Locke High School
College Going Culture Survey Report
Aggregate College Going Culture Survey Report

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FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

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This report is the final summary report for the College Going Culture Survey Project coordinated between LAUSD's District 7 and Locke High School, and UCLA's Center X and the SRM Evaluation Group. This report is an aggregate of four years of data collected from both staff and students at Locke High School about their beliefs and expectations for college.

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Introduction and Background

For the past four years (2002-2006) students and teachers at Locke High School were given a survey aimed at capturing their beliefs and expectations for college. The survey was generally referred to as the "college going culture survey" and was first given in December of 2002, then in June of 2004, June 2005, and June 2006. Survey items asked students about their expectations for the future, their views of the school, and beliefs about the people they interact with on a daily basis (e.g. parents, friends, and teachers). Additionally, school staff (including teachers, counselors, and administrators) were asked about their expectations for students, interactions with parents, views on the school, and job satisfaction. The survey was administered with the intention of understanding how students and staff view themselves, their school, and their community at large.

The creation of the Survey Series was prompted by a desire to understand the expectations of students' post-secondary education and employment options. This desire is rooted in the attempt to better understand what kind of information students receive about post-secondary options, where they turn for information, what they see as impediments to their postsecondary aspirations, whether their aspirations are aligned with self-reported academic indicators, views of the school, and their beliefs about people they interact with at school and home (e.g. parents, friends, administrators and teachers).

Each year the results of the survey are presented to the Locke teaching staff, counselors, and administration. Many pertinent questions are often raised in these meetings, leading to a better understanding of the results obtained through the surveys. For example, in the focus groups conducted following the June 2005 presentation of the 2004 survey results, members of the teaching staff, counselors, and administrators discussed observations made during the presentation, challenges they saw to creating a high school culture that supports students' post-secondary expectations, possible solutions to those challenges, and potential action items. The feedback that students and staff have provided has contributed to the creation of a better survey instrument each year

and helps the researchers involved in this project to have a better understanding of the college going culture at Locke High School.

Each year, a set of reports has been produced. Previous reports are divided into sections addressing various thematic divisions in the survey, such as school demographics, future expectations, perceptions of students, family, teachers, friends, and school, study habits, and obstacles for getting into college. Year three reports focus on comparing student and staff responses from the first (2002-03), second (2003-04), and third (2004-05) year survey administrations. The intent of the comparison in the student report is to track trends in student perceptions about their school, their post-secondary expectations and options, obstacles to going to college, and who they turn to for advice regarding college. The intent of the comparison in the staff report is to track trends in staff perceptions about students, the school, and their jobs at Locke High School. Differences from year to year could be seen as indicators of change in how students, teachers, counselors, and administration view their school environment, and can also reflect the on-going work and effort of everyone involved in the school. Each of the previous reports can be found on the SRM Evaluation Group Website[1].

The reports in Years 2 and 3 were designed to look at change over time from Year 1. Although we did see a slight increase in expectations for students and slight increases on the overall positive perception of the school, in general, survey response did not change more than 10 percentage points and the vast majority of responses changed less than 5 percentage points, often fluctuating up and down between years. Because there was relatively little change over time we hoped to present this year's findings in a new light. We decided to aggregate the data over four years, looking at the general picture of the college going culture at Locke High School. This aggregate perspective is driven by the research of McClafferty, McDonough, and Nuñez (2002), who delineate the nine

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[1] The website is: http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/~srmevaluationgroup/

principles of a successful college going culture and how to build one in any school. [2] The report at hand is also organized using the nine principle structure.

According to McClafferty, McDonough and Nunez (2002), a college going culture consists of the following nine principles: college talk, clear expectations, information and resources, comprehensive counseling model, testing and curriculum, faculty involvement, family involvement, college partnerships, and articulation. Each of these principles will be discussed below in more detail in the "Creating a College Going Culture" section. The survey series are focused on the high school environment, because for many of the students at Locke High School, information about college and post-secondary options is not available at home. Students depend on the school to provide this support, and the information offered through this survey can help in understanding student perceptions of their environment and how staff and parents' perceptions intersect.

The use of an organizational culture and climate framework stems from the desire of the evaluation team and school representatives to understand how the constructs of culture and climate impact the individual decision-making processes of students, and how the normative expectations of post-secondary choices are conveyed to students. The impact of the high school college going culture on the development of post-secondary aspirations and expectations is particularly important for students who are limited to the school environment for obtaining information about post-secondary options. According to McDonough (1998), high school college going cultures can either expand on the perceived college choices available to students or institutionally confine those choices depending on the nature of the college culture within the school[3]. Furthermore, she contends that the high school college going culture is created through an intersection of the internal school culture and that of the community served by the school. This is why the College Going Culture Survey Series attempts to capture the perceptions of students,

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[2] McClafferty, K.A., McDonough, P.M., Nunez, A., (2002, April). What is a College Culture? Facilitating College Preparation through Organizational Change. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

[3] McDonough, P.M., (1998). Structuring Opportunity: A Cross-Case Analysis of Organizational Cultures, Climates, and Habiti. In C.A. & T.R. Mitchell (eds.), Sociology of Education: Emerging Perspectives. New York: SUNY Press, p. 181-210.

peers, teachers, administrators, and parents, because each group contributes to the bounding of college expectations and to the college going culture of the school.

The terms culture and climate are often used interchangeably. However, it is useful to define these terms in a way that captures and exemplifies their central nature and use in this evaluation. Peterson and Spencer (1990) state that culture is a construct that "focuses on the deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organization" (p. 6)[4]. For example, a *high school's college going culture* would be its values regarding college attendance and its beliefs about the possible destinations for students after high school[5]. Climate, on the other hand, is considered malleable and responsive to change and the focus is at an individual level[6]. Peterson and Spencer (1990) define climate as the "current common patterns of important dimensions of organizational life or its members' perceptions of and attitudes toward those dimensions" (p.7). In the case of the college going climate within high schools, the *high school college going climate* would be the current individual perceptions and views regarding the possible behaviors (choices) in relation to college choice in a specific school (McDonough, 1998). By learning about the college going climate of Locke High School based on the perceptions of individuals, we can amalgamate this information and make inferences regarding the overall college going culture of the school.

By collecting information, analyzing it, writing annual reports, and sharing the information with the Locke High School community, the hope is that this information will initiate conversation and action amongst school community members that will foster a college going culture that gets students, teachers, counselors, and parents focused on making college and other post-secondary outcomes a reality for students.

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[4] Peterson, M., Spencer, M., (1990). "Understanding Academic Culture and Climate." In *Assessing Academic Climate and Cultures*. Edited by William G. Tierney. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, New Directions for Institutional Research.
[5] See McDonough (1998), footnote 3.
[6] See Peterson and Spencer (1990), footnote 4.

