291)

In addition to looking at educational data, the Sandia Report also analyzed workforce skills and information that could be used to make connections to educations. The report concluded,

> Recent surveys indicate that business is far more concerned with employees' personal and social skills than academic skills. Nearly 90% of business training dollars are spent on college-educated and skilled employees. Japan, Germany, and other nations invest far more in worker training that the United States. Skill levels are projected to increase slowly, not dramatically, during the nineties; and the rate of increase is decelerating. (Carson et al., 1993, p. 297)

In the latter part of the 1900s, lawmaker influence became a role in expectations for high schools and spoke to the importance of including them in this study. Ravitch (2010) spoke to the public view of schools and the expectations of American leaders.

> In the 1990s, accountability became the watchword of public officials and business leaders. Governors, corporate executives, the first Bush administration, and the Clinton administration agreed: They wanted measureable results; they wanted to know that the tax dollars invested in public education were getting a good return. (Ravitch, 2010, p. 149)

As a result of the desire for increased accountability, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed into law in 2001. "Democrats and Republicans alike agreed on the importance of accountability for teachers, principals, and schools, especially if the students were not achieving" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 150). The accountability came in the form of testing: "NCLB opened a new era of testing and accountability in American public schools" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 150). The NCLB Act "contained one goal: All children would be 'proficient' in reading and math by 2014. The goal was not merely a devoutly desired wish, but a federal mandate, with real consequences for schools whose students did not meet it" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 150).

Jones (2006) offered the following perspective on the background of expectations of school effectiveness:

> Sometimes called outcome-based education or results-based accountability, the current model has come about in the last twenty years as a part of a welcome shift in thinking from a strictly "input" model. Schools had been evaluated primarily on the basis of things like time-on-task, library resources, prescribed approaches to teaching, and so forth. What was not taken into account was student learning. Schools could be

> considered fine if they were doing the "right things," whether or not those things led to successful learning for students. And it didn't seem to matter if some kids did well and others did not. Schools were, and still are, clearly not the force of equity and equal opportunity we believe them to be. And so, the thinking went, let's go beyond talking about equal opportunity—let's insist on equal results. No "excuses" for less than that would be accepted. (p. 3)

With the current spotlight on school accountability and effectiveness, public expectations become the focus of this study. With all stakeholders concerned with this topic, it is interesting to note, "our current accountability approach was created without much of a public discussion about how it would do this" (Jones, 2006, p. 2).

Goodlad (1979) addressed the goals of public education. The book contained a list of 12 goals for schooling in the United States (Goodlad, 1979). This work presented another alignment of school expectations that have affected the anticipated outcomes by stakeholders essential to this study.

According to Goodlad (1979), Goal 1 stated, "mastery of basic skills or fundamental processes" (p. 46), included the following subcategories:

> Develop the ability to acquire ideas through reading and listening, to communicate ideas through writing and speaking, to understand and utilize mathematical concepts, to utilize available sources of information, and to read, write, and handle basic arithmetical operations. (p. 46)

Goal 2 was entitled "career education-vocational education" (Goodlad, 1979, p. 46) and contained the following subcategories:

> Develop the ability to select an occupation that will be personally satisfying and suitable to one's skills and interests, salable skills and specialized knowledge that will prepare one to become economically independent, attitudes and habits (such as pride in good workmanship) that will make the worker a productive participant in economic life. (p. 46)

Goal 3 was labeled as intellectual development. The subcategories of this goal included

> develop the ability to think rationally; that is, thinking and problem-solving skills, use of reasoning and the application of principles of logic, and skill in using different modes of inquiry. Develop the ability to make use of knowledge sources utilizing technology to gain access to needed information. (Goodlad, 1979, p. 47)

Goal 4 was entitled enculturation. The subcategories of goal four included

> develop insight into the values and characteristics of the civilization of which one is a member. Develop awareness of one's historical heritages—the literary, aesthetic, and scientific traditions of the past—and familiarity with the ideas that have inspired and influenced mankind. (Goodlad, 1979, p. 47)

Goal 5 was stated as interpersonal relations. The subcategories linked with this goal included "develop knowledge of opposing value systems and their influence on the individual and society. Develop an understanding of how members of a family function under different family patterns. Develop skill in communicating effectively in groups" (Goodlad, 1979, p. 48). Goal 6 was entitled autonomy. The subcategories of this goal included

> develop a positive attitude towards learning., a skill in selecting personal learning goals, a skill in coping with and accepting continuing change, a skill in making decisions with purpose, the ability to plan and organize the environment in order to realize one's goals,

and the willingness to accept responsibility for and consequences of one's own decisions. (Goodlad, 1979, pp. 48-49)

Goal 7 was labeled citizenship. The subcategories for this goal included

Develop a sense of historical perspective, a knowledge of the basic workings of the government, a commitment to the values of liberty, government by the consent of the governed, representational government, and responsibility for the welfare of all, and to develop the ability to think productively about the improvement of society. (Goodlad, 1979, p. 49)

Goal 8 was entitled, creativity and aesthetic perception and included the following subcategories

develop the ability to motivate oneself, to deal with new problems in original ways, the ability to be sensitive to problems and tolerant of new ideas, the ability to be flexible, to redefine skills, and to see an object from different points of view, and the ability to enjoy and be willing to experience the act of creation. (Goodlad, 1979, p. 50)

Goal 9 was stated as self-concept and included the following subcategories:

develop the ability to search for meaning in one's activities, the self-confidence needed for confronting one's self, the ability to live with one's limitations and strengths, and both general knowledge and interest in other human beings as a means of knowing oneself. (Goodlad, 1979, p. 50)

Goal 10 was entitled emotional and physical well-being and contained the following subcategories:

Develop the willingness to receive new impressions and to expand affective sensitivity, the competence and skills for continuous adjustment and emotional stability, and the ability to control or release the emotions according to one's values. Develop positive

> attitudes and habits towards health and physical fitness. Develop physical fitness and psychomotor skills. (Goodlad, 1979, p. 51)

Goal 11 was labeled moral and ethical character and included the following subcategories:

> Develop the judgment to evaluate events and phenomena as good and evil, a commitment to truth and values, the ability to utilize values in determining choices, and to develop moral integrity along with understanding of the necessity for moral conduct. (Goodlad, 1979, p. 51)

Goal 12 was entitled self-realization and contained the following subcategories: "Develop an appreciation of the idea that there are many ways to be a good human being. Develop a better self. Contribute to the development of a better society" (Goodlad, 1979, p. 52).

When further examining the goals and expectations related to this study of schools over time, "society has moved the goal posts on schools and imposed upon them new measures of performance" (Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, 2008, p. 51). The authors expanded on that thought by stating, "In essence, the public schools have been required to do the equivalent of rebuilding an airplane in mid-flight—something almost no private enterprise has been able to do" (Christensen et al., 2008, pp. 51-52).

Christensen et al. (2008) described four *jobs* of schools over the history of our nation. The first job was entitled "preserve the democracy and inculcate democratic values" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 52). Even though the topic of education or schools is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, there were some early thinkers on the role schools should play in U.S. society. For those thinkers,

> preserving the newly created democracy was a paramount goal and a constant worry. They say the schools as a way to meet that goal. Basic education needed to be universal,

> they reasoned, so that all citizens could participate in the democracy. Schools needed to teach what we think of today as the basics—reading, writing, and arithmetic. They also needed to instill sound morals in students, as well as civics lessons on how the republic functioned—which they could do by teaching Greek, Roman, European, and American history. And schools needed to serve as the melting pot for children from different backgrounds by teaching them social norms and assimilating them into a common American culture. By doing this, these thinkers hoped that schools could help all citizens become functioning, self-governing members of the republic. (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 52)

The second job of schools described by Christensen et al. (2008) over the history of the United States was explained as being able to "provide something for every student" (p. 53). When illustrating this job the authors stated,

> In the 1890s and early 1900s, competition with a fast-rising industrial Germany constituted a minicrisis; Americans responded in the early 20th century by handing schools a new job: prepare everyone for vocations. The goal was to produce a sound workforce for jobs ranging from administrative functions to technically demanding manufacturing positions so that America could compete with Germany. The old job of preparing the next generation to lead and participate in democracy did not go away; society asked schools simply to perform both jobs. To do this new job, the school systems needed to extend high school to everyone. (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 53)

The third job of American schools over history described by Christensen et al. (2008) was to "keep America competitive" (p. 58). Describing this job the authors stated,

> Beginning in the 1960s, a host of Japanese companies began disrupting their U.S. counterparts. The United States questioned its competiveness. By 1980, it began to feel the bite of disruption as company after company downsized. The nation turned to its schools for answers. This time, however, Americans noticed something different: In comparison to other countries, U.S. students were not performing as well as measured by certain standardized tests. This observation sparked society to change schools' job again: The axis on which schools were judged became improvement in average test scores. Against this backdrop, the public's confidence in its nation's schools declined. (Christensen et al., 2008, pp. 58-59)

The fourth and most recent job of schools as outlined by Christensen et al. (2008) was the idea to "eliminate poverty" (p. 62). Describing this job the authors stated,

> The No Child Left Behind Act not only federally cemented average test scores as the primary metric for performance improvement, but it also arguably once again shifted the goal posts. No longer can public schools simply raise the average test scores in their schools; instead, public schools must see to it that every child in every demographic improves his or her test scores. Now the performance measure for schools is the percentage of students who are proficient in core subjects. The essential motivation for asking schools to make sure all students are proficient in reading, math, and science is to eliminate poverty. (Christensen et al., 2008, pp. 62-63)

VanTassel-Baska (1998) addressed the focus of education. The case could be made that all of education should be about talent development, a view of schooling that focuses on the optimal, not the minimal, development of each student. Based on such an idea, many educational

institutions have reformed their practices using talent development ideas (VanTassel-Baska, 1998).

Emerging Characteristics

Many current publications have outlined the characteristics of effective schools. These characteristics offered from a wide variety of sources are vital to this study. The characteristics presented within this section shaped the nature of the data collection at the heart of this research. Emerging or repeated characteristics shaped the focus of statements of expectation within the survey of this study and therefore shaped the analyzed outcome and conclusions of this study.

Lezzotte and Snyder (2011) conducted extensive research related to the effectiveness of schools and the characteristics needed to achieve that success. These characteristics began the organization of survey construction and the nature of data collection for this study. According to Lezotte and Snyder (2011), seven correlates of effective schools are

1. High expectations for success: "Staff members believe that all students can and will obtain mastery of the intended curriculum and in their professional capacity to enable all students to achieve mastery" (p. 39).
2. Strong instructional leadership: "The principal acts as an instructional leader by persistently communicating the mission to the staff, students, parents, and larger community. The principal understands the principles of effective instruction and uses that knowledge in the management of the instructional program" (p. 51).
3. Clear and focused mission: "The staff develops a clearly articulated mission focusing on successful learning for all students. Through collaboration, the staff forms a shared understanding of and commitment to instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability" (p. 65).

4. Opportunity to learn/time on task: “Teachers manage instructional time to ensure that, for a high percentage of time, students are actively engaged in teacher-directed learning activities focused on the essential skills” (p. 75).
5. Frequent monitoring of student progress: “Student progress is monitored frequently using a variety of assessment procedures. Assessment results are used to improve individual student performance and to adapt the instructional program to meet student learning needs” (p. 91).
6. Safe and orderly environment: “An orderly, purposeful, and businesslike atmosphere free from the threat of physical and emotional harm exists. The school culture and climate are conducive to teaching and learning (p. 101).
7. Positive home-school relations: “Parents and other members of the community are familiar with the school’s mission, and the leadership provides a variety of opportunities for them to support the mission” (p. 115).

