



Locke High School College Going Culture Survey Report
Year 2: (2003-2004)

Student Survey: Comparison between Year 1 & Year 2

Tarek Azzam

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Outreach Evaluation Project
Marvin C. Alkin, Project Director
Sandy Taut, Coordinator

Graduate School of Education and Information Studies
UCLA

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Introduction

After completing Year 1 (2002-2004) of data collection and analysis for Locke high school (2002-2003), members from Center X and the evaluation team presented the findings of the survey to the Locke teaching staff and administration. The presentation raised many questions and concerns about students' future expectations and the obstacles facing them at home and school.

After the discussion, we started to think about ways to modify the survey instrument to try to answer some of the questions raised. Most of the survey items remained the same in order to make comparisons between student responses in Year 1 and Year 2. However, using the questions raised by teachers, parent representatives and district administrators, we were able to generate items that addressed their concerns. Some of the new items focused on: who students turn to for advice and what they see as roadblocks towards attending college.

This report also includes comparison results between student responses in Year 1 and in Year 2. The intent of the comparison is to track changes in student attitudes and perspectives of their future. Differences from year to year could be seen as indicators of changes in how students view their school environment and can also reflect the on-going work and effort of everyone involved in the school.

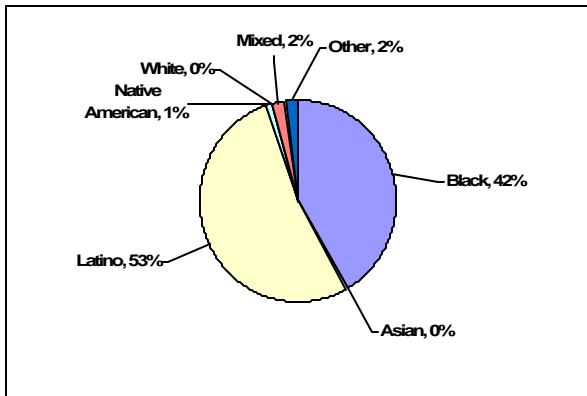
The report will be divided into four sections addressing thematic divisions in the survey. The first section will focus on comparing the demographics of the student population. The second section compares student future expectations from year one to year two. The third section looks at how students perceive their family, teachers, friends, and school. The fourth section focuses on students' reported study habits. The final section will look at the people that students turn to for advice and what students see as obstacles to getting into college.

Section 1: Demographics

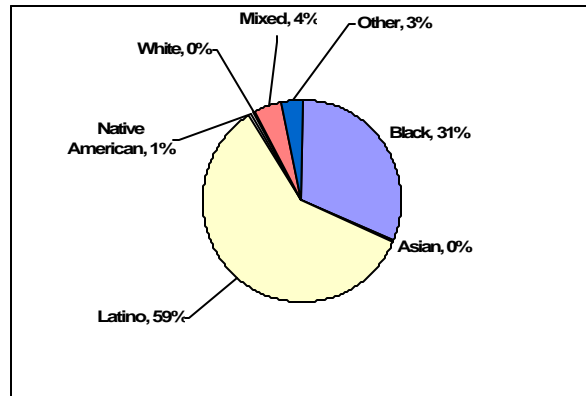
The racial makeup of the schools did not significantly change from Year 1 to Year 2. The majority of students at Locke school were Latino (59%, Year 2), and African American (31%, Year 2) (Graph 1a, 1b). Compared to the reported demographics in the same year (2003-2004) from the school website¹, we found relatively similar ethnic distributions with the majorities being Latino (62%), and African American (37%). Grade level distribution was also more proportional to actual school numbers in Year 2. Grade wise, the majority of students were from the 9th (37%) and 10th grade (33%), followed by 11th (21%) and 12th (10%) graders.

In addition, the survey response rate increased in the second year, increasing from 30% in Year 1 (total of 913 students) to almost 52% in Year 2 (total of 1,589 students). This increase in the response rate was largely due to the help of school staff in coordinating survey distribution and collection with Center X and the evaluation team. Their help was instrumental in getting the information needed and having the process run smoothly.

Graph 1a. Ethnicity Year 1



Graph 1b. Ethnicity Year 2



Section 2: Student Future Expectations

The future expectations of students is an important indicator of how they value the time they spend at school. Students who do not expect to graduate will most likely not be as motivated to participate and learn in the classroom. On the opposite end of the spectrum, students who expect to go to a university or a community college will likely value the time spent in the classroom. For this reason, we were interested in looking at

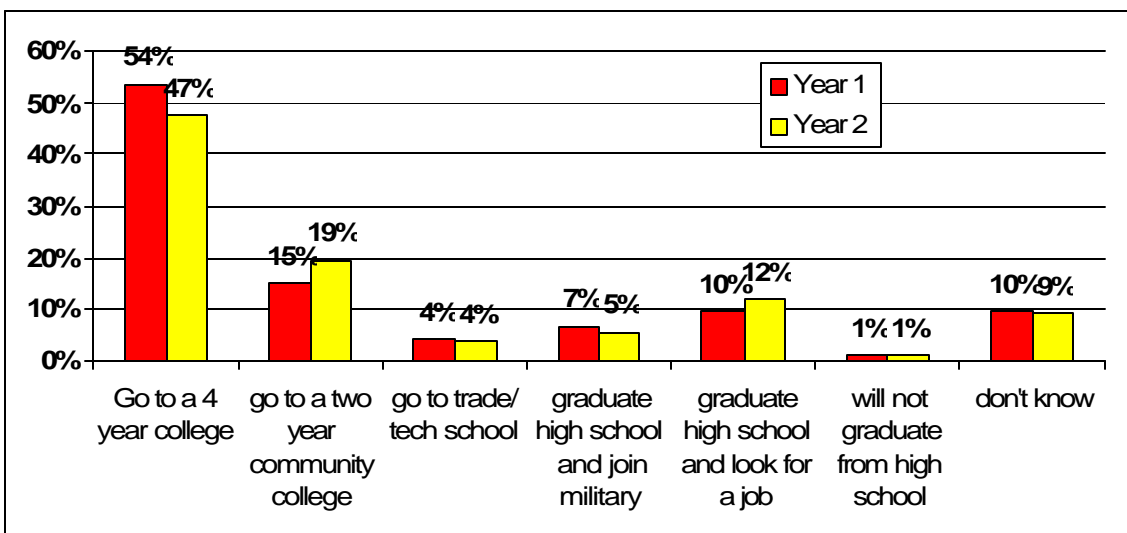
¹ The website is <http://search.lausd.k12.ca.us/cgi-bin/fccgi.exe?w3exec=school.profile.content&which=8733>

what students expected in the future, and how they viewed their own academic performance.