Creating a College Going Culture

Disadvantaged students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, or from families unfamiliar with the United States educational system (such as recent immigrants), or who have parents with lower levels of educational attainment, find the path to higher education much more difficult to navigate than their affluent counterparts (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000)[7]. This is due, in part, to the gap in college knowledge that disadvantaged students face (Tierney, 1980 as cited in Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000a)[8]. Knowledge about college is often unavailable at home and high schools are unprepared to support students, other than through the provision of information, in the college choice process (McDonough, 2002).

According to the California Department of Education, a little over a third of California high school graduates are eligible for the University of California schools or the California State University campuses. This means that two thirds of California graduates do not complete the UC/CSU course requirements and/or other requirements. Moreover, there are significant disparities between racial groups. African Americans and Hispanic/ Latino students are two of the groups with the lowest percentages of students completing these requirements (25% and 21% respectively) (MacDonald & Dorr, 2006)[9]. Considering that Locke High School is composed of a largely African American (36.8%) and Hispanic/Latino (62.9%) student population,[10] these statistics should be of concern. For instance, on the 2005 Senior Survey conducted by Locke High School at the end of the school year, only 33% of the senior class reported that they would be attending a four-year college the following year.

Significantly increasing the number of low SES and racially underrepresented students applying to and enrolling in college requires that high schools foster a college

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[7] Cabrera & La Nasa. (2002a). Understanding the College-Choice Process. In A. F. Cabrera & S.M. La Nasa (Eds.), *Understanding The College Choice of Disadvantages Students*: Vol. XXVII, No. 3. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, no.107. (p. 5-22). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

[8] See Cabrera & La Nasa (2000a), Footnote 7.

[9] MacDonald, M.F. & Dorr, A. (2006). "Creating a College Going Culture: A Resource Guide.

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

going culture that gets students, teachers, counselors, and parents focused on making college a reality for students (McClafferty et al., 2002). Doing so requires building a strong college going culture where all students are "prepared for a full range of post-secondary options through structural, motivational, and experiential college preparatory opportunities" (McDonald & Dorr, 2006). However, creating a college going culture requires a commitment from the school administration, support staff, teachers, and counselors; belief that *everyone* is a college counselor, and dedication to creating strong ties with parents and school communities.

In a conference paper McClafferty et al. (2002) delineated nine basic principles of a college going culture. Following are descriptions of each[11].

- *College talk-* Clear and constant communication is necessary to convey the requirements of getting to college and what it takes to stay on the college path while in high school. This communication includes the verbal and non-verbal communication between teachers, students, and parents.

- *Clear expectations-* Preparing students for a full range of postsecondary options requires that the goals of college preparation be clearly defined, communicated and integrated into the daily routines of the school.

- *Information and resources-* Comprehensive and current college information must be accessible to students. Teachers and counselors share responsibility for making students aware of the information that is available. Generally counselors collect and maintain college information, and teachers must incorporate this information into students' daily classroom activities.

- *Testing and curriculum-* For students to be successful in their attempt to attain admittance to college, both the provision of a college preparatory curriculum and preparation for standardized tests such as the PSAT, SAT, and ACT is necessary. This requires that schools provide all students with college preparatory curriculum that will ensure their eligibility to apply to college, as well as adequate standardized test preparation. Schools exhibiting this principle will take steps to educate students, parents, and

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[11] For a detailed and creative example of how to turn these principles into a solid action plan, please see "Creating a College Going Culture: A Resource Guide (2006), written by Melissa Friedman MacDonald and Aimée Dorr based on the McClafferty et al. (2002) paper.

staff of the curricular requirements necessary to apply to college, and provide adequate opportunities for students to take the necessary courses and practice exams at the appropriate time.

- ***Faculty involvement-*** Faculty involvement within high schools is key to the creation and maintenance of a college going culture, because for many students and parents, faculty are their main points of contact with the school. Playing an active role in the college culture of a high school requires, among other things, that faculty members are up-to-date about college, are actively speaking with students about college, and are integrating college knowledge into a rigorous curriculum.

- ***Family involvement-*** Family involvement is vital to building a college going culture. Schools can engage family members by creating opportunities for family members to learn about college along with their children in settings such as workshops or meetings with teachers and counselors. By having high expectations and working with their students', families are able to offer the support needed to make college a priority.

- ***Comprehensive counseling model-*** An integral factor of a successful college going culture is a counseling model structured in a manner that allows all counselors to be college counselors, ensures that all counselors are up-to-date on the college application process and requirements, and that counselors are using their knowledge about postsecondary options to inform students at every step of their high school career.

- ***College partnerships-*** Partnerships between high schools and colleges foster college-related activities such as field trips, college fairs, and enrichment programs, which has the potential to inspire the formulation of college aspirations.

- ***Articulation-*** Coordination between teachers and counselors in middle schools and high schools is necessary to provide students with a seamless college message throughout their schooling.

Following is a discussion of the procedures and methods used in this four-year evaluation of the college going culture at Locke High School. We explain how the evaluation instruments were designed, distributed, and collected in each of the four years of the investigation. We also describe the analysis procedures employed for the first three years, why we have decided to change to an aggregate model for the final report, and how we went about doing so. Additionally, we explain the organization of the remainder of this report and why we have chosen to approach the presentation of the evaluation material in this manner.

Procedures

The process of designing, refining, distributing, and collecting the college going culture survey was completed in large part due to the help and effort of LAUSD's District 7 administrators, teachers, staff, and parents. Survey design was accomplished with the input of the former District Superintendent, Dr. Sylvia Rousseau, Locke High School administrators (specifically former Vice Principal Guillermina Jauregui), and members representing the teachers' union. In addition, the evaluation team met with parent representatives to discuss the issues that concerned them the most about the teacher and student surveys.

These interactions led to additional items that were included in the Year 2 survey. For example, in the Year 2 survey, students were asked about what they see as their main obstacles to going to college, and to identify the people they seek out in order to obtain information about college. These changes to the survey are discussed in more detail in Occasional Reports 19a[12] and 19b[13]. In terms of survey distribution and collection, administrators and staff played a pivotal role in aiding the evaluation team. Teacher and student surveys were then entered into a statistical analysis package for analysis.

Data Analysis Approach

The data analysis used in previous reports was mainly descriptive in nature. Descriptive methods entail the use of means and other measures of central tendency to understand how the average or the majority of students and teachers responded to a particular item or set of items. This report focuses on using descriptive statistics to understand the overall view of the College Going Culture at Locke High School. Initially, we analyzed the data as an extension of year three analysis and again saw there were few changes in responses from previous years and in fact the slight upward trend seen in Years 2 and 3 was not observed in the Year 4 data. Since there was minimal and

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[12] Azzam, Tarek. 2004. Occasional Report 19a. "Locke High School College Going Culture Survey Report   (Teachers) Year 1: (2002-2003)." SRM Evaluation Group.
[13] Azzam, Tarek. 2004. Occasional Report 19b. "Locke High School College Going Culture Survey Report   (Students) Year 1: (2002-2003)." SRM Evaluation Group.

inconsistent change in item responses from Years 1-4, and since the *change over time analysis* is an approach we have already taken, we decided to aggregate the data to produce a cleaner, more interpretable view of what we have learned over the past four years.