In the book *Grading Education: Getting Accountability Right*, Rothstein et al. (2008) identified eight outcomes outlined for schools that have been established over the past 250 years. These outcomes continue the focus of the desired characteristics for the current study. Those outcomes are

1. Basic academic knowledge and skills: basic skills in reading, writing, and math, and knowledge of science and history.
2. Critical thinking and problem solving: the ability to analyze information, apply ideas to new situations, and develop knowledge of computers.
3. Appreciation of the arts and literature: participation in and appreciation of musical, visual, and performing arts as well as a love of literature.

4. Preparation for skilled employment: workplace qualification for students not pursuing college education.
5. Social skills and work ethic: communication skills, personal responsibility, and the ability to get along with others from varied backgrounds.
6. Citizenship and community responsibility: public ethics; knowledge of how government works; and participation by voting, volunteering, and becoming active in community life.
7. Physical health: good habits of exercise and nutrition.
8. Emotional health: self-confidence, respect for others, and the ability to resist peer pressure to engage in irresponsible personal behavior. (p. 14)

The Coalition of Essential Schools (2011) offered 10 common principles that should be present in all schools and relate to this research study. These principles help young people learn to use their minds well; focusing on depth of knowledge over coverage of material; having goals that apply to all students; personalizing teaching and learning; practicing a student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach approach; emphasizing demonstration of mastery; communicating a tone of decency and trust; expressing a commitment to the entire school; dedicating resources to teaching and learning; and honoring and modeling democracy and equity.

Armstrong (2006) articulated the purpose of high school as preparing students for independent life in the real world. With that purpose in mind, he presented seven *developmentally appropriate* practices in high school: "small learning communities, theme-based magnet or charter schools, career academies, internships, entrepreneurial enterprises, apprenticeships, and democratic communities" (Armstrong, 2006, p. 141).

Kohn (1999) suggested that by itemizing what is wrong with our schools one can develop a plan for superior schools. Kohn (1999) stated,

> In place of superficial facts, we emphasize deep understanding. In place of fragmentation, we seek to integrate; we bring together skills, topics, and disciplines in a meaningful context. In place of student passivity and isolation, we value learning that is both active and interactive. (p. 131)

Daniels et al. (2001) offered "eleven key ingredients of good high schools" (p. 10). These ingredients furthered the description of characteristics used within this study. Those components included

1. Size: The high school is small—or feels small.
2. Climate: Every student is known, appreciated, and included in a diverse, collaborative community.
3. Voice and leadership: Both students and teachers exercise choice and make decisions in all elements of school life.
4. Teaching: Teachers collaborate with students to explore and employ a growing repertoire of instructional strategies.
5. Curriculum: With their teachers, young people engage in challenging inquiry into topics that matter.
6. Community experiences: Young people are engaged in the life of the community and the world of work.
7. Scheduling: The school day and calendar provide flexible and variable blocks of learning time.

8. Technology and materials: Contemporary technology and rich materials support students as thinkers, researchers, and authors.
9. Assessment: Teachers help students to monitor, evaluate, and guide their own thinking.
10. Professional development: Teachers are students of instruction, with many opportunities to learn and grow.
11. Relationships: The school works closely with parents, community organizations, and educational institutions (Daniels et al., 2001, pp. 10-11)

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP; 2004) also weighed in on school quality. The findings of secondary principals lent itself to the development of this study of expected characteristics of high schools. Their approach was from the practical perspective of offering seven "cornerstone strategies to improve student performance" within schools (NASSP, 2004, p. 6). Those seven cornerstones include

1. Establish the essential learning a student is required to master in order to graduate, and adjust the curriculum and teaching strategies to realize that goal.
2. Increase the quantity and improve the quality of interactions between students, teachers, and other school personnel by reducing the number of students for which any adult or group of adults is responsible.
3. Implement a comprehensive advisory program that ensures that each student has frequent and meaningful opportunities to plan and assess his or her academic and social progress with a faculty member.
4. Ensure that teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.

5. Implement schedules flexible enough to accommodate teaching strategies consistent with the ways students learn most effectively and that allow for effective teacher teaming and lesson planning.
6. Institute structural leadership changes that allow for meaningful involvement in decision-making by students, teachers, family members, and the community *and* that support effective communication with these groups.
7. Align the schoolwide comprehensive, ongoing professional development program and the individual Personal Learning Plans of staff members with the content knowledge and instructional strategies required to prepare students for graduation. (NASSP, 2004, p. 6)

The North Central Association, now known as AdvancED, awards accreditation to over 27,000 public and private schools in the United States. The history of this organization dates back to 1895 when it was first founded to evaluate school quality. The expected characteristics of this accreditation organization offer insight to this research study and the descriptors used within the data collection from stakeholders. Currently, AdvancED uses seven standards in order to evaluate school quality and award accreditation. Those seven standards include

1. Vision and purpose: The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.
2. Governance and leadership: The school provides governance and leadership that promotes student performance and school effectiveness.
3. Teaching and learning: The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

4. Documenting and using results: The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.
5. Resources and support systems: The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.
6. Stakeholder communication and relationships: The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.
7. Commitment to continuous improvement: The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance. (AdvanceED, 2010, pp. 1-7)

The issues of testing and accountability are often mentioned with the idea of school quality. "Testing allows politicians to show they're concerned about school achievement and serious about getting tough with students and teachers" (Kohn, 2000, p. 3). It can also be stated that

> any aspect of learning (or life) that appears in numerical form seems reassuringly scientific; if the numbers are getting larger over time, we must be making progress. Concepts such as intrinsic motivation and intellectual exploration are difficult for some minds to grasp, whereas test score, like sales figures or votes, can be calculated and tracked and used to define success and failure. (Kohn, 2000, p. 3)

When evaluating the broad picture, which was the aim of this research project, "the best way to judge schools is by visiting them and looking for evidence of learning and interest in learning—thoughtful observation is what matters even if different criteria are applied" (Kohn, 2000, p. 47).

Frequently in the literature, accountability of schools was mentioned with the goals of schooling. The measures of accountability often illustrate "more of what schools do not do, rather than what they do" (Smith, 2003, p. 75). When examining the objectives of schooling and what schools do, Smith (2003) outlined seven goals that were found when studying schools: "building basic literacy skills, encouraging academic excellence, vocational/technical skills, promoting good work habits and self-discipline, promoting personal growth, promoting human relations skills, and promoting specific moral or religious values" (p. 87).

The Edison Schools are school redesign projects for improved quality of public education (Whittle, 2005). The elements of their school design can lend insight to the current research study (Whittle, 2005). The CEO of The Edison Schools offered five *new truths* of school design:

1. Learning accomplished through individual effort, or through working in small teams is "stickier" (better retained) than that "served up" in any group no matter what size.
2. Learning can come in many forms, and the size of the learning group can vary greatly without any penalization of effect whatsoever.
3. Children are capable of tremendous focus and responsibility on their own, and they can be taught these traits earlier than you might think.
4. Variety also matters in learning. Too much of any one thing, like sitting reactively in a classroom for twelve years, has rapidly diminishing returns. (And teachers need variety, too.)
5. Children can teach as well as learn. Has your child ever taught you anything? Has your older child ever taught one of your younger ones? (Whittle, 2005, p. 103)

The Coalition Campus Schools project in New York City was a seven-year study that researched new schools created to replace failing ones (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Ort,

2002). All of the new schools created showed growth in student achievement. In addition they all shared a number of common design features. The design factors gave insight to the descriptive statements used to collect data within this study. These factors "were consistently identified by respondents–and confirmed by our observations and document review–as important to the new schools' success" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002, p. 653). The common factors included

1. Small size
2. Structures that allow for personalization and strong relationships
3. A carefully constructed curriculum aimed at specific proficiencies
4. Teachers' pedagogical approaches, especially their explicit teaching of academic skills and their ability to adapt instruction to students' needs
5. A schoolwide performance assessment system
6. The creation of flexible supports to ensure student learning
7. Strong teachers supported by collaboration in planning and problem solving. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002, p. 653)

Other current research has suggested that there could be alternate indicators of high school effectiveness in addition to test scores. This is a premise that was important to this research study, which was aimed at analyzing expected characteristics that might be more varied than minimum standardized test scores. Dropout rates (the percentage of students who quit school before completion) and graduation rates (the percentage of students who remain in school and earn a diploma) were two examples of alternate indicators of high school effectiveness.

One reason for using multiple indicators of school performance is that some schools may perform better on one type of outcome than on another. This may be especially true if the

> resources and practices required to raise performance in one area are different from those required in another area. Another reason for using multiple indicators of school performance measures is that the goal of improving one outcome may actually conflict with the goal of improving another. One way to improve test scores is to increase the number of students who drop out or otherwise leave school, since school leavers generally have lower test scores than other students. (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005, p. 4)

The same research outlined several variables that had significant effects on alternative measures of high school performance and were, therefore, vital to this study of desired characteristics of those high schools. Some outcomes of Rumberger and Palardy's (2005) research study included

1. Large schools had higher dropout rates than mid-sized schools.
2. Schools with higher teacher salaries had lower dropout rates.
3. Schools with higher student-teacher ratios had higher attrition (sum of dropouts and transfers) rates.
4. Two measures of academic climate–mean time spent on homework and mean number of advanced courses taken by students–had positive effects on student learning.
5. The mean number of advanced courses also had a large negative impact on dropout rates.
6. Schools where more students feel the discipline is fair had lower attrition rates.
7. Schools where teachers had high expectations for student learning had higher learning rates and lower dropout rates. (pp. 21-22)

Rumberger and Palardy (2005) concluded that their study suggested "test scores alone are insufficient for measuring school performance. Failure to use other complementary measures of

school performance in addition to test scores could lead to erroneous conclusions about which schools are effective and what characteristics promote school effectiveness" (p. 26).

Several states have addressed the issue of school effectiveness and lend vital aspects and outcomes for description within this study. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2011) outlined seven characteristics of successful schools for their state. The characteristics include

1. Vision: A vision represents clearly articulated statements of goals, principles, and expectations for the entire learning community. A common unifying vision is achieved when the administration, teachers, support staff, students, families, and demographically representative community members are able to clearly communicate that vision through the daily operation of the school district. A vision becomes a guiding force when all educational decisions are based on its framework and goals.
2. Leadership: Strong leadership promotes excellence and equity in education and entails projecting, promoting, and holding steadfast to the vision; garnering and allocating resources; communicating progress; and supporting the people, programs, services, and activities implemented to achieve the school's vision.
3. High Academic Standards: High academic standards describe what students are expected to know and be able to do. High standards in each and every subject are the foundation for academic success.
4. Standards of the Heart: In a school, standards of the heart help children become caring, contributing, productive, and responsible members of society. This includes: advocating for equity, diversity, fairness, inclusiveness, and justice; making responsible decisions; caring about others; being a contributing member of the

community and the broader society; developing personal and interpersonal skills; and developing and adhering to a core set of values. Schools that deliberately foster positive character traits in their students are described in many ways. Students and staff may say the school has a positive climate; parents may note it is an equitable school where diversity is valued and stereotyping and harassment are not tolerated. The community might observe that students and staff are often engaged in service to others. In reality, standards of the heart are all of these things, and they add a new dimension to the idea of achievement.

5. Family, School, and Community Partnerships: Family and community participation in the schools recognizes the important role that families, communities, and school play in helping all children succeed in school and in life. Partners bring their own strengths, skills, perspectives and knowledge to the educational process, and they all need to be welcomed and respected for their contributions.
6. Professional Development: Professional development is a continuous learning process across all levels of education for the entire learning community. Quality professional development expands the capacity of the learning community to realize its vision and reach its goals.
7. Evidence of Success: Evidence of success is found in the data related to student achievement, behaviors, demographics, programs, and staff perceptions. It facilitates decision-making leading to the improvement of teaching and learning. (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2011, para. 2)

The state of Washington also published a document that describes nine characteristics of high-performing schools (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). These characteristics lend themselves to

this study as aspects needed for quality schools. This resource was published for schools and districts to assist with improving student learning. The nine characteristics consisted of

1. Clear and shared focus: Everybody knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.
2. High standards and expectations for all students: Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. Students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.
3. Effective school leadership: Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They also nurture an instructional program and school culture conducing to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders can have different styles and roles–teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.
4. High levels of collaboration and communication: There is strong teamwork among teachers across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and member of the community, to identify problems and work on solutions.
5. Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned with state standards: The planned and actual curriculum is aligned with the essential academic learning requirements. Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff members understand

the role of the classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student wok is evaluated.

6. Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching: A steady cycle of different assessments identifies students who need help. More support and instruction time is provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to students who need more help. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.
7. Focused professional development: A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focuses extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.
8. Supportive learning environment: The school has a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.
9. High level of family and community involvement: There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Parents, businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort. (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007, p. 24)

The Indiana Student Achievement Institute (InSAI) has worked with over 250 schools in the state of Indiana since 1996. The information from InSAI was extremely relevant to the current study, which focused on the expectation levels of Indiana stakeholders with regard to high schools. InSAI developed a list of elements of high achieving schools that reflects research

as well as lessons learned from successful (solid improvements in student achievement on the Indiana Statewide Test of Educational Progress Plus) schools with which they had worked. The InSAI (2007) elements are organized into seven *force fields* that include

1. Expectations: Students, faculty, parents, and the community share a common vision for student achievement. Adults believe all students are able to learn rigorous academic content in order to continue their education after high school. Adult expectations are concretely and clearly described in measurable terms such as graduation requirements, academic standards, and grades that reflect mastery. Adult expectations for academic success are conveyed to students through parent involvement, guidance relationships, and annual educational goals written by the student in partnership with significant adults. (p. 2)
2. Curriculum: A sound curriculum that includes both content and process knowledge. A curriculum that also aligns with world-class standards such as the Indiana Academic Standards. A curriculum that enables students to succeed at the next educational level, become productive members of a global economy, and become responsible citizens. A curriculum that coordinates between classrooms, grade levels, building levels, and disciplines. (p. 3)
3. Instruction: Instructional practices align with specified content standards. The instructional strategies also engage students in learning by addressing learning styles, addressing differences in culture, requiring students to be active learners, and incorporating technology as a learning tool. In addition, the instruction shows connections between multiple disciplines and the real world by including school site and work site settings as well as collaborative teaching between instructors and

community members. Teachers who are deeply committed to all students learning, passionate about what they teach, accept no excuses, and are highly qualified, deliver the instruction. (p. 4)

4. Assessment: Sound classroom assessments that align with world-class standards, require students to solve real-world problems, provide multiple methods/chances for showing mastery, and use an evaluation rubric. Students use the results of classroom assessments to evaluate their learning strategies, identify standards that they have not yet mastered, and develop/refine their personal learning plan. Teachers use the results of classroom assessments to evaluate their teaching strategies, identify standards that the students have not yet mastered, identify students that did not master the standards, and develop plans for re-teaching standards. (p. 5)
5. Extra help/time: Sound extra help initiatives that coordinate with classroom instruction and are provided by teachers, students, and community members. The initiatives would also occur during and outside the school day, include group and individual activities, provide structure for learning, and meet individual student needs. Sound extra time initiatives allow students to learn at their own rates without penalty. (p. 6)
6. Guidance: Sound guidance curriculum programs are developed with input from students, teachers, families, and community members. These programs include content that will help the students become successful students, responsible citizens, and productive members of a global economy. The guidance programs also include student standards and indicators in the areas of academic development, career development, and personal-social development. In addition these programs support

the school's mission statement, vision statement, and academic achievement goals. The programs are evaluated on a regular basis, accountable for student achievement, and included activities that are delivered by the entire faculty, parents, and appropriate community members. (p. 7)

7. Learning Environment: Sound educational policies and procedures that support the mastery of a rigorous curriculum, support instructional strategies that engage all students, require student progress be assessed on a regular basis, require frequent notification to parents concerning student progress, reflect attendance and punctuality expectations of the business community, and clearly state and communicate behavior expectations and consequences to all students and parents. Sound family involvement in schools that involves family members in a variety of school programs, involves family members in school governance, enables family members to provide learning experiences at home, provides two-way communication between school and family members, and encourages family members to have high expectations for all students. Sound community involvement that involves community members in school programs and governance, creates partnerships for the purpose of providing educational experiences, provides community events in the school building, and encourages high community expectations for all students. Sound instructional resources that include technology standards, are available to the students and community after school hours, and provide adequate time for teacher research, professional development, planning, and assessment. Sound student assistance activities that include staff development on referral options, child abuse procedures, and crisis response plans. Sound leadership that enables all educators to be leaders

> and learners, uses shared decision-making, ensures that day-to-day decisions are consistent with the school's vision and goals, encourages all educators to be risk-takers, ensures that all opinions are valued and that resistance is embraced, and demonstrates a tireless commitment to raising student achievement. Sound professional development activities that support the strategies in the local school improvement plan, are required for all teachers, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessionals on a regular basis, are provided by local educators who serve as "local experts" in various topics, include a sequence of activities, are embedded during the school day, and include an evaluation. (p. 8)

A study retrieved from the North Carolina Middle School Association outlined factors that were prevalent at schools in Texas that received the accountability ratings of exemplary or recognized (Vaughn, Gill, & Sherman, 2009). The factors contributed to the characteristics used to collect and analyze data for this study. The list below includes the significant factors that were identified by teachers in those schools:

1. The school leader assumes an assertive instructional role.
2. The school leader provides a vision of excellence that is translated into goals and objectives.
3. Teachers believe in their own efficacy.
4. The school environment is orderly.
5. The school fosters parental involvement in student learning.
6. The school provides a well-kept school plant.
7. The school uses site-based decision-making.
8. The school emphasizes high academic achievement for all students.

9. The school assesses and monitors student progress systematically.
10. The school assigns meaningful homework.
11. The school adjusts lessons to student needs.
12. The school uses effective grouping for instruction.
13. The school fosters parent participation.
14. The school shares governance with teachers and parents.
15. The school provides academically rich programs.
16. The school provides personal attention to students.
17. The school creates an accepting and supportive environment.
18. The school teaches with the aim of preventing academic problems.
19. The school develops a curriculum that integrates the academic skills into the content areas.
20. The school shares governance between students, parents, and teachers. (Vaughn et al., 2009, pp. 5-6)

Other countries have studied the idea of effective schools and their characteristics. In order to explore a varied approach, findings from other countries helped shape the statements of expectations used to collect and analyze the data for this study. Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore (1995) prepared a report for the Office for Standards in Education in London outlined 11 factors for effective schools.

1. Professional leadership: Firm and purposeful, a participative approach, and the leading professional
2. Shared vision and goals: Unity of purpose, consistency of practice, collegiality and collaboration

3. A learning environment: An orderly environment, an attractive working environment
4. Concentration on teaching and learning: Maximization of learning time, academic emphasis, focus on achievement
5. Purposeful teaching: Efficient organization, clarity of purpose, structured lessons, adaptive practice
6. High expectations: High expectations all round, communicating expectations, providing intellectual challenge
7. Positive reinforcement: Clear and fair discipline, feedback
8. Monitoring progress: Monitoring pupil performance, evaluating school performance
9. Pupils rights and responsibilities: Raising pupil self-esteem, positions of responsibility, control of work
10. Home-school partnership: Parental involvement in their children's learning
11. A learning organization: School-based staff development. (Sammons et al., 1995, p. 8)

When stakeholder expectations were studied, public perception and opinion became relevant. In the most recent Gallup poll conducted by Phi Delta Kappan, Americans responded about their thoughts on public schools (Bushaw & Lopez, 2011). In terms of school quality, the poll asked Americans to give their local public school a letter grade. Of the respondents, 51% gave a grade of A or B to their local public schools and 16% graded their schools with a D or F (Bushaw & Lopez, 2011). When people were asked to grade public schools in the nation as a whole, only 17% responded with an A or B and, in contrast, 30% gave a D or F (Bushaw & Lopez, 2011).

In addition to school quality, Americans were also asked about technology aspect of schools. Access to the Internet for all students was viewed as very important by 61% of Americans as well as somewhat important by an additional 30% (Bushaw & Lopez, 2011). In addition, access to computer technology within schools was a topic within the poll. Of the respondents, 70% viewed access to computers within a school as very important and an additional 25% responded somewhat important (Bushaw & Lopez, 2011).

The same poll asked Americans about specific outcomes of attending public schools. People responded on a five-point scale where five meant *strongly agree* and one meant *strongly disagree*. The list below summarizes the mean score of responses to the statements about different aspects of public schools:

1. My child's teachers make schoolwork relevant with real world examples. Mean score of 3.83
2. I feel that my child is safe at school. Mean score of 4.44
3. My child has the opportunity to do what he or she does best every day. Mean score of 3.68
4. I know my child will find a good job after he or she graduates. Mean score of 3.74
5. My child has a substantially higher well-being because of the school he or she attends. Mean score of 3.91
6. My child's school encourages him or her to build stronger relationships with friends and family members. Mean score of 4.00
7. My child's school teaches him or her to manage finances more effectively. Mean score 2.84
8. My child's school does things to help him or her become healthier. Mean score 3.76

9. My child's school encourages him or her to become more involved in the community. Mean score of 3.83. (Bushaw & Lopez, 2011, p. 21)

Public perception within aspects of schools was vital to this current research project. Within this project, public stakeholder expectations were evaluated and analyzed with regard to high schools. Methodology, data analysis, and findings are discussed in the upcoming chapters.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

What characteristics exist within an effective high school? Does a test score indicate effectiveness of a high school and, for that matter, student learning or the level of instruction? Kohn (2000) addressed the process of using a test to judge a school when he stated,

> Exams used to be administered mostly to determine where to place kids or what kind of help they needed; only recently have scores been published in the newspaper and used as the primary criteria for judging children, teachers, and schools–indeed, as the basis for flunking students or denying them a diploma, deciding where money should be spent, and so on. Tests have lately become a mechanism by which public officials can impose their will on schools, and they are doing so with a vengeance. (p 2)

In addition, "a ranking of states, districts, or schools by test scores is too crude a measure to offer any insight about the quality of education because other factors, having nothing to do with instruction, contribute significantly to those scores" (Rotberg, 1998, p. 28). Rothstein (2008) addressed this idea when he stated,

> At least when it comes to basic academic knowledge and skills, it seems reasonable to most people that we should be able measure schools' and teachers' effectiveness by their students' test scores. But, alas, test scores turn out not to be an adequate accountability device, even for basic skills. (p. 53)

Tests scores might offer a concise measure of performance, however, "the fundamentals of good education are to be found in the classroom, the home, the community, and the culture, but reformers in our time continue to look for shortcuts and quick answers" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 225). Further, "it is surprising that so many education policy makers have been seduced into thinking that simple quantitative measures like test scores can be use to hold schools accountable for achieving complex educational outcomes" (Rothstein et al., 2008, p. 73).

The belief also exists that using a test to evaluate school is detrimental. Kohn (1999) wrote,

> Every time we judge a school on the basis of a standardized test score—indeed, every time we permit our children to participate in these mass testing programs—we unwittingly help to make our schools just a little bit worse. (p. 73)

Some believe a comparison of test scores offers a better way to evaluate a school with a growth model. However, "growth models have even bigger error margins than single-year test results because they rely on two unreliable scores (last year's and this year's), not one" (Rothstein et al., 2008, p. 72).