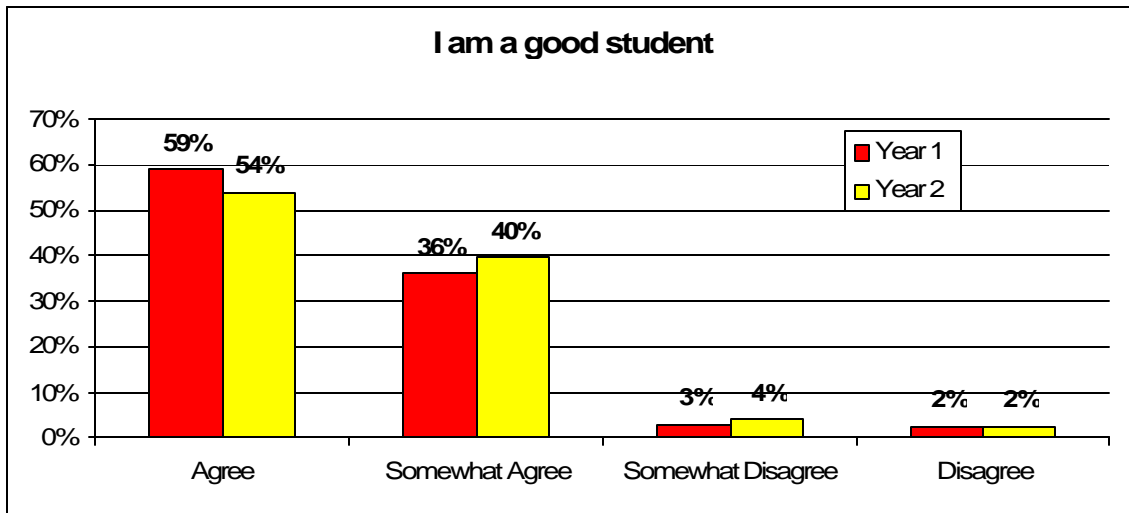
Looking at student responses to what they expect to be doing in the future (Graph 2) we find that student expectations for attending a 4-year college dropped slightly from 54% in Year 1 to 47% in Year 2 (Graph 2). This drop was counteracted by an increase in the percentage of students who expected to attend a community college after high school (Year 1=15%, Year 2=19%). There seems to be a general increase in student expectations for attending some form of higher education after high school, but not necessarily at a 4-year institution. These trends in college expectations should be examined further by speaking with students. It may be the case that students are becoming more aware of what it takes to get into a 4-year college and are adjusting their expectations accordingly, or school staff, parents and other influences may have shifted their emphasis from 4-year institutions to 2-year institutions. As for the remainder of the responses, the overall trend did not change from Year 1 to Year 2. Only 1% of students did not expect to graduate from high school. The remainder of students expected to graduate from high school and go to a trade/technical school or join the military. There were also some students (about 10%) that did not know what they expected to do in the future (Graph 2).

When focusing on how students viewed themselves academically, we found that there were no major changes from Year 1 to Year 2. The overwhelming majority of students (95%) believed that they were good students (Graph 3). So there is a situation where students believe that they are good students, but a good number of them do not expect to go on to a 4-year college. Student focus groups are needed to attempt to further understand this trend.

Graph 2. Student expectations of their future



Graph 3.



Section 3: Student perception of Family, Friends, Teachers, Counselors and School.

This section is the largest section in this report, because it encompasses many different student views and perspectives. Due to its size, this section is divided into sub-sections addressing student views on each individual person or group including perceptions of family, teachers, and school.

A. Perceptions of Family (I have literature to support claims)

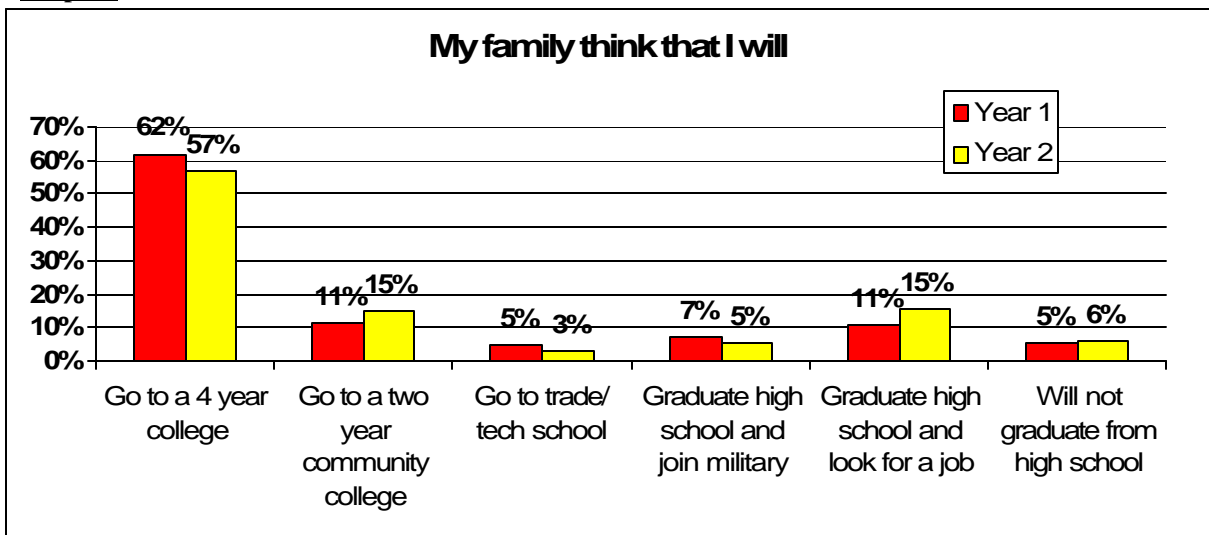
Students with families that support their academic engagement in school and future plans typically do better in school and have higher expectations for their future. Although it is difficult and often inappropriate for the school to interfere in family circumstances, understanding student perceptions of their family circumstances may provide insight as to how the family can be a source of academic support for students and for the school.