Survey items were categorized and analyzed based on the issue or construct they capture in the context of the McClafferty, McDonough, and Nunez article (2002). The first step was to group questions thematically around the nine principles of a college going culture. The evaluation team went through both surveys and indicated the element of the college going culture that each question corresponded to. Some questions seemed to overlap principles, some did not relate to any of the nine principles, and others seemed to center around their own relevant construct. Ultimately, we found that six of the nine elements of a college going culture were addressed by questions represented in the survey: college talk, clear expectations, school resources/environment, testing and curriculum, faculty involvement, and family involvement. There were also three other survey constructs identified; demographics, student and staff perceptions about themselves and others (i.e. "good:" student, teacher, counselor, parent), and obstacles to getting into college.

Once survey items were arranged around the elements of a college going culture, and grouped together under the same scales (i.e. strongly agree to strongly disagree), correlations were run amongst each of the questions within a certain construct and scale. This was done in order to support our theoretical groupings with statistical significance. We looked for questions that were positively and significantly correlated at the .01 level. Most of our intuitive groupings were in fact supported by statistical significance. In the final report and presentation, questions were only grouped together under a certain theme if the items were in fact significantly correlated. When items were correlated at the .01 level with a correlation coefficient of .4 or above, those items often appear grouped on the same graph as they were aimed at explaining a similar issue within a construct. For example, under the construct of information and resources, you will find teachers' perceptions of student ability to build relationships with teachers (agree, somewhat agree,

somewhat disagree, and disagree) and teacher's perceptions of student ability to get help on school if they want (agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and disagree) on the same graph, as they both aim to explain perceptions of students' ability to access information and resources. (The correlation coefficient for these two questions is .578).

The final step in the data analysis process was aggregating the data collected over the four years to create an overall view of the college going culture. Over four years, the student survey had on average 1,128 responses. In Year 1, 953 students responded, in Year 2, 1,589 students responded, in Year 3, 1,283 students responded, and in Year 4, 686 students responded. Responses in Year 4 sharply declined for both the student and staff surveys due to several reasons beyond the control of the evaluation team, including turnover in the administration during June and decreased teacher support for the survey. Although we had enough responses from students in Year 4 to include in the analysis, there were not enough responses from staff (N=17) to be considered a reliable sample. Staff surveys were aggregated over three years and on average had 99 respondents per year. In Year 1 there were 103 respondents, in Year 2, 104 respondents, and in Year 3 there were 89 respondents. Each year of responses was treated equally as important as other years, regardless of number of respondents, as opposed to weighting the responses by the number of respondents. We treated the data in this way as to preserve individual year perceptions of the college going climate of the school that could then be averaged to obtain an aggregate picture of the college going culture of the school.

The descriptive statistics that appear in this report are averages of responses over four years for the student survey and over three years for the staff survey. Because most survey items were some variation of a Likert Scale (three to five-point), we could have come up with a single measure of each construct (per scale). For example, in the case of information and resources, we could have taken the six questions that corresponded to the college going culture principle at hand, and created a single measure between the agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and disagree scale (1-4), that summed the overall view of teachers about the information and resources at the school. We chose not to present the data in this way because we felt too much of the detail would be lost in the

analysis. Even though it makes sense to combine the questions theoretically and statistically, there still could be some practical problems with doing so. For this reason, we present the data grouped together under constructs so that the reader is free to make any further interpretations.

There was some fine-tuning of the survey between the years. For the most part, questions remained the same as to ensure comparability between the years. In the instances where a question was asked in one year and not in another, or response options changed from one year to another, we note what occurred next to the corresponding graph or report section.

Purpose and Organization of this Final Report

The purpose of this report is to share information collected through the administration of both the student and staff portions of the College Going Culture Survey Series over the past four years.   More specifically, it is the intention of the authors and research team involved with this project to organize the data around the nine principles of a college going culture outlined by McClafferty, McDonough, and Nunez, (2002), in an effort to stimulate conversation and action towards the improvement of the college going culture of Locke High School, based on the information provided by the Locke community. We believe that the information collected from students and the greater Locke community is a powerful guide as to where, when, and who students look to for guidance in the college choice process, as well as where they perceive deficiencies in the school structure which they rely upon for support.

The report is divided into nine main sections. The first section addresses the general demographics of the teachers and students surveyed. Following are six sections, which address one of the nine principles of a successful college going culture. These sections include college talk, clear expectations, school resources/environment, testing and curriculum, faculty involvement, and family involvement. Some of the information contained in each section will overlap with other sections, and some of the principles are

not addressed through information collected in the survey series (comprehensive counseling model, college partnerships, and articulation). The following section is on extra measures addressed in the surveys, "good" (student, teacher, counselor, parent), and obstacles to getting into college. Although not part of the nine principles of a successful college going culture, the research team believes that these items provide valuable information for policy intervention that can help students overcome what they perceive to be roadblocks to the extension of formal education beyond secondary school. The final section consists of discussion, conclusions, and suggestions for future action and research.
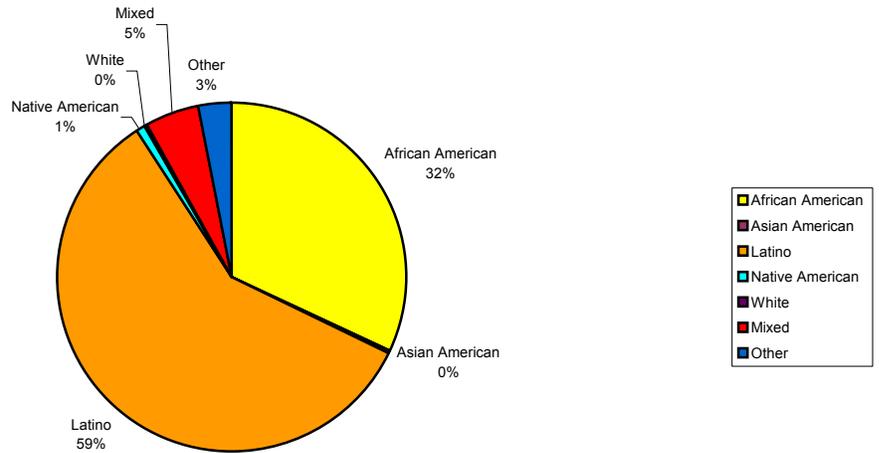
Demographics

There were no significant changes in the racial makeup of the student population responding to the survey during the four years of the study. The majority of students responding to the survey were Latino (59%) and Black (32%) (Graph 1). Compared to the reported demographics of the student population from the school website[14], we found similar ethnic distributions; therefore, the population of students who participated in the survey administrations form a racially representative population of the actual student population at Locke High School. The grade level distribution of students responding to the survey is represented in Graph 2. The majority of student respondents are 9th and 10th graders (34% and 31% respectively), while 11th and 12th grade students constitute the remaining third (22% and 13%). This too is consistent with the reported grade level distribution on the Locke High School website, meaning that the surveys collected for this evaluation are representative of the actual student population.