Not using a single test score makes the idea high school effectiveness a complex issue. Because of this complexity, accountability of high schools is difficult to establish and define. "A good accountability system, whether for schools, teachers, or students, must include a variety of measures, not only test scores" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 228). Rothstein et al. (2008) mentioned that variety when he wrote,

> While any accountability system is subject to some gaming, tricking the accountability system would be more difficult if schools and teachers were accountable for a broader

> collection of outcomes, and if the achievement of these outcomes were measured in more varied ways, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. (pp. 67-68)

Ravitch (2010) further mentioned the idea of quantitative and qualitative measures when she wrote,

> The tests we have now provide useful information about students' progress in reading and mathematics, but they cannot measure what matters most in education. Not everything that matters can be quantified. What is tested may ultimately be less important than what is untested, such as a student's ability to seek alternative explanations, to raise questions, to pursue knowledge on his own, and to think differently. (p. 226)

Daniels et al. (2001) spoke to the need for a variety of means when they stated,

> Given the political realities of our age, standardized tests, no matter how banal, inaccurate, or unfair, will doubtless be a part of school life for some time to come. But they needn't be our principal means of monitoring student learning or shaping instruction. (p. 235)

So, what is important when evaluating a high school? "The best-informed and most affluent parents make sure to enroll their children in schools that have small classes, a broad curriculum in the liberal arts and sciences, well-educated teachers, and well-maintained facilities" (Ravitch, 2010, pp. 228-229). How are these determinations made? "The best way to judge schools is by visiting them and looking for evidence of learning and interest in learning. . . . Thoughtful observation is what matters even if different criteria are applied" (Kohn, 2000, p. 47).

Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics of an effective high school as identified by stakeholder groups?
2. What characteristics are most important in the beliefs of stakeholders to the effectiveness of a high school?
3. Are there differences in expectations and priorities among stakeholder groups concerning the effectiveness high schools?

Methodology

The Quality School Survey (Appendix A) was formulated in order to address the above research questions. The survey represented areas found through extensive research. Items chosen for the survey denoted a wide range of characteristics that were identified as important to the effectiveness of high schools. Care was taken to designate topics within the survey from many sources as to expand the focus as much as possible.

A validation process was used for the Quality School Survey. The survey was put in front of a cohort of education administration Ph.D. students at Indiana State University two different times. After each trial run feedback was received from those Ph.D. students and adjustments were made to the survey. This process helped make the survey as clear and concise as possible for the respondents. This process also added content and construct validity to the survey.

Three stakeholder groups were identified as respondents for the survey. Stakeholders selected for this study included educators, parents of students, and lawmakers from the state of Indiana. Within the survey, respondents were asked to reply as to the level of importance of

various statements about high schools and also asked to rank a list of priorities with regard to effective high schools.

Expectations of effective high schools between stakeholder groups were the focus of the study. Within the Quality School Survey, respondents were asked to categorize the type of stakeholder group to which they belong—educators, parents, and lawmakers. Data were collected and analyzed among these three subgroups. Differences and commonalities within expectations of high schools were established among subgroups. Analysis showed where gaps could exist in terms of expectations of high schools. Analysis also outlined common alignment of expectations between stakeholder groups.

Data Collection

An electronic introduction/communication was formulated in order to solicit responses from educators, lawmakers, and parents. An introductory letter was created and sent electronically to all Indiana lawmakers at the state level (Appendix B). All Indiana representatives (100) and all Indiana senators (50) were contacted through their public contact email addresses in order to request participation.

An introductory letter/correspondence was also sent to Indiana high school principals via the Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP) in order to request participation from statewide educators (Appendix C). The IASP list service for high school principals was utilized to reach all high school principals. Principals were asked to forward the survey to all educators in their buildings in order to gather responses from educators. A statement to educators was forwarded by the principals when requesting educator participation (Appendix D). With all high school principals in Indiana contacted, the sample of educators represented a random selection of the different demographics of the state.

For parent participation, every principal contacted in Indiana was also asked to forward the survey electronically to the parents of students in their schools. A message to parents was supplied to the principals in order to introduce the study and explain participation (Appendix E). Asking this of all principals allowed for a random sampling of parent responses and represented the wide range of high schools in the state of Indiana.

Electronic means of surveying all stakeholders was utilized for ease of return. The Quality School Survey was set up within the Qualtrix system of surveying. Once set up within the Qualtrix system, it was sent to stakeholders as mentioned above.

In order to analyze the stakeholder expectations the Quality School Survey utilized quantitative means of gathering responses. The Quality School Survey was constructed based on extensive research conducted regarding school effectiveness. The statements within the survey represent a wide range of areas regarding high schools. Within the Quality School Survey respondents were asked to indicate the importance of statements related to the categories using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *not important*, 2 = *somewhat important*, 3 = *important*, to 4 = *essential*. In addition, respondents were also asked to rank the categories within the survey. The purpose of the ranking was to distinguish between aspects that are equally ranked as essential in the Likert scale questions in the beginning of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Items from the formulated survey were analyzed in a quantitative manner. The level of importance was evaluated among stakeholder groups to analyze significant differences and similarities. In order to evaluate the differences, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) design was utilized. With three groups considered as the independent variable and one dependent variable in the rating on the Likert scale, the study verified significant differences across the three groups

with a one-way ANOVA. This ANOVA allowed the evaluation of that difference across the groups with a Tukey's post-hoc comparison when significant difference was found.

Within a one-way ANOVA, two assumptions must be met. The first assumption is an assumption of normality among responses and the second assumption is the assumption of homogeneity of variance within the same responses. With the anticipated sample sizes being different (only 150 possible lawmakers compared to all high school parents and educators in Indiana) the assumptions mentioned above could not be violated in order for accurate conclusions from the ANOVA. By nature of the statements a normal distribution of responses was not anticipated for all areas. Homogeneity of variance was also not anticipated in all areas based on the nature of the statements as well.

If the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated based on a Levene's test concerning an item within the Likert scale statements, then Brown-Forsythe and Welch tests were executed. If a significant difference was found, a Games-Howell post-hoc analysis was run to compare the three groups.

If the assumption of normality was violated based on skewness and kurtosis levels within Likert scale item, then a Kruskal-Wallis test was utilized to analyze difference. If significance was found, then a Mann-Whitney U post-hoc analysis was utilized to compare the groups.

Alpha level to establish significance was also considered within the study. In order to protect against error inflation between the items, an alpha level of .01 was utilized to ensure a conservative approach to significance.

In addition, the ranking of characteristics was also analyzed. The ranking evaluation established priorities between the characteristics that were equally viewed as highly important on the Likert scale questions. Once again, differences and similarities were evaluated between

stakeholder groups regarding priorities within a high school setting. In order to evaluate differences descriptive statistical analysis was utilized.

Summary

This study analyzed stakeholder expectations of high schools in order to affirm existing criteria for evaluation of the effectiveness of a high school. The analysis of expectations between stakeholder groups informed this study in order to describe the qualities of effective high schools. The analysis within this study also identified differences of expectations between stakeholder groups in order to address accountability in terms of the qualities deemed important to effective high schools.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of the study was to determine and compare the expected characteristics of effective high schools between parents, educators, and lawmakers in Indiana. The need to assess high school effectiveness from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders was considered imperative in establishing priorities for high schools. In order for high schools to advance and develop, the expectations of stakeholders were analyzed to provide direction for school improvement.

The study used survey methodology to gather data from parents, educators, and lawmakers in order to determine overall expectations as well as expectations from each group. Group responses were then compared to evaluate differences (if any) in the expectations by stakeholder type.

I developed the Quality School Survey to provide a quantitative description in which the three groups' expectations could be analyzed and compared. The survey was developed from the review of literature as well as characteristics found in the high school accountability policy for the Indiana Department of Education. After collecting the initial stakeholder description, the Quality School Survey contained two parts: Likert scale statements where respondents selected their level of importance to the statement and then a section where respondents were asked to select or prioritize three expectations from a list of 12 common expectations of high schools.

The survey was sent to all high school principals in the state of Indiana requesting them to send the survey and instructions to all educators in their buildings as well as all parents of their students. In addition the survey request was sent to all 150 state-level lawmakers in Indiana—both senators and representatives. Follow-up reminders were sent to the groups in order to maximize the number of respondents.

Demographic Information

Data were entered into SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were conducted to report the stakeholder group membership, analysis of survey items for all respondents, analysis of survey items for specific stakeholder groups, and the means and standard deviation for each item within the survey. The following tables present the descriptive data. Table 1 contains survey respondents' data.

Table 1

Respondent Groups

Stakeholder Group	Number (*n*) included in the Sample	Percent of Respondents
Parents	64	19.5
Educators	233	70.8
Lawmakers	32	9.7

Survey Responses from All Groups

The first analysis of data addressed Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of an effective high school as identified by stakeholder groups? Evaluating a comparison of the mean responses of the Likert scale questions for all respondents regardless of stakeholder group addressed the question. Statements were made and respondents labeled their expectations as *essential* with a value of 4, *important* with a value of 3, *somewhat important* with a value of 2, or *not important* with a value of 1 (see Table 2).

Table 2

Mean Responses of All Stakeholders

Description: "High schools should . . ."	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	330	3.83	0.40
Teach students to appreciate the arts.	330	3.15	0.67
Develop students' social skills within their students.	328	3.30	0.69
Ensure students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	329	3.53	0.67
Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	328	3.53	0.57
Teach physical health within the curriculum.	330	3.23	0.70
Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	328	3.75	0.47
Ensure the emotional health of students.	330	3.15	0.71
Establish a safe and orderly environment.	326	3.80	0.40
Establish positive home-school relationships.	327	3.24	0.72
Frequently monitor student progress.	327	3.48	0.62
Teach critical thinking and problem solving skills.	327	3.81	0.41
Utilize contemporary technology and materials to teach students.	326	3.35	0.63
Use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.	327	3.49	0.64
Offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.	326	3.35	0.61
Be small in size to ensure a sense of belonging within each student.	329	2.59	0.95
Offer professional development that focuses on teachers being students of learning and gives them opportunities to grow and expand their expertise.	328	3.34	0.72
Have a vision and mission statement that guides the decision-making process within the school.	329	3.16	0.83

Table 3

Top Expectations of All Stakeholders

Order of Importance	Statement: "High schools should . . ."	*M*
1	Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	3.83
2	Teach critical thinking and problem solving skills.	3.81
3	Establish a safe and orderly environment.	3.80
4	Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	3.75
5	Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	3.53

Respondents were asked to pick their top three attributes of high schools from a list of 12 statements in the second part of the Quality School Survey. Insight from this prioritization portion of the survey forced respondents to rank attributes even if they rated them as equally essential in previous questions. The expectations from the first section of statements were represented in the 12 statements as well as accountability expectations for the state of Indiana. It is interesting to note that high standardized test scores (used for accountability in Indiana) was the lowest priority of the 12 statements about high schools with only 2.4% of the respondents selecting that expectation (Table 4).

Table 4

Frequency of Selection by All Stakeholders

Statement: "High schools should . . ."	*N*	Percent of Sample
Have high scores on standardized tests.	8	2.4
Establish a safe and orderly environment.	169	51.4
Offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.	60	18.2
Ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	160	48.6
Utilize contemporary technology and material to teach students.	52	15.8
Teach physical health within the curriculum.	9	2.7
Teach students to appreciate the arts.	19	5.8
Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	113	34.3
Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	147	44.7
Have graduation rates over 90%.	32	9.7
Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	195	59.3
Establish positive home-school relationships.	25	7.6

Note. 329 respondents

The top five attributes were selected based on the frequency of selection by all stakeholders. The expectations of high schools within this section of the survey showed a similar list of expectations as seen in the first part of the survey—four out of five were the same. In this section the expectation of preparing students for skilled employment was the third highest priority where in the first section it was sixth in the order. Also in this section the order of the

expectations was different. The expectation of promoting student work ethic to ensure success was the highest priority by all stakeholders compared to being fourth in the first section. Establishing a safe environment was the second highest priority with basic academic skills and citizenship/community responsibility also included in the top five (Table 5).

Table 5

Top Five Based on Frequency of Selection by All Stakeholders

Order of Importance	Statement: "High schools should . . ."	*N*
1	Promote student work ethic to ensure success	195
2	Establish a safe and orderly environment.	169
3	Ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	160
4	Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	147
5	Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	113

Note. 329 respondents

Survey Responses from Each Group

The expectations of each stakeholder group were then evaluated in order to address Research Question 2: What characteristics are most important in the beliefs of stakeholders to the effectiveness of a high school? A ranking of the mean response scores revealed the expectations and level of importance for stakeholder groups on the Likert scale questions within the survey.