The results of the survey show a slight decrease in family expectations and engagement, as perceived by students. The majority of students believed that their family expected them to go to college (Graph 4), but this expectation was slightly lower in Year 2 (57%) than Year 1 (62%). In addition, a higher percentage of students in Year 2 (15%) believed that their family expected them to go to a community college as compared to Year 1 (11%) (Graph 4). These results follow the same trend that appeared in the previous section, there seems to be a drop in the percentage of students who expect to attend a 4-year college/university and an increase in the percentage of students who

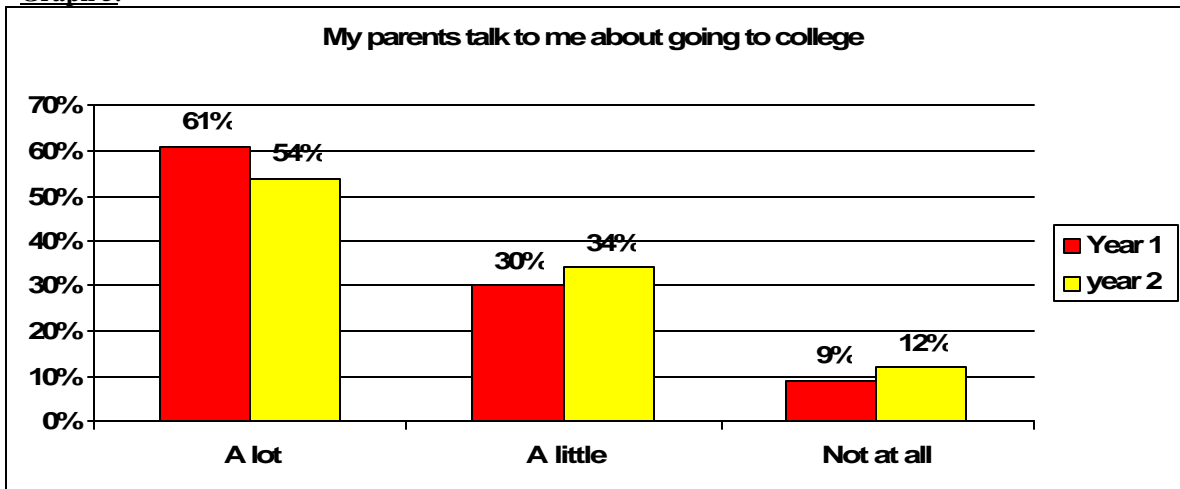
expect to attend a community college. Interestingly, when compared to student’s own expectations, there was a larger percentage of students who believed that their family did not expect them to graduate high school (students =1%, family =5%) (Graph 4).

As for the level of perceived conversation about college, most students reported that their parents talk to them about college a lot. When comparing Year 1 responses to Year 2, we find that there is a drop in the perceived *frequency* of conversations about college. In Year 1, 61% of students indicated that their parents spoke to them a lot about college, while in Year 2, 54% of students reported a lot of college talks with their family (Graph 5). There was also a slight increase in the percent of students who indicated that they never talk to their family about college (Year 1=9%, Year 2=12%) (Graph 5). Although this trend may be slight, a deeper investigation of this phenomenon through student focus groups may be helpful in determining the potential impact it may have on students’ future achievement.

Graph. 4



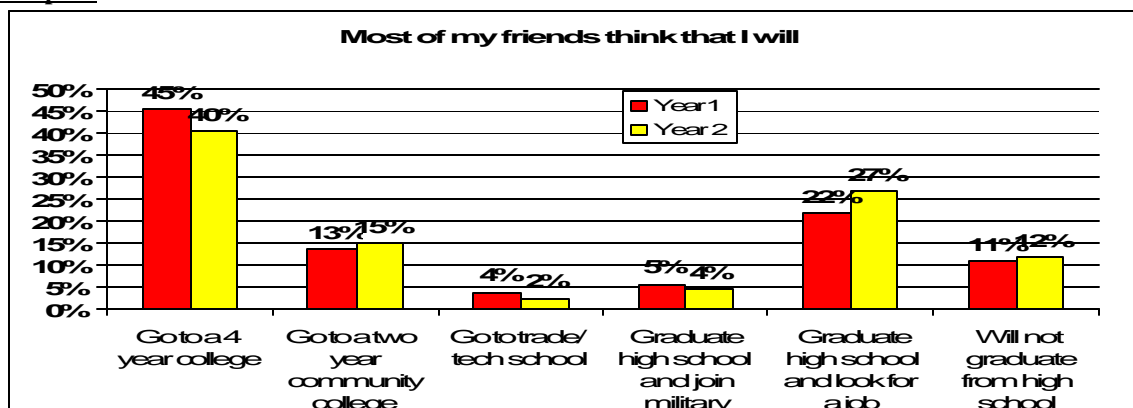
Graph 5.