Two thirds of the staff and teachers (63%) who responded to the survey have been working at Locke for less than 1 to 3 years (Graph 3). The remaining 34% have been working at Locke for 4 or more years.[15]

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[14] The website is: http://search.lausd.k12.ca.us/cgi-bin/fccgi.exe?w3exec=school.profile.content&which=8733
[15] Unfortunately, statistics regarding teacher longevity at Lock High School were unavailable during the preparation of this report.

Graph 1. Average Percentage of Demographic Background of Student Respondents Over 4 Years

■	African American
■	Asian American
■	Latino
■	Native American
■	White
■	Mixed
■	Other

Graph 2. Average Percentage of Grade Level of Student Respondents Over 4 Years

Graph 3. Time working at Locke:

17%

30%

7%

12%

33%

Less than 1 year
1-3 years
4-6 years
7-10 years
more than 10 years
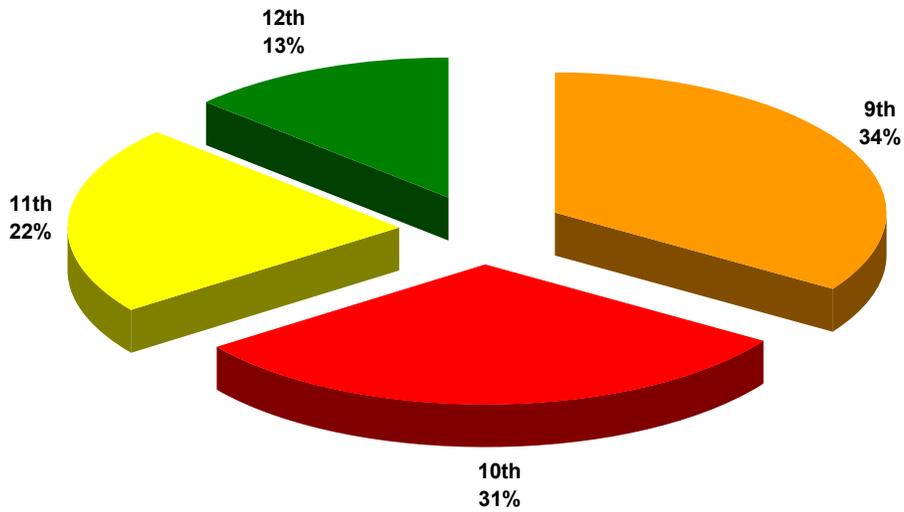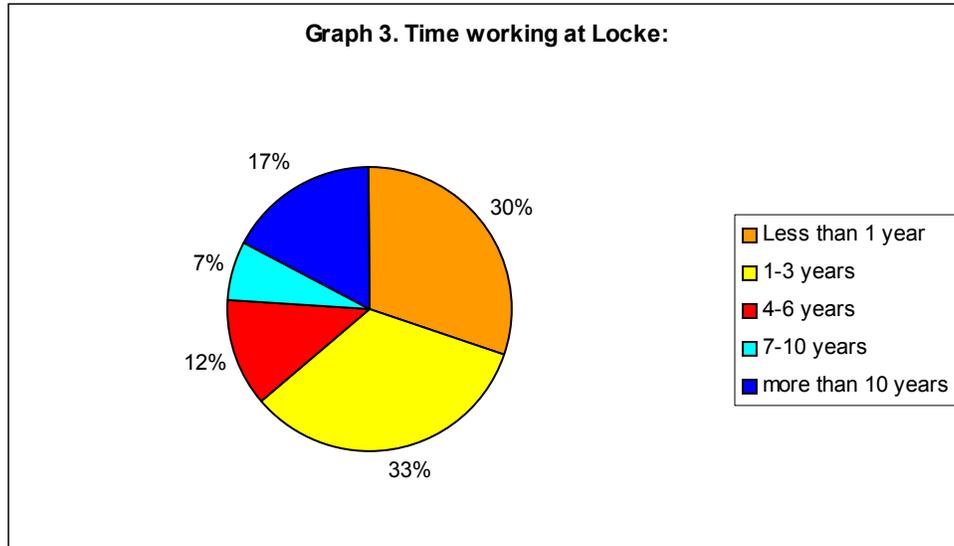
College Talk

Teachers, parents, and high school counselors are the three main groups of people that students turn to for guidance in the college choice process. The college choice process begins with the development of aspirations and interest in continuing formal education beyond high school. Students then seek out information about college, prepare to apply, apply, and then choose between the postsecondary educational options available.[16] Teachers, parents, and counselors are vital to the development of student aspirations. By sending clear signals that college attendance is an expectation, and guidance in navigating the complicated preparation and application process is available, they can encourage students to have higher aspirations. Several questions regarding how often students spoke with teachers, parents, and counselors about college were included in the survey.

We asked students whether they talk "a lot," "a little," or "not at all" with teachers, parents, and high school counselors about college. We also asked students who they would look to for information about college admission. Table 1 demonstrates that
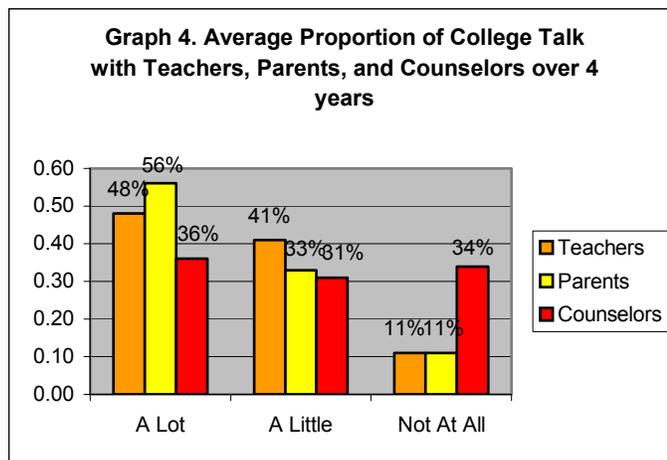
[16] Hossler, Don, John Braxton & Georgia Coopersmith (1989). "Understanding Student College Choice."
In J.C. Smart (Ed.) *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research.* Volume V, p. 231-288.
NY: Agathon Press.

students look to counselors first, then teachers and parents for college information. Graph 4 indicates that the majority of students are talking either "a lot" or "a little" with teachers, parents and counselors. However, more than one third (34%) of the student population at Locke High School indicated that they do not talk to counselors at all about college.

Table 1. Who Would You Ask To Get Information About College Admission?