Parents expected a curriculum that teaches basic academic skills as their top priority when evaluating the mean response score on the Likert scale questions. A safe environment and critical thinking were also included as well as promotion of work ethic and frequently monitoring

student progress rounded out the top priorities for parents. This order of expectations for parents also revealed that school size, appreciation for the arts, emotional, and physical health were of least importance to this group of stakeholders as reflected in Table 6.

Table 6

Ranking Likert Scale Expectations of High Schools by Parents

Order of Importance	Statement: "High schools should . . ."	*M*	*SD*
1	Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	3.86	0.40
2	Establish a safe and orderly environment.	3.75	0.44
3	Teach critical thinking and problem solving skills.	3.75	0.44
4	Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	3.64	0.57
5	Frequently monitor student progress.	3.53	0.62
6	Use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.	3.52	0.62
7	Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	3.44	0.64
8	Utilize contemporary technology and material to teach students.	3.36	0.68
9	Ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	3.34	0.72
10	Offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.	3.33	0.60
11	Develop social skills within their students	3.23	0.73
12	Offer professional development that focuses on teachers being students of learning and gives them opportunities to grow and expand their expertise.	3.22	0.81
13	Establish positive home-school relationships.	3.19	0.76
14	Have a vision and mission statement that guides the decision-making process within the school.	3.09	0.87
15	Should teach physical health within the curriculum	3.06	0.64
16	Ensure the emotional health of students.	3.05	0.74
17	Teach students to appreciate the arts	3.03	0.64
18	Should be small in size to ensure a sense of belonging within each student	2.63	0.92

The expectations of educators showed their top expectations on the Likert scale questions within the survey. A safe and orderly environment was the top priority followed by critical

thinking/problem solving as well as basic academic skills. Promotion of work ethic and preparation for skilled employment rounded top of the priorities. The order of expectations for this stakeholder group also showed that school size, appreciation of the arts, the use of a vision and mission statement, emotional health, and home-school relations are of least importance to educators as presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Ranking Likert Scale Expectations of High Schools by Educators

Order of Importance	Statement: "High schools should . . ."	*M*	*SD*
1	Establish a safe and orderly environment.	3.83	0.37
2	Teach critical thinking and problem solving skills.	3.82	0.40
3	Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	3.80	0.42
4	Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	3.78	0.44
5	Ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	3.55	0.66
6	Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	3.54	0.55
7	Use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.	3.54	0.64
8	Frequently monitor student progress.	3.49	0.63
9	Develop social skills within their students.	3.39	0.65
10	Offer professional development that focuses on teachers being students of learning and gives them opportunities to grow and expand their expertise.	3.39	0.70
11	Offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.	3.38	0.61
12	Utilize contemporary technology and material to teach students.	3.37	0.63
13	Should teach physical health within the curriculum.	3.31	0.71
14	Establish positive home-school relationships.	3.31	0.69
15	Ensure the emotional health of students.	3.27	0.65
16	Have a vision and mission statement that guides the decision-making process within the school.	3.24	0.80
17	Teach students to appreciate the arts.	3.21	0.70
18	Should be small in size to ensure a sense of belonging within each student	2.65	0.94

The evaluation of lawmaker responses showed their top expectations of high schools on the Likert scale questions within the survey. Lawmakers expected a high school to offer a curriculum that develops basic academic skills. In addition, the lawmakers also valued critical thinking and problem solving. The expectations of promoting work ethic, preparation for skilled employment, and establishing a safe environment were also among the top priorities. The order of mean responses for this stakeholder group revealed that school size, emotional health, use of a vision and mission statement, development of social skills, and positive home-school relationships were of little importance to lawmakers Table 8.

Table 8

Ranking Likert Scale Expectations of High Schools by Lawmakers

Order of Importance	Statement: "High schools should . . ."	*M*	*SD*
1	Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	3.97	0.17
2	Teach critical thinking and problem solving skills.	3.87	0.34
3	Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	3.81	0.40
4	Ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	3.76	0.50
5	Establish a safe and orderly environment.	3.69	0.47
6	Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	3.66	0.60
7	Frequently monitor student progress.	3.31	0.54
8	Offer professional development that focuses on teachers being students of learning and gives them opportunities to grow and expand their expertise.	3.26	0.63
9	Offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.	3.19	0.59
10	Utilize contemporary technology and material to teach students.	3.13	0.55
11	Use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.	3.09	0.53
12	Should teach physical health within the curriculum.	3.03	0.65
13	Teach students to appreciate the arts.	2.88	0.42
14	Establish positive home-school relationships.	2.84	0.68
15	Develop social skills within their students.	2.81	0.65
16	Have a vision and mission statement that guides the decision-making process within the school.	2.74	0.82
17	Ensure the emotional health of students.	2.47	0.62
18	Should be small in size to ensure a sense of belonging within each student	2.13	0.94

Priority Ranking by Each Group

The second section of the Quality School Survey asked respondents to select their three most important expectations of high schools from a list of 12 statements. The responses were evaluated based on stakeholder group—parents, educators, and lawmakers.

The top priorities of parents were analyzed. When compared with mean score responses from the first section, the priorities of parents changed in this section. A safe environment was the top priority selected in this section by parents. Offering a curriculum of basic academic skills moved to second on this priority list compared to first on the Likert scale questions. Also on this list the idea of high schools promoting work ethic with students remained as a major priority for parents. Two new expectations emerged for parents when asked to select only three from the list – promoting citizenship and community responsibility as well as ensuring each student is prepared for skilled employment. As the priority selections were ranked, physical health education, performance on standardized tests, appreciation of the arts, and a graduation rate over 90% were the lowest priorities for parents as presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Ranking of Frequency Selections by Parents

Order of Importance	Statement: "High schools should . . ."	*N*	Percent of Sample
1	Establish a safe and orderly environment.	34	53.1
2	Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills	32	50.0
3	Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	31	48.4
4	Ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	26	40.6
5	Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	18	28.1
T-6	Offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.	13	20.3
T-6	Utilize contemporary technology and materials to teach students.	13	20.3
8	Establish positive home-school relationships.	9	14.1
9	Have graduation rates over 90%.	8	12.5
10	Teach students to appreciate the arts.	6	9.4
11	Have high scores on standardized tests.	2	3.1
12	Teach physical health within the curriculum.	1	1.6

Note. 64 respondents

The top priorities of educators were also evaluated based on responses from the survey. The idea of promoting work ethic was the most selected priority in this section for educators as compared to coming in fourth on the Likert scale section. New to this list of priorities for educators was the expectation of promoting citizenship and community responsibility. This item replaced the idea of teaching critical thinking and problem solving skills from the top priorities within the Likert scale section. Educators still expected a safe environment, preparation for skilled employment, and a curriculum of basic academic skills. On the low end of the priorities for educators were the ideas of having high standardized test scores, teaching physical health, teaching an appreciation of the arts, and establishing positive home-school relationships as presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Frequency of Selection by Educators

Order of Importance	Statement: "High Schools should . . ."	*N*	Percent of Sample
1	Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	146	62.7
2	Establish a safe and orderly environment.	118	50.6
3	Ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	113	48.5
4	Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	97	41.6
5	Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	85	36.5
6	Offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.	44	18.9
7	Utilize contemporary technology and materials to teach students.	39	16.7
8	Have graduation rates over 90%.	17	7.3
9	Establish positive home-school relationships.	15	6.4
10	Teach students to appreciate the arts.	13	5.6
11	Teach physical health within the curriculum.	8	3.4
12	Have high scores on standardized tests.	5	2.1

Note. 233 respondents

The top priorities of lawmakers were then evaluated based on responses from the prioritization portion of the survey. Lawmakers' top priority was that students were prepared for skilled employment upon graduation. This priority was listed fourth in the expectations of lawmakers from the Likert scale section. Promoting work ethic, having a curriculum to develop basic academic skills, and establishing a safe and orderly environment remained priorities for lawmakers as well. Within this section of the survey the lawmakers selected the promotion of citizenship and community responsibility as a priority which replaced critical thinking and problem solving skills from the Likert scale section. The expectations of teaching physical health, utilizing contemporary technology, and teaching an appreciation of the arts were not selected by any of the sample of lawmakers. In addition, having high standardized test scores and positive home-school relationships were only selected once in the sample and are low priorities for lawmakers as reflected in Table 11.

Table 11

Frequency of Selection by Lawmakers

Order of Importance	Statement: "High schools should . . ."	*N*	Percent of Sample
1	Ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.	21	65.6
2	Promote student work ethic to ensure success.	18	56.3
3	Offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.	18	56.3
4	Establish a safe and orderly environment.	17	53.1
5	Promote citizenship and community responsibility.	10	31.2
6	Have graduation rates over 90%.	7	21.9
7	Offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.	3	9.4
T-8	Establish positive home-school relationships.	1	3.1
T-8	Have high scores on standardized tests.	1	3.1
T-9	Utilize contemporary technology and materials to teach students.	0	0
T-9	Teach physical health within the curriculum.	0	0
T-9	Teach students to appreciate the arts.	0	0

Note. 32 respondents

Statistical Analysis of Difference

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was then run with the data to address the research question: Are there differences in expectations and perceptions between stakeholder groups concerning effectiveness of high schools? The assumptions of normality of the sample and the homogeneity of variance must both be met in order to report the ANOVA. The different sample sizes (parent, educator, and lawmaker) did not protect against the violation of the assumptions of the data. The 18 Likert scale items were analyzed first for normality, next for homogeneity of variance, and then finally for significant difference. For the purpose of this analysis an alpha of .01 was used. This alpha level is conservative but does guard against inflation over the course of the 18 items in the section.

The first item that met both assumptions was high schools should develop students' social skills within their students. When the ANOVA was run a significant difference was found across stakeholder groups in the expectation of social skill development, $F(2, 325) = 11.00$, $p < .001$, two-tailed. A Tukey's honestly significant difference post-hoc comparison revealed that the expectations of parents ($M = 3.23$) and educators ($M = 3.39$) were not significantly different from each other ($p = .221$). However, the expectations of parents were significantly higher than the expectations of lawmakers ($M = 2.81$, $p = .010$). The expectations of educators were also significantly higher than lawmakers ($p < .001$). All tests were two-tailed.

The idea that high schools should ensure the emotional health of students also met both assumptions and the ANOVA was run. There was a significant difference found in the level of expectations across stakeholder groups, $F(2,327) = 20.79$, $p < .001$, two-tailed. A Tukey's honestly significant difference post-hoc comparison revealed the expectation level of parents ($M = 3.05$) was not significantly different compared to educators ($M = 3.27$, $p = .056$). However, the

expectation level of parents was significantly higher that the expectation level of lawmakers (M = 2.47, $p < .001$). The expectation level of educators was also significantly higher than lawmakers in the area of emotional health of students, ($p < .001$). All tests were two-tailed.

Both assumptions were met and the ANOVA was run for the item of high schools should establish positive home-school relationships. A significant difference was revealed in the level of expectations across the three stakeholder groups, $F(2, 324) = 6.22$, $p = .002$, two-tailed. The Tukey's honestly significant difference post-hoc comparison found that no significant difference between level of expectations between parents ($M = 3.19$) and educators ($M = 3.31$). The post-hoc also revealed no significant difference between parents and lawmakers ($M = 2.84$). However, the expectation level of educators was significantly higher than the expectations of lawmakers ($p = .002$). All test were two-tailed.

When evaluating the item that high schools should have a vision and mission statement that guides the decision-making process within the school both the normality and homogeneity of variance assumptions were both met and the ANOVA was run. When compared to the alpha level of .01 a significant difference in the level of expectations was found, $F(2, 326) = 5.36$, $p = .005$. The Tukey's honestly significant difference post-hoc comparison showed no significant difference between parents ($M = 3.09$) and educators ($M = 3.24$). No significant difference was revealed between parents and lawmakers ($M = 2.74$) as well. However, the expectation of a high school having a vision statement was significantly higher for educators compared to lawmakers ($p = .005$).