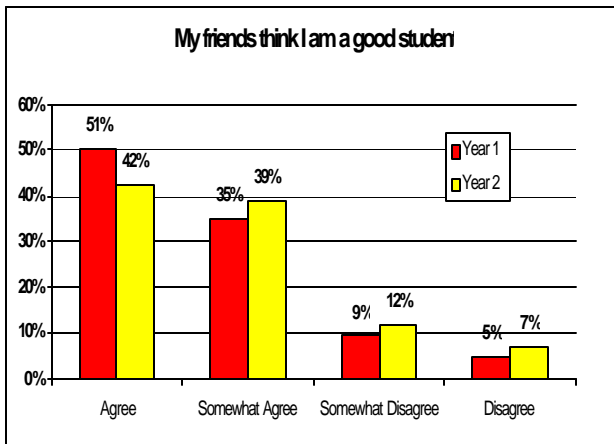
Peer influence has been recognized as a major contributing factor to student perceptions of themselves and their future. The value systems held by peers will inevitably influence a person's own values. This observation led us to focus on how students viewed their peers and how they believed their peers viewed them. What we found was that most students believed that their friends expected them to go to college (Graph 6). Although this was true for both years, there was a 5% drop in this expectation in the second year. It should be noted that the overall percentage of students who believed that their friends expected them to go to college was the second lowest of all student responses to similar questions. That is, peers have lower expectations regarding future career paths than do parents. Similarly, the percentage of students who believed that their friends expected them to drop out of high school (12%) or look for a job (27%) was also amongst the highest reported percentages (Graph 6), meaning that students believe that relative to other people around them (e.g. teachers, parents, etc.) their friends do not expect them to go on to college. These results could indicate that students do not view their friends as potential supporters of their personal college aspirations.

In contrast, we found that the majority of students in Year 1 (around 80%) believed that their friends considered them good students (Graph 7). This trend dropped in Year 2, but only by 5 percentage points (Graph 7). This finding is interesting, because it shows that within their peer group, students believe that they are good students. In addition, students believed that their peers are also good students. For example, when asked if other students cared about getting good grades, the majority of students (62%) indicated that their peers do care about getting good grades (Graph 8). These trends can be seen as running counter to each other. On the one hand, students believe that their friends do not expect them to go to college, and on the other, students believe that they and their friends are good students. These results require deeper examination of student expectations to understand which is more representative of the overall student population.

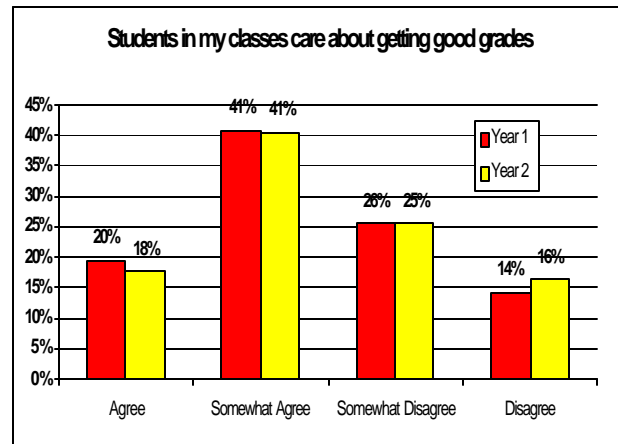
Graph 6.



Graph 7.



Graph 8.



C. Perceptions of Teachers

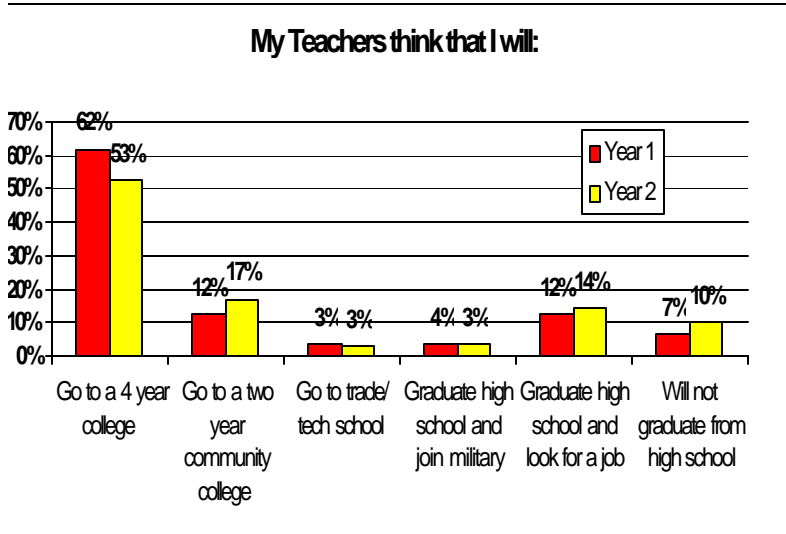
To attain the most complete picture of student expectations and how they view the individuals surrounding them, (e.g. friends, family etc.) it is helpful to understand how students view their teachers and how they think their teachers view them. In some respects teachers can be seen as academic role models for students. The daily interactions between both groups in the classroom and school can influence the way students view their own academic progress and abilities, thus influencing their future academic expectations.

The results of the survey indicated that students believe that teachers expect most of them to attain very high academic goals. Focusing on what students believe their teachers expect of them, we find that the majority of students (Year 1=74%, Year 2=70%) thought that their teachers expect them to go into some form of higher education (Graph 9). These results are amongst the highest relative to other groups that students were asked about. This is a relatively positive finding because it points out that most students do view their teachers as supporters of high academic achievement.

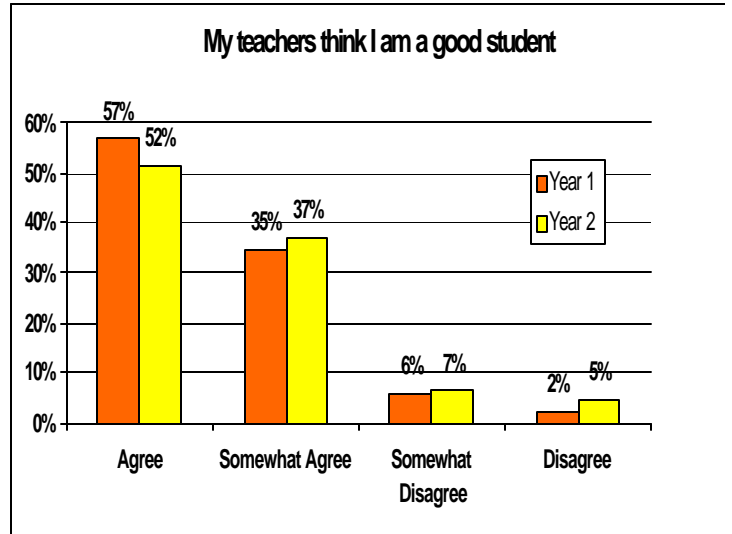
In addition, the majority of students (Year 1= 93%, Year 2= 89%) believed that their teachers considered them good students (Graph 10). In addition, over 80% of students believed that their teachers cared about their learning (Graph 11). In terms of teaching rigor, most students (Year 1=64%, Year 2=57%) believed that teachers made them study hard at school (Graph 12). All these results were slightly lower in the second

year relative to Year 1, but they still represented a large majority of the student population.