Rank Order of Who The Student Would Ask For Information About College Admission	Total Frequency Over 3 Years
1. Counselors	2371
2. Teachers	1759
3. Parents	1029
4. Administrators	878
5. Friends	796
6. Other	398
7. Don't Know	200
8. Brother/Sister[17]	136
Total N For Years 2-4	3558

NOTE: Data only available for Years 2-4, because the question was added after the first year.

Graph 4. Average Proportion of College Talk with Teachers, Parents, and Counselors over 4 years

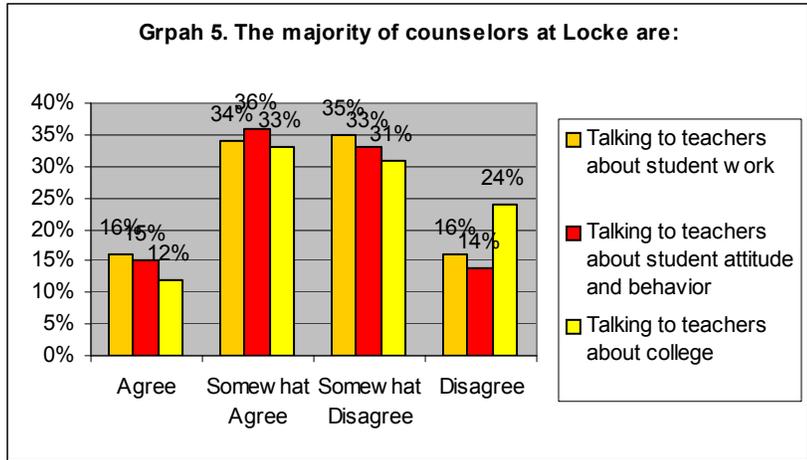|	A Lot	A Little	Not At All
Teachers	48%	41%	11%
Parents	56%	33%	11%
Counselors	36%	31%	34%

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[17] Option Only Available In Year 4 Because A Large Portion of The "Other" Write-In Category Contained Brother/Sister in Previous 2 Years.

The high percentage of students not talking to counselors at all is not surprising considering that most high school counselors attend to duties other than college counseling and that the ratio of students to counselors at Locke High School is approximately 700 to 1. This makes seeing students one-on-one for the purpose of talking about college a challenging task. However, we know from research
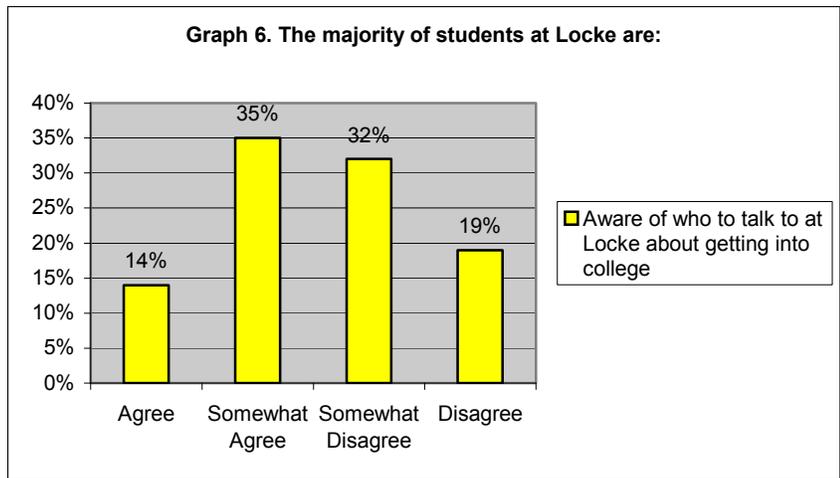
"… that counselors influence students' aspirations, plans, enrollments, and financial aid knowledge. Meeting frequently with a counselor increases a student's chance of enrolling in a four-year college and if students, parents, and counselors work together and communicate clearly, student's chances of enrolling significantly increase (McDonough, 2004: p. 9).[18]

If students are unable to talk to counselors about college, they turn to teachers and parents to obtain information. Therefore, teachers and parents must be informed with up to date information about college. Counselors can help to educate and keep teachers and parents up to date on college information. Graph 5 indicates that Locke High School teachers are divided as to whether they think school counselors are talking to them about student work, behavior and college. Building a strong college going culture at Locke weighs heavily on strengthening the relationship and networks between teachers and counselors. Students have more contact with teachers than any other figures in the school setting. Teachers must then become college counselors as well as incorporating information about college into the daily and weekly activities and visual space in their classroom. Integrating college information into lesson plans as well as hanging posters and information about college in classrooms, are simple examples of what can be done to stimulate discussion of college in a classroom.

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[18] McDonough, Patricia (2004). "The School-to-College Transition: Challenges and Prospects." American Council on Education: Washington, D.C.

Grpah 5. The majority of counselors at Locke are:

Chart showing three categories across Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree:
- Agree: 16%, 15%, 12%
- Somewhat Agree: 34%, 36%, 33%
- Somewhat Disagree: 35%, 33%, 31%
- Disagree: 16%, 14%, 24%

Legend:
- Talking to teachers about student work
- Talking to teachers about student attitude and behavior
- Talking to teachers about college

Teachers and staff were asked if they thought students knew who to talk to about getting into college and, Graph 6 indicates that 49% "agree" or "somewhat agree" that students know who to talk to, while 51% "somewhat disagree" or "disagree" that students know who to talk to about college. In the end, it is students who we are trying to impact the most by strengthening the relationships among staff members, parents, and students to ensure that students know who to turn to for information about college. Ultimately, the process of preparing for, applying to, and then choosing a university or postsecondary institution rests on the shoulders of the students, but it is the schools and the influential people in a student's life who can take the edges off of this often confusing and frustrating process.

Graph 6. The majority of students at Locke are:

Chart showing:
- Agree: 14%
- Somewhat Agree: 35%
- Somewhat Disagree: 32%
- Disagree: 19%

Legend:
- Aware of who to talk to at Locke about getting into college

Clear Expectations

Preparing students for a full range of postsecondary options requires that the goals of college preparation be clearly defined, communicated, and integrated into the daily routines of the school. Student perceptions of subjective norms, or what they perceive to be what others expect of them, are shaped by what they believe are the expectations of their parents, teachers, and friends. Aspirations for postsecondary education are largely shaped by what students believe are the expected norms for themselves and their friends. These expectations also shape where they think they are eligible to apply to college. McDonough's (1997) study of female high school seniors in California informs us that students who had similar academic credentials, but who attended very different high schools (ranging from an expensive, small private school to a large, comprehensive urban school) chose very different college paths because of the influences in their lives.[19] Knowing that students often tend to follow the paths that are expected of them, we included expectation questions on both the student and staff surveys. We asked students what they expect to be doing after high school, then what they thought their parents, teachers, counselors, and peers expected them to do. Additionally, we asked students what they thought most of their peers would do after high school. We also wanted to know what teachers and counselors expected of their students, because it is the formal and informal messaging that students sense and internalize. If teachers, counselors and school staff do not believe that students will go on to higher education of some kind, it is likely that students are aware and are internalizing this sentiment.