Four additional items within the Likert scale section of the survey contained a normal distribution and met the homogeneity of variance assumption. These four items were then evaluated with the ANOVA and did not reveal any significant differences among the stakeholder

groups in terms of expectation level. The first item was the statement that high schools should frequently monitor student progress. No significant difference was found between the groups for this item, $F(2, 324) = 1.41$, $p = .245$. The level of expectation was similar for parents ($M = 3.53$), educators ($M = 3.49$), and lawmakers ($M = 3.31$) within the area of high schools monitoring student progress. Post-hoc comparisons were not conducted because no significant difference was found.

The item that high schools should offer a wide range of advanced courses was the next area where the ANOVA was run. No significant difference was also found within this area across all stakeholder groups, $F(2, 323) = 1.39$, $p = .250$. Parents ($M = 3.33$), educators ($M = 3.38$), and lawmakers ($M = 3.19$) all had similar expectations when it came to offering advanced courses within a high school. No post-hoc comparisons were performed because significant difference was missing.

A high school being small in size to ensure a sense of belonging within each student was another item that met both normality and homogeneity of variance assumptions. When the ANOVA was conducted no significant difference was found across the stakeholder groups, $F(2, 326) = 4.41$, $p = .013$. The level of expectation was similar for parents ($M = 2.63$), educators ($M = 2.65$), and lawmakers ($M = 2.13$) within the area of size of high schools. Post-hoc comparisons were not conducted within this area as well.

The last area that met both the normality and homogeneity of variance assumptions and therefore had the ANOVA run for evaluation was the statement "High schools should offer professional development that focuses on teachers being students of learning and gives them opportunities to grow and expand their expertise." No significant difference was found across the stakeholder groups, $F(2, 325) = 1.61$, $p = .201$, two-tailed. Parents ($M = 3.22$), educators (M

= 3.39), and lawmakers (M = 3.26) had similar expectations of high schools and professional development activities. No post-hoc comparisons were conducted due to not finding any significant difference.

The study revealed two areas where the normality assumption was met, but the homogeneity of variance was violated. Within these areas a Brown-Forsythe and a Welch robust test of equality of means was used to establish differences between stakeholder groups in order to compensate for the violation. The first item that fell within those parameters was the statement: High schools should teach physical health within the curriculum. A significant difference was found when the Brown-Forsythe test was run across all stakeholder groups, $F(2, 113.10) = 5.25$, $p = .007$. When the Welch test was run the significance remained as well, $F(2, 74.71) = 5.07$, $p = .009$. A Games-Howell post-hoc comparison was then conducted. This analysis showed no significant difference of the level of expectation between parents (M = 3.06) and lawmakers (M = 3.03). It also revealed no significant difference between educators (M = 3.31) and lawmakers. When comparing the means of parents and educators the post-hoc analysis approached significance difference ($p = .024$) but did not reach it at the alpha level (.01) for this study.

The assumption of normality was met, but homogeneity of variance was not met when analyzing the statement "High schools should utilize contemporary technology and materials to teach students." As a result, the Brown-Forsythe and the Welch tests were used to analyze the level of expectations of the stakeholder groups. When the Brown-Forsythe test was run, no significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 123.58) = 2.31$, $p = .103$. A Welch's test found no significant difference as well, $F(2, 74.07) = 2.75$, $p = .070$. The level of expectations was similar

for parents (M = 3.36), educators (M = 3.37), and lawmakers (M = 3.13) when it came to the use of technology within high schools.

When evaluating the remaining eight Likert items of the survey, the normality assumption was violated. Because of this violation the ANOVA could not be run to evaluate differences. As a result a Kruskal-Wallis test was run to determine if the expectation levels were similar across the stakeholder groups. The first item in this category was the statement "High schools should teach students to appreciate the arts." When the Kruskal-Wallis test was run, a significant difference in expectation level was found across all stakeholder groups, $X^2(2) = 12.54$, $p = .002$. The Mann-Whitney U post- hoc analysis revealed that educators (M = 3.21) had a significantly higher expectation level than lawmakers (M = 2.88) in terms of expectation of teaching the arts in high schools. The Mann-Whitney U post- hoc analysis also showed no significant difference between educators and parent (M = 3.03) expectations as well as no significant difference between parent and lawmaker expectations of teaching the arts in high school.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was also run on the Likert scale statement "High schools should ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation." The outcome of the test showed a significant difference across all stakeholder groups in terms of the expectation level, $X^2(2) = 10.34$, $p = .006$. The Mann-Whitney U post hoc analysis then revealed that lawmakers (M = 3.75) had significantly higher expectation in this area compared to parents (M = 3.34). The analysis illustrated no significant difference in expectation level for skilled employment preparation between educators (M = 3.55) and parents as well as between educators and lawmakers.

The normality assumption was also violated for the Likert scale statement "High schools should use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles." The Kruskal-Wallis test showed a significant difference in expectation level across stakeholder groups, $X^2(2) = 18.49$, $p < .001$. Post-hoc analysis through the Mann-Whitney *U* test revealed that parents ($M = 3.52$) had a significantly higher level of expectation compared to lawmakers ($M = 3.09$). The analysis also illustrated that educators ($M = 3.54$) also had significantly higher expectations than those of lawmakers. In addition, the test showed no significant difference in expectations of instructional variety within high schools for parents and educators.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was also a necessity for the statement "High schools should offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills." The test uncovered no significant difference between stakeholder expectations in this area, $X^2(2) = 5.91$, $p = .052$. The level of expectations of parents ($M = 3.86$), educators ($M = 3.80$), and lawmakers ($M = 3.97$) were similar when it came to the development of basic skills within high schools.

Normality was also an issue for the statement "High Schools should promote citizenship and community responsibility." As a result, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to evaluate expectation levels in this area as well. The test revealed no significant difference across the stakeholder groups, $X^2(2) = 3.46$, $p = .178$. Parents ($M = 3.44$), educators ($M = 3.54$), and lawmakers ($M = 3.76$) all had a similar level of expectations in terms of citizenship and community responsibility of high school students.

The normality assumption was also not met and a Kruskal-Wallis test was run to evaluate the statement "High Schools should promote student work ethic to ensure success." The test confirmed no significant difference across the groups in terms of this expectation, $X^2(2) = 3.43$, *p*

= .180. A comparable level of expectations existed between parents (M = 3.64), educators (M = 3.78), and lawmakers (M = 3.81) in terms of establishing work ethic within high school students.

A normal distribution did not occur within responses for the Likert scale statement "High schools should establish a safe and orderly environment." The Kruskal-Wallis test was run and revealed no significant difference across stakeholder groups, $X^2(2) = 5.30$, $p = .071$. Parents (M = 3.75), educators (M = 3.83), and lawmakers (M = 3.69) all had similar expectations of safety within high schools.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was also a necessity because of a lack of normality for the statement "High schools should teach critical thinking and problem solving skills." No significant difference was revealed for expectations within this area across stakeholder groups, $X^2(2) = 3.013$, $p = .222$. Comparable levels of expectations were revealed for parents (M = 3.75), educators (M = 3.82), and lawmakers (M = 3.87) within the area of critical thinking taught to high school students.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to address stakeholder expectations of high schools. The study evaluated expectations from parents, educators, and lawmakers. As results were evaluated, this study looked for similarities as well as differences across stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the study also aspired to evaluate priorities within those expectations.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study and have been answered through statistical analysis included

1. What are the characteristics of an effective high school as identified by stakeholder groups?
2. What characteristics are most important in the beliefs of stakeholders to the effectiveness of a high school?
3. Are there differences in expectations and perceptions among stakeholder groups concerning the effectiveness of high schools?

In order to achieve the intended results, the Quality School Survey was designed to provide a quantitative approach to those expectations in a way that could be analyzed and compared. I developed the survey from the review of literature and centered on the characteristics of effective high schools. After respondents answered brief questions about

which stakeholder group to which they belonged, they were instructed to indicate the level of importance of 18 high school characteristics using a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 = *not important* to 4 = *essential*. The survey concluded with a section of 12 characteristics of effective high schools and requested that the respondents indicate their three top priorities.

The Quality School Survey was sent electronically to high principals in the state of Indiana. Those principals then distributed the electronic survey to their teachers and parents. Lawmakers in Indiana were also contacted for participation in the study. All 150 state senators and state representatives were asked to complete the survey of expectations. A total of 322 stakeholders completed the survey and provided their levels of expectations and priorities.

The data gathered from the Quality School Survey were entered in the SPSS software and descriptive statistics were evaluated to report mean responses from each stakeholder group in terms of the 18 Likert scale items. In addition, frequency distributions were also evaluated to determine top priorities within the section where respondents selected only three out of 12 characteristics of high schools.

An ANOVA was conducted to compare differences between stakeholder groups in terms of expectations on the Likert scale statements. In order to conduct the ANOVA, two assumptions were confirmed with the data—normality of responses and homogeneity of variance within the responses. By nature of the statements coming from items found in research of effective high schools, the results were not always a normal distribution. In other words the majority of responses on some items were skewed toward the high end of *essential* in terms of expectations. For those items, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to evaluate differences between stakeholder groups. In cases where the normality was present but the homogeneity of

variance was violated, a Brown-Forsythe test and a Welch's test were performed to interpret the difference in expectations.

Results

When evaluating the difference in expectations of stakeholders, the study revealed similarity or parallel expectations in several areas. As the means were compared, the top five items in terms of total respondents were all on items where no significant difference was discovered. Developing basic academic skills within a high school was the top item in terms of overall mean, and each group had a similar level of expectation within that area. The second-ranked item had similar expectation levels between the groups and involved teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills within the high school. Similar expectations existed among the stakeholder groups for the third-ranked item that focused on establishing a safe environment within the high school. The fourth item in terms of mean expectation level was promoting student work ethic to ensure success and also was agreed upon by the groups in the study. Promoting citizenship and community responsibility was something with which all stakeholder groups shared a similar expectation and ranked fifth overall in the essential level. Items that ranked as highly important across stakeholder groups overall were also items where a level of agreement existed between the groups.

When stakeholders were asked to pick only three priorities from a list of 12 items, a similar outcome occurred. Of the five top priorities in terms of frequency of selection, four had a similar level of expectations within the individual stakeholder groups. The priority of promoting work ethic within high schools was top on the list with 59.3% of respondents selecting it as a necessity. The idea of work ethic also had alignment of expectation levels between the specific groups. Second on the priority list was establishing a safe environment within high schools and

was selected by 51.4% of the sample. Safety also had parallel levels of expectation between the stakeholder groups.

Third on the list of overall priorities within all respondents was the statement that students should be prepared for skilled employment upon graduation of high school. When all respondents were evaluated, 48.6% of the sample selected this item. When levels were evaluated between groups, lawmakers had significantly higher expectations compared to high school parents. Educator expectations were in the middle and were not significantly different from parents or lawmakers within this area.

The fourth and fifth items on the priority list of expectations for all groups were different in nature. The fourth item was centered on the development of basic academic skills within the high school students, which is often the focus of student letter grades and testing results. That item had 44.7% of all respondents selecting it. There was a parallel level of expectations among the three stakeholder groups with regard to this area. The fifth item focused on promoting citizenship and community responsibility with students, which is often a hidden curriculum within a high school. This item had 34.3% of respondents selecting it. A similar expectation level was also shared among the groups in this area as well.

The Likert scale statements were evaluated at the low end of expectations in terms of mean scores across all stakeholder groups as well. A level of agreement existed at this end of the data with the very lowest item. The nature of the statement that ranked last in the list but had similar expectations was that high schools should be small in size to ensure a sense of belonging within each student. Every group ranked that item the lowest in terms of response, and the level was consistent across all groups.