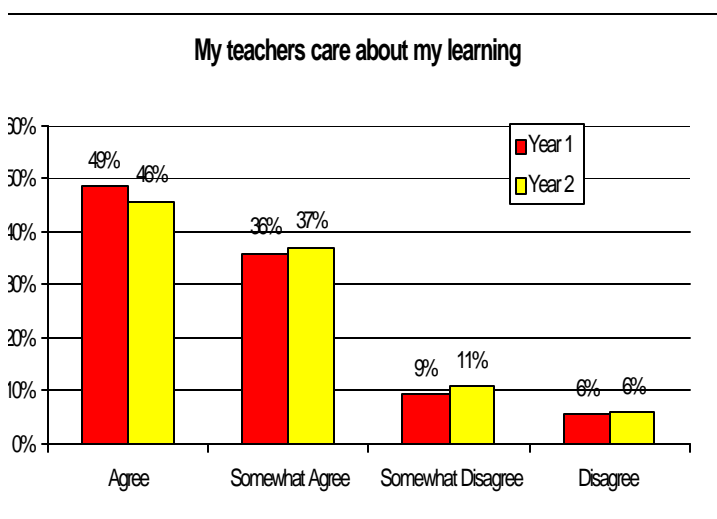
Graph 9.



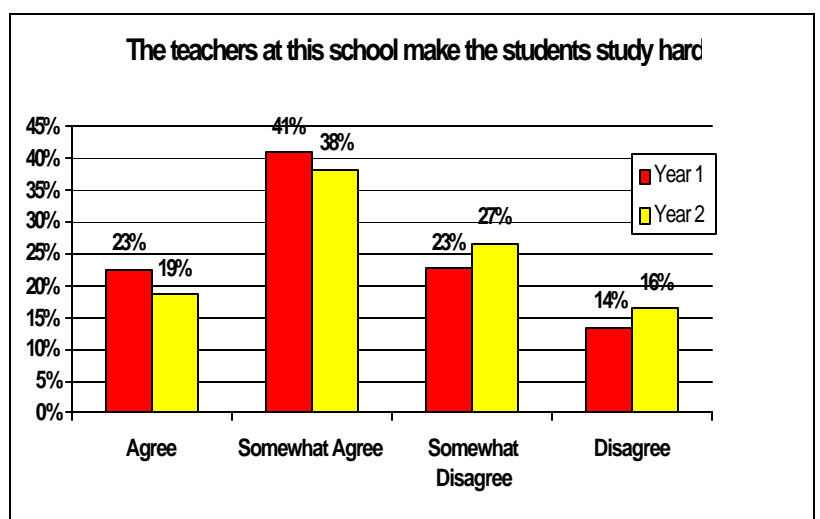
Graph 10.



Graph 11.



Graph 12.

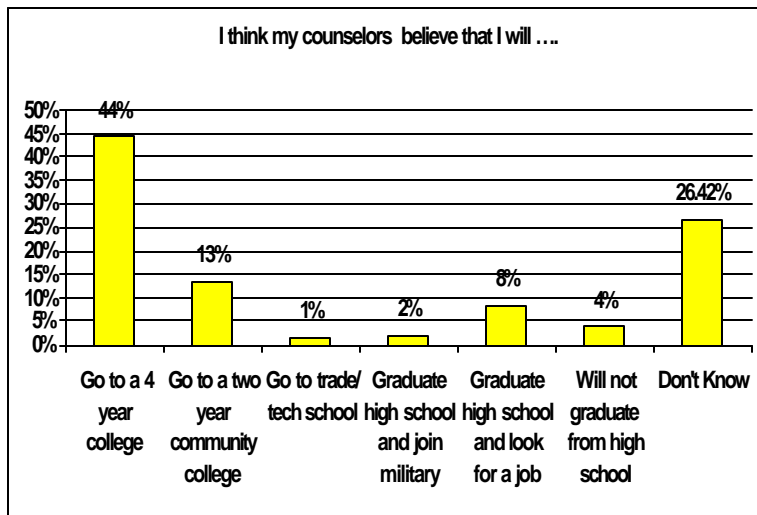


D. Perceptions of Counselors

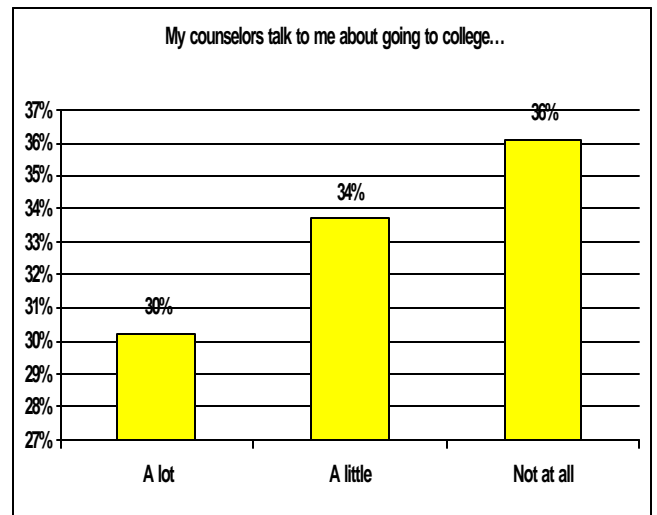
In the second year a few items were added that referred to student perceptions of their counselors. In a large school, such as Locke, it is difficult for counselors to spend extended periods of time with each student, but it is still important to gain a glimpse of how students view these interactions. Looking at the results, we find that the majority of students (57%) believe that their counselors expect them to go on to some form of higher education (Graph 13). This result is also coupled with the highest percentage of students

(26%) indicating that they did not know what their counselors expected of them (Graph 13). This finding is supported by results indicating that relative to teachers and parents, counselors and students conversed less about going to college (Graph 14). However, the majority of students (64%) did indicate that they have had some or a lot of talks with their counselors about college attendance (Graph 14). These results are interesting because they reflect the difficulty of being able to reach out to every student at the school given the sheer size of the school. This is the first year that we have asked such questions about counselors and we look forward to seeing further information in the coming year regarding these questions.