When students were asked what they expect to be doing after high school as well as what teachers, family, counselors, and friends expected them to be doing after high school, they indicated that they have high expectations for themselves and that they perceive that others in their lives have similarly high expectations. Graph 7 shows that the majority of students believe that they and the significant people in their lives expect them to go to a 4-year or 2-year college. Of interest here, and in line with the previous discussion of student contact with counselors, almost 30% of students indicated that they

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[19] McDonough, Patricia (1997). *Choosing Colleges: How Social Class and Schools Structure Opportunity*. Albany: State University of New York.
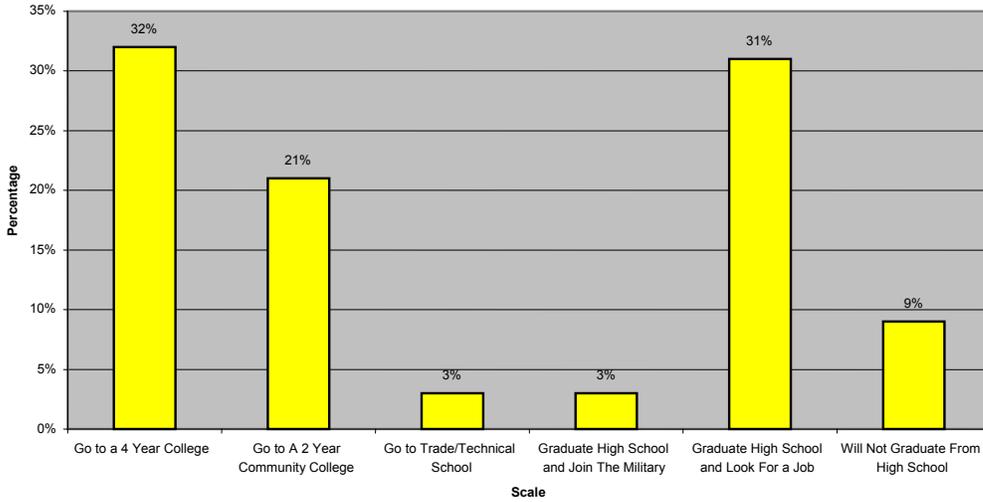
did not know what their counselors expectations are for them, but none of students had any doubt about what their parents expected of them. Graphs 8 and 9 represent student expectations of their friends, and what they think teacher expectations are for most of the students at Locke High School. This is where we begin to see some contrast. Students have much higher expectations for themselves than they do for their friends. As you can see in Graph 8, students believe that a much higher percentage of their friends (31%) will graduate from high school and go directly into the workforce. Moreover, in Graph 9, students indicate that they believe teachers expect a larger proportion of the students at the school to either graduate from high school and immediately look for a job (25%) or not graduate from high school at all (29%). These percentages were much higher than what students indicated for themselves regarding what they thought they would be doing after high school and what they thought their teachers expected for them.

Graphs 8 and 9 are an aggregate of students from all grades over four years. Two-thirds of the students included in this survey are 9th and 10th graders, and by the senior year more than half of these students have left the high school. Even though many of these students do not persist until the end of high school or move to another school, we see these results as something that can be positive. It means that most students have college or postsecondary education as an expectation for themselves. Moreover, a great majority of those students who do persist until the end of senior year are going on to college (81%!!) (Graph 8a). The question we pose here is: "What can be done to keep these students in the educational pipeline?" A tenet of a strong college going culture is starting the process of preparing for college at an early age. This not only gives students time to take the proper classes, etc. It also allows for educational interventions for students who struggle.
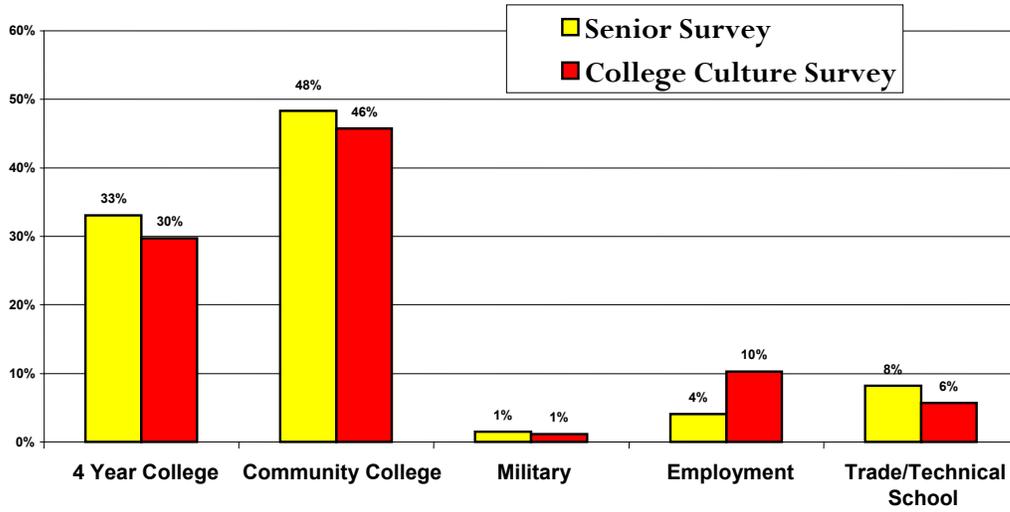
Graph 7. Average Percentage of Clear Expectations Over 4 Years
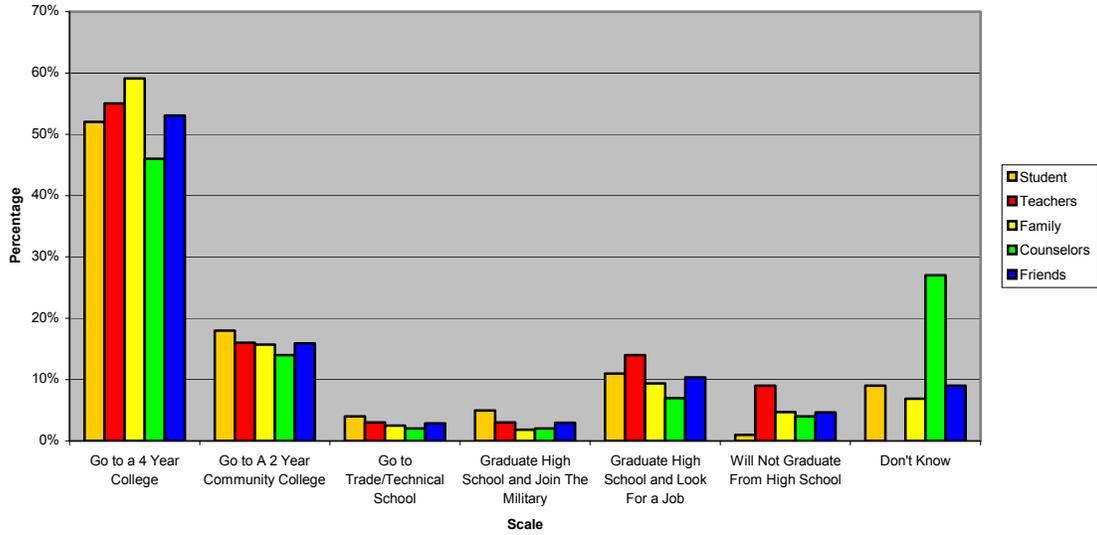
Graph 8. Average Percentage of What A Student Thinks Will Happen To His/Her Friends In High School Over 4 Years