Two items tied for next to last in the list of expectations within the Likert scale section. The first of these low expected characteristics was that high schools should ensure the emotional health of students. As the specific group levels were evaluated within this area, lawmakers had significantly lower expectations compared to both parents and educators. The second item near the bottom of the expectations was that high schools should teach an appreciation of the arts to students. When levels of group expectations were analyzed, lawmakers had a significantly lower level compared to educators only. Parent expectations were in the middle and were similar to both lawmakers and educators when it came to art appreciation.

Also near the bottom of the list of expectations across the mean scores of all stakeholder groups was the idea that high schools should have a vision statement to guide decision-making. Lawmakers had a significantly lower expectation for vision statements compared to educators when the data were evaluated. Parent expectations were in the middle of the other two groups and did not show significant difference to lawmakers and educators.

With a similar low level of expectations was the statement regarding teaching physical health within the high school curriculum. When it came to this aspect of high schools, educators had a significantly higher expectation level compared to parents only. There was no significant difference when lawmaker responses were analyzed compared to the other two groups.

The low end of the data was also explored within the prioritization section of the survey responses as well. The very last item within the priority ranking is that high schools should have high scores on standardized tests. The idea of test scores was included on the survey because it is a major factor in the school accountability law for the state of Indiana and for many other states in the United States. Only 2.4% of the total respondents across all stakeholder groups selected standard test scores as a top three priority of high schools. More specifically, only one

lawmaker selected testing as a top priority, which represented only 3.1% of lawmaker responses. When parent responses were evaluated, only two parents selected testing as a high priority, which also represented 3.1% of their responses. In the same area of testing, only 2.1% of educators selected that as a top concern.

The low end also had the characteristic of teaching physical health to high school students. Only nine total respondents selected physical health as a high priority, which represented only 2.7% of the overall sample of stakeholders. Also on the low end was teaching appreciation of the arts within high schools. Only 5.8% of the overall sample population selected the arts within this section of the survey. Another low priority in the prioritization section of the survey was that high schools should establish positive home-school relationships. Only 7.6% of the complete sample selected this item as a necessity for high schools.

The next item near the bottom of the prioritization list of responses was that high schools should have graduation rates over 90%. This characteristic was also included in the survey due to its prominent involvement in the accountability laws within the state of Indiana. Of the 329 respondents making up the overall sample of the survey, only 9.7% of the sample selected this item as a main concern. When it came to lawmakers and their level of response, only 21.9% of the sample selected graduation rate as main concern for high schools. Within the same area, only 7.3% of educators chose it as a priority, and 12.5% of parents selected it as well.

When addressing the research question centered on differences in expectations, the Likert scale items were evaluated in terms of mean responses from specific stakeholder groups; several other areas not yet discussed showed a significant difference. The first of those areas was the characteristic of high schools developing social skills within their students. When mean

responses were analyzed, lawmakers showed a significantly lower expectation level in the development of social skills of students compared to parents and educators.

Establishing positive home-school relations was another aspect of high schools where significant difference was also found when evaluating mean responses of specific groups. Within this area, lawmakers had a much lower level of expectations compared to educators. Parent expectation levels were in between educators and lawmakers and were not significantly different to either group.

The other area where significant difference was discovered in terms of mean responses on the Likert scale statements was that high schools should use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles. Within this area, lawmakers had a significantly lower expectation compared to parents and teachers. When analyzing parent and educator expectation levels, no difference was discovered.

Summary

The research questions of this study aimed at describing expectations of high schools and evaluating differences in expectations between the stakeholder groups of parents, educators, and lawmakers. Alignment of expectations occurred within several areas of the study. Those areas are listed below with the average overall level of expectation included on a 1 – 4 scale (with 4 representing something that is essential).

Items with aligned expectations between all three stakeholder groups were

1. High schools should offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills. Average expectation level was 3.83.
2. High schools should teach critical thinking and problem solving skills. Average expectation level was 3.81.

3. High schools should establish a safe and orderly environment. Average expectation level was 3.80.
4. High schools should promote work ethic to ensure success. Average expectation level was 3.75.
5. High schools should promote citizenship and community responsibility. Average expectation level was 3.53.
6. High schools should frequently monitor student progress. Average expectation level was 3.48.
7. High schools should utilize contemporary technology and materials to teach students. Average expectation level was 3.35.
8. High schools should offer a wide range of advanced courses. Average expectation level was 3.35.
9. High schools should offer professional development that focuses on teachers being students of learning and gives them opportunities to grow and expand their expertise. Average expectation level was 3.34.
10. High schools should be small in size to ensure a sense of belonging within each student. Average expectation level was 2.59.

The study also revealed several areas where significant difference was discovered between stakeholder groups in terms of level of expectations. Those characteristics are listed below along with their average rating on the four-point Likert sale.

Items with significant difference discovered between groups were

1. High schools should ensure students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation. Average expectation level was 3.53.

2. High schools should use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles. Average expectation level was 3.49.
3. High schools should develop social skills within their students. Average expectation level was 3.30.
4. High schools should establish positive home-school relationships. Average expectation level was 3.24.
5. High schools should teach physical health within the curriculum. Average expectation level was 3.23.
6. High schools should have a vision and mission statement that guides the decision-making process within the school. Average expectation level was 3.16.
7. High schools should teach students an appreciation of the arts. Average expectation level was 3.15.
8. High schools should ensure the emotional health of students. Average expectation level was 3.15.

The findings of this study suggested an alignment within expectations of high school characteristics that have a high level of importance to all stakeholders. Items which included basic academic skills, problem-solving skills, a safe environment, and promoting work ethic all ranked high in level of importance and represented an aligned expectation between the groups. The study also found alignment at the lowest level of expectation level within the overall sample. The characteristic of being small in size was of least importance to the overall respondents and also represented parallel levels of expectation between the groups.

The findings of this study also showed that items on the low end of expectations of stakeholders often showed a difference between two and sometimes all three groups. Items that

included emotional health, appreciation of the arts, teaching physical health, and social skills all ranked in the lower half of the survey and had significant difference in expectation level between stakeholder groups.

Conclusions

Many aspects and focus areas exist within a high school. Often school leadership teams can lose direction among the many undertakings of a high school. Often lawmakers fail to fully understand the many aspects as well. This study has given focus to those tasks within a high school. Based on the findings as the data were analyzed the following conclusions were drawn:

1. With the aligned high expectations of teaching basic skills, critical thinking development, and problem solving, stakeholders seemed to be more concerned with the processes and outcomes compared to a measurement instrument. As a result this study also showed standardized testing success as the lowest priority selected by all stakeholders. This could speak to the expectations of more of what is observed with high school students and real outcomes achieved. This could also tell us that school accountability measures should focus on a presentation of those skills as opposed to high testing performance.
2. With standardized testing performance, which is the major portion of high school accountability, being found as the lowest priority within that section of the survey could lead to a conclusion that this data is misapplied within the current accountability metrics. This might additionally speak to the importance of other aspects of high schools in the perspective of each group. It could suggest that one standardized test does not represent the multitude of expected characteristics within a high school. This outcome could also suggest that stakeholders understand the

difficulty in measuring the many desired outcomes of high school students. Overall this might lead to an overhaul in accountability measures of high schools to address more detailed outcomes that cannot be represented by a test score. This extremely low level of expectation might also imply that success for students looks different than a test score for parents and educators who work closely with those students. This part of the study could further recommend that stakeholders may not desire a standardized outcome (in the form of a test) for students. This additionally brings into question the idea of standardized testing performance being used as accurate measures of high schools in terms of accountability. The possibility exists that test scores are only used because they are an easy way to assign a number to a level of performance when additional measures would fit better with expectations.

3. A low selected frequency within the prioritization section placed on graduation rate of 90% could have been a result of the arbitrary percentage used as a part of Indiana's accountability measures for high schools. In terms of parents, this could speak to the main concern being the graduation of their individual child. In terms of educators this outcome could possibly be attributed to the idea that 100% is the goal for graduation within high schools. The thought of losing 10 out of 100 students in a class is possibly unacceptable to educators. This outcome within this study could also bring into question this idea of an arbitrary percentage is used for an accountability target for high schools. A better accountability measure could be the evaluation of supports put in place to assist students in the pursuit of graduation. This, however, could possibly be difficult to measure in that the supports needed within high schools could vary greatly depending on the needs of the students.

4. Alignment and high expectations of safety within the high school suggests that this might be an area for school accountability. That accountability could evaluate items that are in place to keep students safe within high schools. The current system of having safety documents created is only a part of accreditation. The current system does not evaluate the effectiveness level of those safety plans but only verifies that the documents have been created. The state and school could create strategies and fund new approaches to keep schools safe. Possibilities could include school resource officers in each high school building, access control for exterior entries and interior corridors, as well as updated interior door design with limited windows and inside locks. Outreach coordination from the state could include a safety walk-through approach to evaluate processes and procedures. That way state-level experts could give recommendations for improvement.
5. With alignment and high expectations of developing work ethic among high school students this study presents an interesting situation. This aspect of stakeholder expectations is not easily measured and needs to be observed through the processes in place within the high school. This particular outcome of the study could tell schools that high expectations should be placed on holding students accountable for the efforts given within their high school experiences. High schools should possibly work to develop overriding principles or belief systems that require and reward strong work ethic within courses and the school in general. Parents might want to operate in a way that is supportive of the school developing this work ethic.
6. Another area that is difficult to measure but was highly expected and aligned between stakeholders was promoting citizenship and community responsibility. This speaks to

the fact that high schools should possibly evaluate how they are addressing these expectations. Schools could require a community service component for a specific course or as a graduation requirement. Schools could also look to create civic experiences that promote and give explanation of citizenship and its place within society. This is something that would be difficult to put within accountability. One possible aspect could require schools to detail experiences offered to their students. The setting (urban, suburban, rural, etc.) of the high school could dictate different community and civic experiences offered and therefore could make it difficult to put state-level requirements for specific activities.

7. The aligned and low expectation of schools being small in size to ensure a sense of belonging was an interesting finding. All stakeholder groups responded that this was the lowest expectation among the Likert scale statements. This response could be a result of stakeholders believing that a school being small in size is not connected to the idea of students having a sense of belonging. Stakeholders could also have shown a belief that a sense of belonging could also be achieved within a large high school setting. This response might additionally suggest that stakeholders place little value in a student's sense of belonging being connected to the goal of learning within the high school.
8. A low expectation of teaching physical health shared across groups could possibly speak to the limited requirement within this area during the high school years of a student. Physical education is only required for two semesters and health education is only required for one semester in order to graduate. The responses from this study suggest that parents and educators do not hold this as highly expected which is

contradictory compared to the call from society for more fitness and activity to fight obesity along with the federal government strict guidelines for nutrition within schools. It is also a possibility that this is not measurable enough for lawmakers to make it a priority within high schools or rank it highly in terms of importance.

9. An overall low priority ranking of social skill development and ensuring emotional health of students along with a lower of importance reported by lawmakers compared to both educators and parents could suggest a vagueness of these aspects of high school and speaks to the difficulty of measurement. As a result, these areas are not easily included within accountability determinations and could have led to the low priority for lawmakers. This could also be a result of parents and educators having a direct connection to students on an individual basis whereas lawmakers possibly only see the big picture and do not consider these aspects important for all. Parents and educators had these aspects ranked high than lawmakers but still relatively lower compared to their ranking of other expectations which could have been a result of limited incidents of specific intervention needed for high school students in these areas. It could also be a result of parent and educator knowledge of counseling services and other intervention strategies already in place within high schools to address the areas of social skills and emotional health of students.
10. A low expectation of high schools teaching an appreciation of the arts possibly points to the result of many years of focusing on minimum standards within only math and literacy. Even though the participation within the arts plays a vital role within the school experience for many high school students, the narrow focus of math and literacy has possibly played a role in the low ranking by stakeholders. Unfortunately,

the narrowed focus had possibly taken away from the expectation of educating the whole child in every aspect and domain of learning.