Graph 13.



Graph 14



E. Perceptions of School

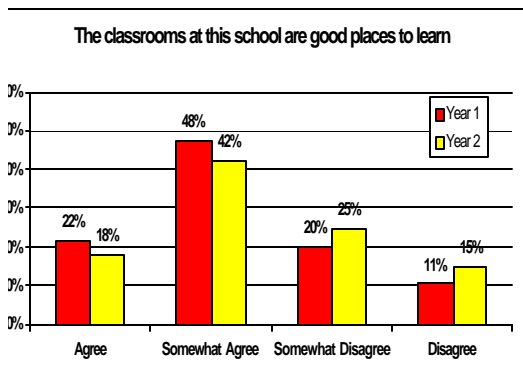
Since students spend a considerable amount of time at school and in classes we wanted to understand how they viewed their school environment. Looking at the way students view their day-to-day time in the classroom and school, we found that the majority of students (60% to 70%) think that classes are a good place to learn (Graph 15). It should be noted that there was a 10% drop from Year 1 to Year 2 (year 1=70%, year 2=60%), meaning that in the second year more students believed that the classroom was *not* a good place to learn. This result could be related to an increase in the number of disruptions in classes. We found that in Year 2 more students believed that there were more disruptions in their classes (went up by 5%, from 33% in Year 1 to 37% in Year 2) (Graph 16). This is also coupled with more students in Year 2 indicating that there were

not enough textbooks to use and take home (Graph 17). The increase in perceived classroom disruptions and lack of textbooks could be contributing to students having a more negative perception of school classrooms. The drop in Year 2 should be examined further in student focus groups and with school staff to understand the underlying reasons, and possible measures to adjust or correct for it.

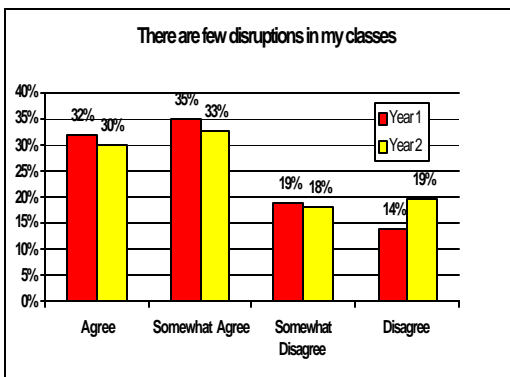
Focusing on the broader context of the school we find that a large majority of students (62% to 70%) believed that the school does get them ready for college (Graph 18). There was also a similar drop in this perception from Year 1 to Year 2. In Year 1, 70% thought that the school was preparing them for college, and in Year 2 this number dropped to 62% (Graph 18). This drop may also be related to reasons mentioned previously (more disruptions in class, and/or lack of textbooks).

Looking at how they view their course work and classes we found that most students (57% to 60%) believed that when they graduate they will have completed all the needed classes to get into college (Graph 19). This number is encouraging, but there is still a large proportion of students (32% to 34%) who are not sure whether they are taking the appropriate courses to get into college. (Graph 19). In addition, there appears to be a split between students on the rigor of the classes they are taking (Graph 20). In both years, half of the students believed that their classes were hard while the other half did not. So the perceived rigor of classes is in disputed amongst the students.

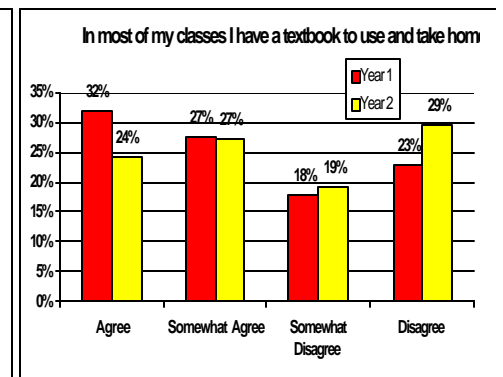
Graph 15.



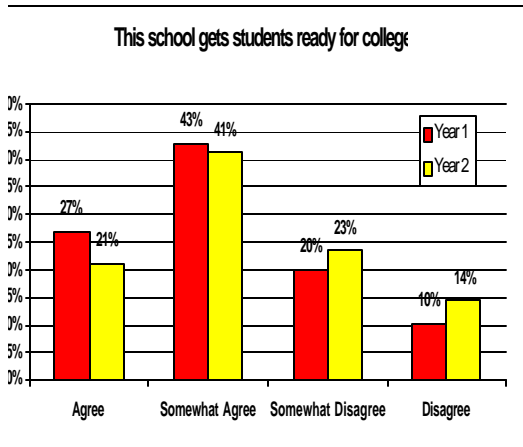
Graph 16



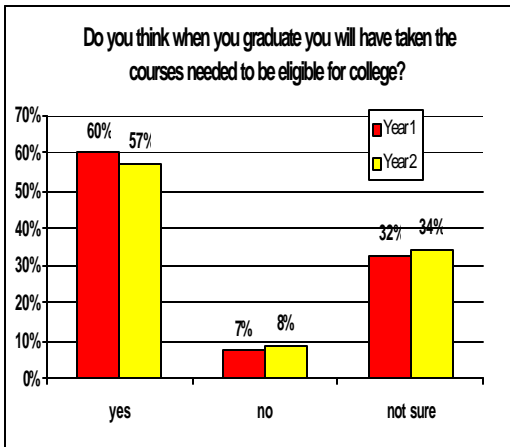
Graph 17



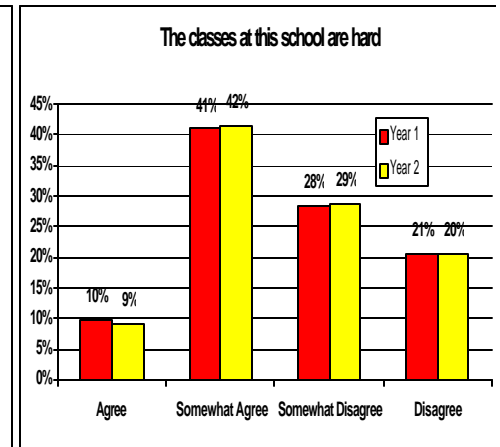
Graph 18.