Graph 8a. 2005 Future Expectations Results (12th graders)

Legend:
- Senior Survey (yellow)
- College Culture Survey (red)

Category	Senior Survey	College Culture Survey
4 Year College	33%	30%
Community College	48%	46%
Military	1%	1%
Employment	4%	10%
Trade/Technical School	8%	6%

Graph 9. Average Percentage of What A Student Thinks His/Her Teachers Think Will Happen to Most Of The Students In High School Over 4 Years

Scale	Percentage
Go to a 4 Year College	26%
Go to A 2 Year Community College	16%
Go to Trade/Technical School	2%
Graduate High School and Join The Military	2%
Graduate High School and Look For a Job	25%
Will Not Graduate From High School	29%

21
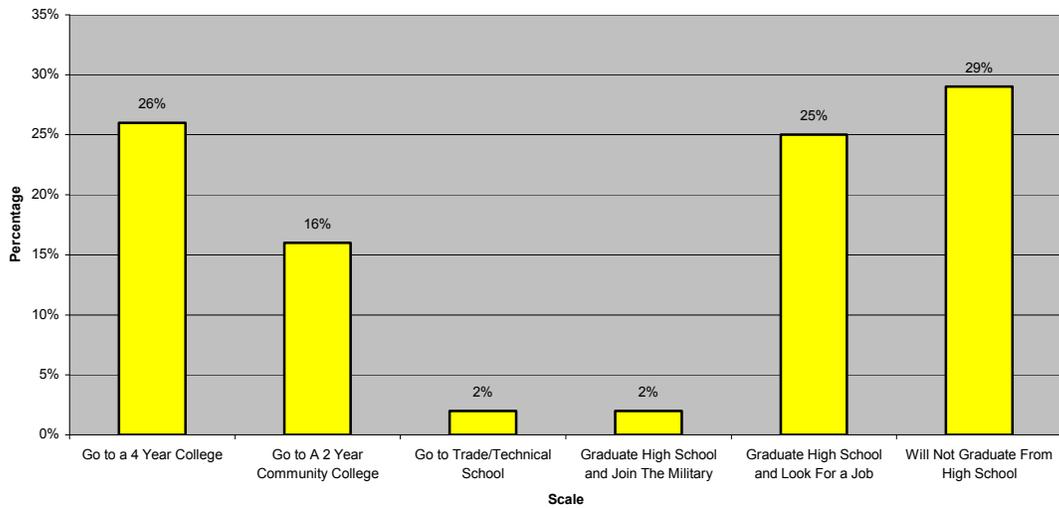
In the next series of graphs, beginning with Graph 10, we begin to look at teacher and staff expectations for students, their assumptions about their post high school destinations, and opinions about students' ability to succeed in college. We asked teachers and staff what they thought Locke students would be doing after high school, and provided them with space to fill in percentages. Therefore, the percentages represented in Graph 10 do not add up to 100%. One can see that the destination that teachers and staff believe to be the most probable for Locke students is to graduate and immediately look for employment (44%), followed by attending a community college (27%). Teachers were also asked what percentage of the 12th graders they believed would be eligible for a California State University (CSU) or for a University of California (UC) school. Graphs 11 and 12 indicate that teachers believe 22% of 12th grade students will be eligible for a UC and 32% will be ready for a CSU. Teachers were also asked what percentage of the 9th graders they believed would graduate from high school. They predicted fairly accurately at 51% (Graph 13). It is difficult to know if teachers are making these guesses based on prior knowledge of where students go after high school or how many students graduate, but these numbers are on par with Locke High School statistics.

We also asked staff and teachers whether they believed Locke High School students were capable of succeeding in college, and they indicated that 52% either "agreed" or "somewhat agreed" that Locke students were capable of succeeding, while 48% indicated that they either "somewhat disagreed" or "disagreed" that the students could succeed.

Off the topic of college going, but pertinent to the destinations of students, there were several questions included in the teachers and staff survey regarding issues around what staff expected of students. Teachers and staff were asked what percentage of students they thought would be on probation with the court system at some point in their life (30%), the percentage that would be on public assistant for income (32%), the percentage that would affiliate with a gang (33%), and the percentage that would not have the opportunity to hold a legal job (25%) (Table 2). Teachers and staff believe that

almost a third of the student population will at one point in their lives deal with serious issues related to crime, poverty, or legal status in the United States.

Graph 10. In your opinion what percentage of 12th graders at Locke will...
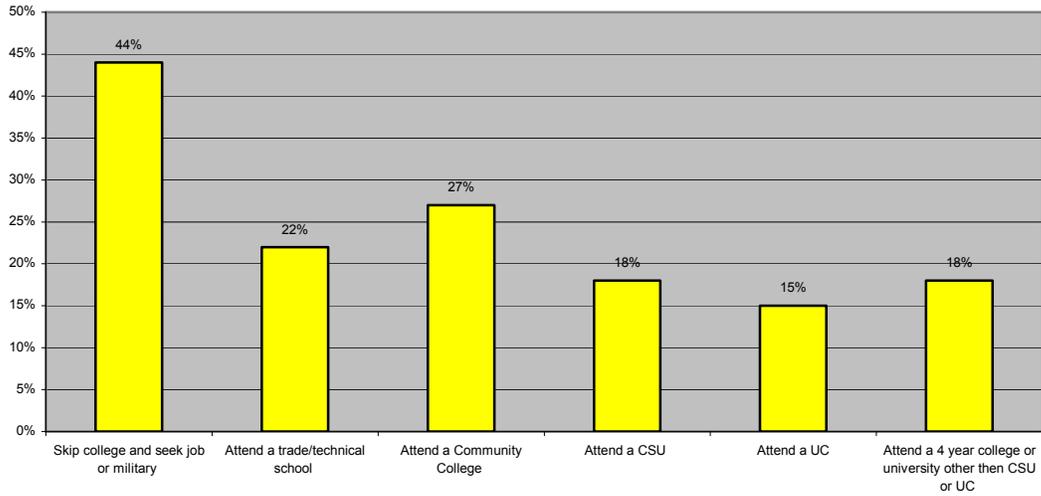
Graph 11. In your opinion, what percent of the 12th grade students at Locke High School will be eligible to apply to a UC?