11. An agreement of lower expectation level in regard to the use of contemporary technology could have been a result of stakeholders viewing traditional or enduring aspects such as basic skills, critical thinking, work ethic, and citizenship in a higher light based on the ever-changing nature of technology. This could also be a result of the thoughts that current technology will be outdated when current high school students reach the workplace. This could also show a possible understanding that the use of technology will be specific to an occupation and much of the training will take place on the job. Additionally, this outcome may offer an outlook that an effective teacher with varied instructional approaches is viewed as a more valuable medium to reach students compared to technology.
12. A fundamental disconnect could have been signified between lawmakers and the work within the school when their expectations were significantly lower in terms of reaching individual learning styles with a variety of instructional strategies. Individual students learn differently, and that understanding seemed to be evident by parents and educators but not lawmakers. Lawmakers possibly are under the belief that the same instruction will work for every student. Lawmakers seem to believe that a standardized approach to instruction could reach every student—much like the standardizing of outcomes for entire schools. This lawmaker dissimilarity in expectations could speak to their lack of proximity to schools and the lack of understanding with regard to the varied educational procedures used within high schools to reach students. This lawmaker discrepancy could also point to a larger

divide concerning a belief in a business model of standardized outcomes and a bottom line approach to educating high school students. Educators and parents seem to desire an individualized approach and value that in schools.

13. A higher expectation held by lawmakers compared to parents within the category of preparation for skilled employment could speak to the idea that parents expect specific employment training to take place after high school. This could point to the idea that parents view college and postsecondary training as more essential in securing skilled employment. This viewpoint of parents falls more in line with the high expectations of basic skills and critical thinking within high schools that could lead to successful postsecondary education. This difference in expectation could also show that lawmakers placed this aspect of high schools higher than parents because they seem to have more influence in the accountability of high schools compared to universities.
14. Alignment and importance of selected criteria among all stakeholders surveyed could narrow the focus of high school leadership teams. The data suggested a sharp focus is needed on initiatives centered on basic academic problem solving skills for high school staff. Curricula heavy on basic skills infused with critical thinking activities and assessments could be developed within high schools. In addition, school leadership teams could also concentrate on plans that ensure the safety of all involved with the high school. The interesting implication was the common high expectation of establishing work ethic within the students of the high school. Staffs and leadership teams should keep that in mind when establishing and executing student management plans and procedures within the school.

15. Overall alignment and importance of selected criteria among all stakeholders surveyed could widen the focus of lawmakers. That widened focus with lawmakers could lead to a different approach for accountability laws for high schools. It was evident from this study that how basic academic skills and problem solving are measured do not fit with the expectations of any of the stakeholder groups. When asked to prioritize, only 2.7% of the sample selected high standardized test scores as a need or expectation of high schools. In addition, a safety rating of high schools should be established and judged in order to address the expectation of safety.
16. The overall results from this study in terms of alignment and importance of expectations could give vital information to high school parents. That information could lend itself to understanding where differences exist and where advocacy for high school students is needed. Parents had higher expectations than lawmakers in several areas such as developing social skills within students, ensuring emotional health within students, and the use of varied instructional strategies and assessments. Parents could use this information to inform choices about high schools as well as targets for changing practice and accountability expectations within high schools—both locally and at the state level.

The results of this study could lead to an overall conclusion of a disconnect existing between lawmakers compared to parents and educators. This discrepancy seemed to exist between lawmakers and the other two groups on items and expectations related to individual students. This possibly speaks to the overall proximity to the work being done in high schools. Parents and educators have a much closer perspective to the outcomes and initiatives of high schools. This brings to light the issue of who is in the best position to evaluate the effectiveness

of a high school. From the results of this study, it appears as if the stakeholders that are closer to high schools have more aligned expectations compared to state-level lawmakers who are further removed. Trying to develop accountability that fits all high schools within an entire state is possibly too vague and, according to this study, does not evaluate many of the highest expectations. Quite possibly local expectations and accountability would be the most effective way to address accountability and evaluation of high schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations could be evaluated for further research:

1. A follow-up study could be constructed with data collection regarding the location of the school associated with the respondent. This would allow an analysis of expectations among rural, suburban, and urban high school stakeholders and speak to any differences based on the setting of the school.
2. Another research project could be designed to collect demographic information about the school associated with the stakeholder. Information about socioeconomic status as well as ethnicity percentages would allow examination of similarities and differences among schools serving different populations.
3. Data collected from lawmakers could include political party affiliation within an additional research project. That information would allow analysis and assessment of expectation similarities and differences among lawmakers in different parties.
4. A follow-up study could be conducted to include high school students as a stakeholder group for evaluation. A comparison of students with parents, educators, and lawmakers would be interesting and add to the description of expectations for high schools.

5. A follow-up study could be designed to determine more detailed meaning behind the low rating of high schools being small in size. Response items could be constructed to determine if stakeholders believe a sense of belonging is connected to the size of the high school and if groups also connect that sense of belonging to student learning.
6. Another study could be done to incorporate responses of Chamber of Commerce members or business leaders as a stakeholder group for analysis. It would be appealing to compare their expectation levels with the other stakeholder groups.
7. A study could be performed to analyze the same stakeholder responses within the United States for an expanded evaluation at the federal level of expectations of high schools. This type of study could include federal lawmakers and inform accountability of high schools from that federal perspective.
8. A parallel study could be conducted to evaluate elementary school expectations of the same stakeholders. The different level of schooling would have different expectations to prioritize and evaluate.
9. A similar study could also be done to analyze middle school expectations for the same stakeholders as well. Different characteristics would exist within a survey of stakeholder expectations due to the different level of education but would be valuable to evaluate.
10. An equivalent study could be performed in the same manner with a narrowed focus within a specific school corporation. Expectations could be elevated in order to make decisions at the local level for the high school.

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APPENDIX A: QUALITY SCHOOL SURVEY

Background

Please respond to the following statement about your relationship to high schools.

1. _____ Which of the following categories best describes your relationship with public high schools:
    a. Parent
    b. Educator
    c. Lawmaker

Expectations

Please respond on four-point scale (4 = essential, 3 = important, 2 = somewhat important, and 1 = not important) to the following statements regarding your expectations in terms of characteristics of high school effectiveness.

1. High schools should offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.
2. High schools should teach students to appreciate the arts.
3. High schools should develop students' social skills within their students.
4. High schools should ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.
5. High schools should promote citizenship and community responsibility.
6. High schools should teach physical health within the curriculum.
7. High schools should promote student work ethic to ensure success.
8. High schools should ensure the emotional health of students.
9. High schools should establish a safe and orderly environment.
10. High schools should establish positive home-school relationships.
11. High schools should frequently monitor student progress.
12. High schools should teach critical thinking and problem solving skills.
13. High schools should utilize contemporary technology and materials to teach students.
14. High schools should use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.
15. High schools should offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.
16. High schools should be small in size to ensure a sense of belonging within each student.
17. High schools should offer professional development that focuses on teachers being students of learning and gives them opportunities to grow and expand their expertise.

18. High schools should have a vision and mission statement that guides the decision-making process within the school.

Prioritize

Please choose three top priorities from the following statements about high school effectiveness with regard to your personal expectations of high schools.

1. High Schools should have high scores on standardized tests.
2. High schools should establish a safe and orderly environment.
3. High schools should offer a wide range of advanced courses for students.
4. High schools should ensure that students are prepared for skilled employment upon graduation.
5. High schools should utilize contemporary technology and materials to teach students.
6. High schools should teach physical health within the curriculum.
7. High schools should teach students to appreciate the arts.
8. High schools should promote citizenship and community responsibility.
9. High schools should offer a curriculum that teaches students to develop basic academic skills.
10. High schools should have graduation rates over 90%.
11. High schools should promote student work ethic to ensure success.
12. High schools should establish positive home-school relationships.

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO LAWMAKERS

February 2013

Dear Senator/Representative:

My name is Doug Miller, and I am the Principal of North Montgomery High School near Crawfordsville, Indiana. I am also a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University. For my dissertation, I have chosen to study stakeholder expectations of effective high schools. As a part of this study of expectations, I am attempting to collect responses from lawmakers. Therefore, I am respectfully requesting that you participate in the study by completing the Quality School Survey.

The expectations gathered from this survey will be extremely valuable as I study effectiveness characteristics of high schools. Your participation and facilitation of this survey will greatly contribute to the accuracy of this study and its conclusions.

The survey is brief and self-explanatory in nature. The survey is divided into two parts – the level of agreement with certain statements regarding high schools and then a ranking of characteristics of high schools. Respondents will be afforded complete anonymity, as personal information will not be gathered. Stakeholders must only select to which group they belong before responding to the survey.

Attached is the link to the electronic survey provided by the Qualtrix system and Indiana State University. Please feel free to contact me for clarification, if needed. My email is dmiller@nm.k12.in.us, and my daytime phone number is (765) 362-5140 ext. 224. Dr. Terry McDaniel, dissertation committee chair, may also be contacted at terry.mcdaniel@indstate.edu or at Indiana State University at (812) 237-3862. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your help and timely response to this survey.

Sincerely,

Doug Miller
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

February 2013

Dear Principal:

My name is Doug Miller, and I am the Principal of North Montgomery High School near Crawfordsville, Indiana. I am also a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University. For my dissertation, I have chosen to study stakeholder expectations of effective high schools. Therefore, I am respectfully requesting that your school participate in the study by completing the Quality School Survey.

The expectations gathered from this survey will be extremely valuable as I study effectiveness characteristics of high schools. Your participation and facilitation of this survey will greatly contribute to the accuracy of this study and its conclusions.

As a part of this study of expectations, I am attempting to collect responses from educators and parents. For that reason, I am requesting that your participation be two-fold. First, I ask that you forward the survey (electronically) to all educators within your high school building. Below is a statement you may send to the educators in your building to accompany the link to the survey.

Second, I ask that you forward the survey (electronically) to all parents who have students attending your high school. There is also a message that can be sent to parents from your high school below in order to introduce the survey.

The survey is brief and self-explanatory in nature. The survey is divided into two parts – the level of agreement with certain statements regarding high schools and then a ranking of characteristics of high schools. Respondents will be afforded complete anonymity, as personal information will not be gathered. Stakeholders must only select to which group they belong before responding to the survey.

Attached is the link to the electronic survey provided by the Qualtrix system and Indiana State University. Once again, I ask that you forward the link to all educators and all parents within your high school.

Please feel free to contact me for clarification, if needed. My email is dmiller@nm.k12.in.us, and my daytime phone number is (765) 362-5140 ext. 224. Dr. Terry McDaniel, dissertation committee chair, may also be contacted at terry.mcdaniel@indstate.edu or at Indiana State University at (812) 237-3862. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject,

you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your help and timely response to this survey.

Sincerely,

Doug Miller
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D: STATEMENT FOR EDUCATORS

Dear Educator:

My name is Doug Miller, and I am the Principal of North Montgomery High School near Crawfordsville, Indiana. I am also a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University. For my dissertation, I have chosen to study stakeholder expectations of effective high schools. Therefore, I am respectfully requesting your participation in the study by completing the Quality School Survey.

Your participation is important in gathering as much data as possible concerning the expectations of high schools. The survey is brief and self-explanatory in nature. The survey is divided into two parts – the level of agreement with certain statements regarding high schools and then a ranking of characteristics of high schools. Respondents will be afforded complete anonymity, as personal information will not be gathered. You must only select to which stakeholder group you belong at the beginning of the survey.

Attached is the link to the electronic survey provided by the Qualtrix system and Indiana State University.

Please feel free to contact me for clarification, if needed. My email is dmiller@nm.k12.in.us, and my daytime phone number is (765) 362-5140 ext. 224. Dr. Terry McDaniel, dissertation committee chair, may also be contacted at terry.mcdaniel@indstate.edu or at Indiana State University at (812) 237-3862. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your help and timely response to this survey.

Sincerely,

Doug Miller
Doctoral Candidate