Graph 19



Graph 20



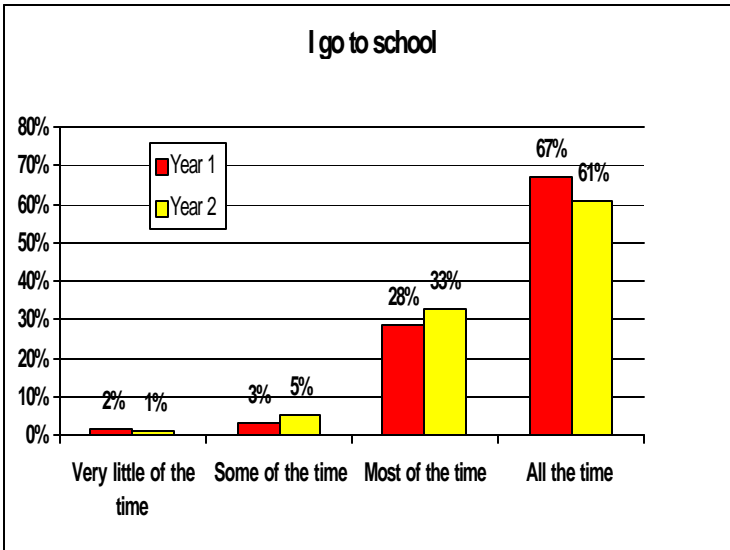
Section 4: Study habits

One way to see student progress is to look at changes in academic habits. When students were asked about how often they came to school, most (Year 1 =95%, Year 2=94%) indicated that they came to school all or most of the time (Graph 21). Although this represents a large proportion of students who go to school, we realized from further discussions that the students taking the survey were also the students that were most likely to be at school. For this reason, students were also asked about how often their friends went to school. We found that there was a drop in the in the perceived school attendance. Students reported that about 81% of their friends came to school all or most of the time (Graph 22). This drop may be true and should be confirmed with school attendance records.

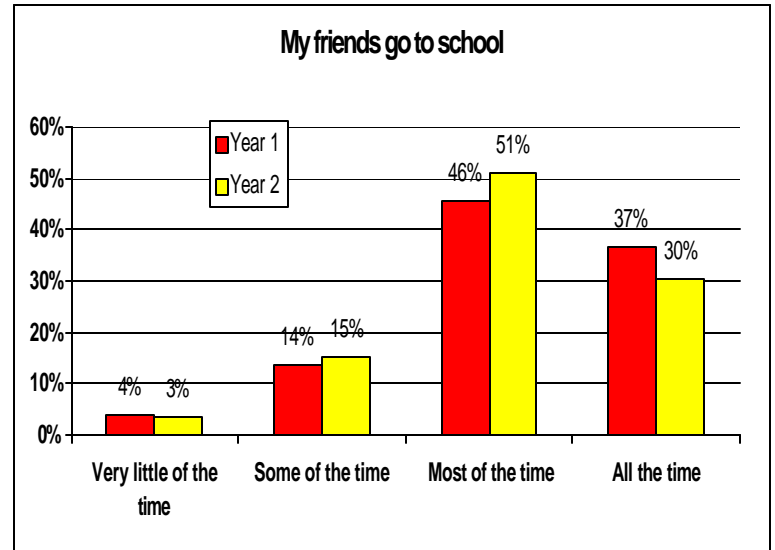
In addition, we wanted to look at how many hours of homework students did, and relate that to how many hours they think they need to do to get into college. We found that most students (Year 1=43%, Year 2 =58%) reported doing between zero to two hours of homework a week (Graph 23). This result was even more pronounced in Year 2 where 15% more students reported doing zero to two hours of homework (Graph 23), meaning that, overall, students reported that they spent less time on homework in Year 2 than in Year 1. In addition, students were asked how many hours of homework they thought they needed to do in order to get into college. The most frequent response was, “I don’t know” (Graph 24), but the other responses indicated that students knew that they needed to do

more than zero to two hours of homework a week. These results indicate a gap between what students are doing and what they think they should be doing. In addition, it appears that a large proportion of students do not know what it is they need to do, in terms of school work, to prepare for college. This issue should be addressed with students to provide them with further information about what it takes to get into college.

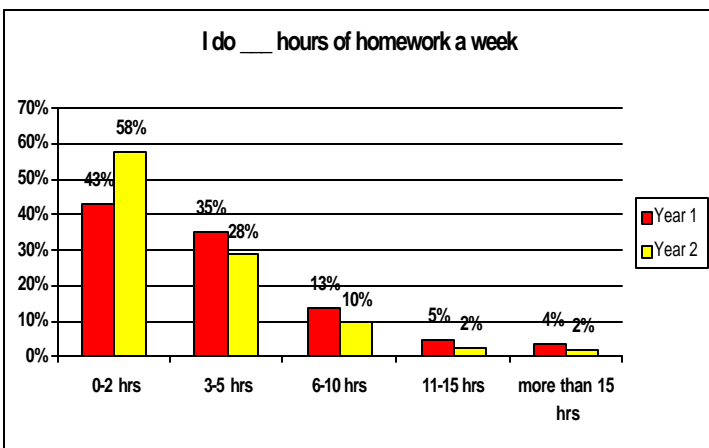
Graph 21.



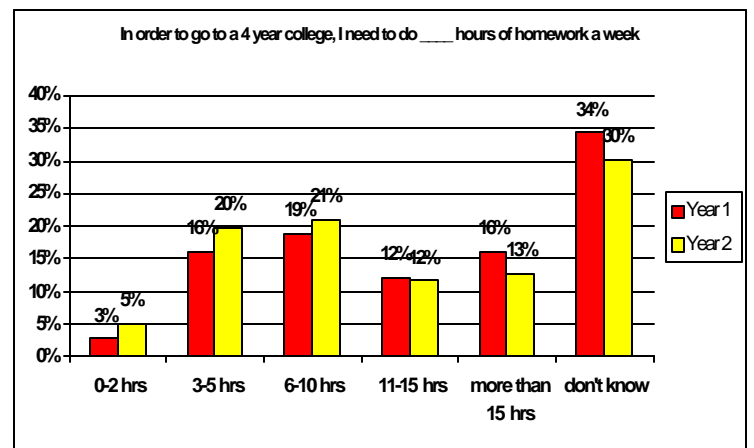
Graph 22.



Graph 23.



Graph 24.



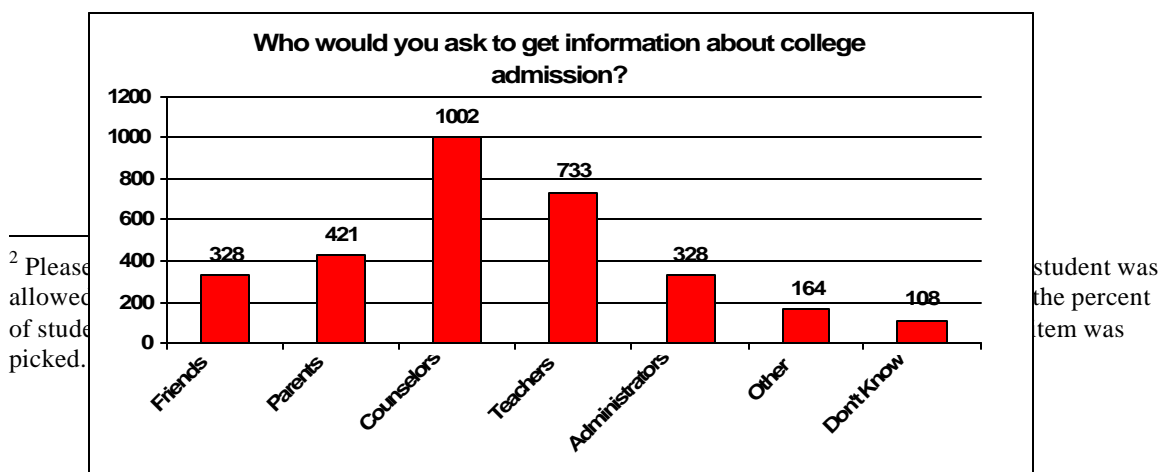
As mentioned previously, some of the items that were added in the second year survey focused on the people that students turned to for information about college, and the obstacles facing them on their way to college. These two areas were seen as vital because they form the basis for most of the expectations discussed earlier. Although it is difficult for a school to exact changes that will eliminate most of the obstacles mentioned, it is still important to be aware of them and what they represent. In addition, knowing

what obstacles students deem most daunting may provide information on areas the school can address in order to focus school efforts in assisting students on their path to post-secondary education.

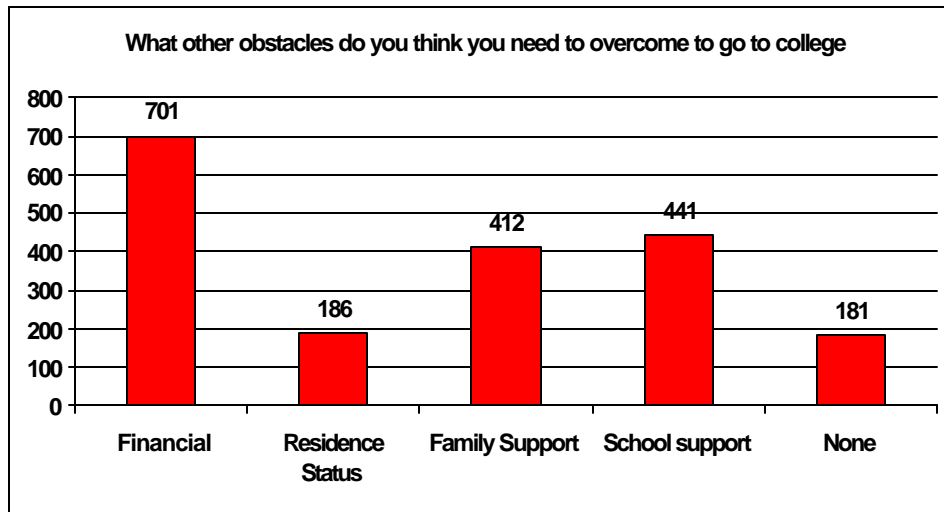
Looking at results², we found that most students (a little above 1000) indicated counselors as a resource for obtaining information about college (Graph 25). Students also indicated that teachers (733) and parents (421) are individuals they would turn to in order to learn more about college (Graph 25). It appears that students view school staff as their main resource for obtaining information about college. This creates a difficult situation, especially for the school counselors, because (as earlier findings indicated) there seems to be relatively less conversation about college between students and counselors. More contact is preferable but difficult due to the large student population. One possible solution to this problem is the involvement and training of student peer advisors to help ease the burden and spread the word about college admission requirements. This effort may increase the flow of information about college and help students set and work goals.

We asked students to indicate possible obstacles to going to college. Most students (701) cited financial considerations as their main reason for not being able to attend college (Graph 26). This was followed by school support (441) and family support (412). These results are not completely surprising. The citing of financial reasons as an obstacle may be related to the relatively low socio-economic status of students at Locke. What is difficult to explain is why students cited school support as an obstacle. This could be due to previously mentioned reasons, such as not enough textbooks or more disruptions in class. Further conversations with students should be conducted in focus groups to understand the reasons for this trend.

Graph 25.



Graph 26.



Conclusions

To be added after presentation to school staff, administrators, and students.