Graph 12. In your opinion, what percent of the 12th grade students at Locke High School will be eligible to apply to a CSU?
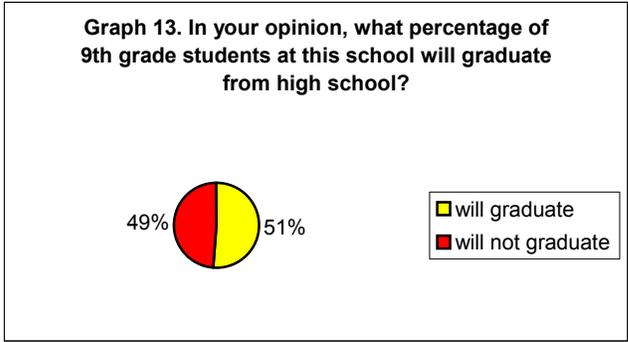
Graph 13. In your opinion, what percentage of 9th grade students at this school will graduate from high school?

49%   51%

☐ will graduate
■ will not graduate

Table 2. In your opinion, what percentage of Locke students will….	
At one time in their life, be on probation (through the courts)	30%
As an adult, rely primarily on public assistance for income	32%
Affiliate with a gang	33%
Not have the opportunity to hold a legal job *	25%

- This question was added to the survey in Year 2

Overall, what we take from the information provided by teachers and staff as well as students is that most students have high expectations for themselves and think that other important figures in their lives also have college or postsecondary education expectations for them. At some point a great number of these students are being lost. Based on school statistics, after the 10th grade year, many students drop out of high school. Those students, who make it to the senior year and finish, are going on to postsecondary education of some kind at very high rates (81%, Graph 8a) immediately after finishing high school. Teachers and staff have much lower expectations for students than the students have for themselves. The only indication from students that may reflect these low expectations were in student responses about what they thought teachers expected the majority of students to do after high school. These predictions tended to be lower than what students reported for themselves. Creating a college going culture requires that students believe they are capable of success and that they think those in the

school who should be supporting them through the educational process believe they can succeed as well.

School Resources and Environment

This section focuses on school resources and school environment. One of the nine principles of a college going culture is "information and resources," and although this is meant to concern mostly resources related to college going, such as college related newsletters and periodicals as well as testing booklets and preparation, financial aid information and planning, we will focus mostly on perceptions of the school environment in general from both the student and teacher and staff perspective. Students were asked whether they had access to certain resources such as textbooks they could take home and computers they could use at school, as well as what they think about the learning environment of the classroom. Teachers and staff were asked about their working environment and whether they thought students had access to the resources that they need and want in the school.

First we look at the student perspective. Table 3 and Graph 14 relay the student opinions regarding resources at the school, whether the school is a good place to learn, and student devotion to academics. The majority of students believe that teachers care about there learning (85%). Once again, students are very positive about their teachers and the relationships they have with them. The students also think teachers make them study hard (61%); however, when asked whether the classes at the school are "hard," only 52% agreed. Regarding the classroom, a majority of students do believe that they are good places to learn (65%), and that there are few disruptions (63%). Sixty percent of students agreed that other students in their classes cared about getting good grades. When asked about physical resources, students indicated that most of their classes used textbooks (71%), but only 60% of students said there were enough textbooks to take home. Students were also asked about computer usage. Only 35% of students indicated that they used computers at school for schoolwork (Graph 14).

The majority of students believe that teachers care about them and their learning, that classrooms are good places to learn, and that they have enough textbooks to use and take home; however, in many cases anywhere from 35-40% of students disagreed with these statements. This indicates that there is quite a large population of students who do not think the school is well resourced and that they have access to those resources. This would indicate that the school does not have much of the information and resources necessary for building a college going culture. Computer usage for example is very low. Although the question regarding computer usage at the school is geared towards using computers for the purpose of schoolwork there is still a very small percentage of students using computers at school, for schoolwork, on a weekly basis. Considering that the majority of college information, applications, and financial aid requirements are now online, this may indicate a serious need for the school in general and for the specific purpose of building a college going culture.

Table 3. Classroom Based Resources

Type of Information Resource	Agree
My Teachers Care About My Learning	85%
The Classrooms At This School Are Good Places To Learn	65%
There Are Few Disruptions In My Class	63%
Students In My Classes Care About Getting Good Grades	60%
The Classes At This School Are Hard	52%
The Teachers At This School Make The Students Study Hard	61%
In Most Of My Classes I Have a Textbook To Use And Take Home	60%
The Textbooks Used In Most of My Classes Are Understandable	71%

Graph 14. At this school we use computers at least once a week for school work...

35%

65%

☐ Yes
☐ No
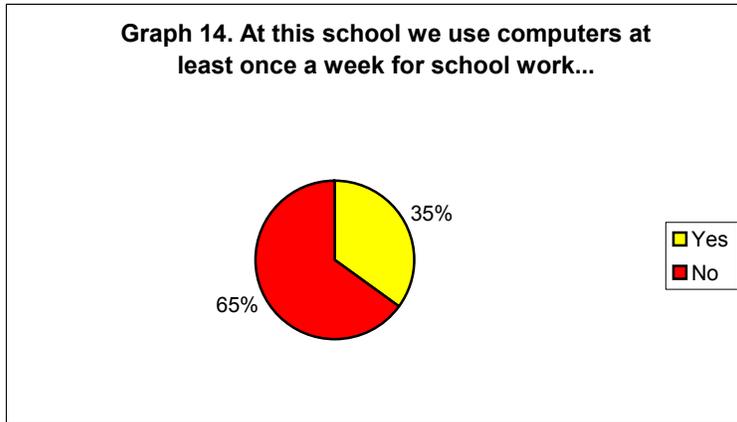
Teachers and staff were asked a series of questions pertaining to their work environment. Some of those questions directly concerned their thoughts about the physical environment of the school, working conditions, and student's ability to access information and resources when needed. Graph 15 indicates that 73% of the teachers and staff believe the adequacy of the school facilities are either "fair" or "poor," and that 74% think that access to technology and computers is also "fair" to "poor." Teachers were asked about their opinion of the quality of professional development at the school, and 63% rated it as "fair" or "poor" (Graph 16). They also rated the working conditions at the school as mostly "fair" or "poor" (76%) (Graph 16). On a more positive note, 76% of teachers and staff "agreed" or "somewhat agreed" that students are able to build relationships with teachers, and that they can get help in school if needed and wanted (81%) (Graph 17).

The results of the teacher and staff questions indicate that they are not satisfied with the working conditions of the school, access to resources, and professional development. Considering that there are many facets to each of these areas, obtaining more detailed information regarding teacher concerns about their working environment may be needed. It is encouraging that teachers are positive about student ability to obtain what they need from the school and hints at the dedication that teachers have to students. Student opinion of teachers caring about their learning also suggests that teacher

dedication to their learning and well-being is noticed by the students at Locke High School.
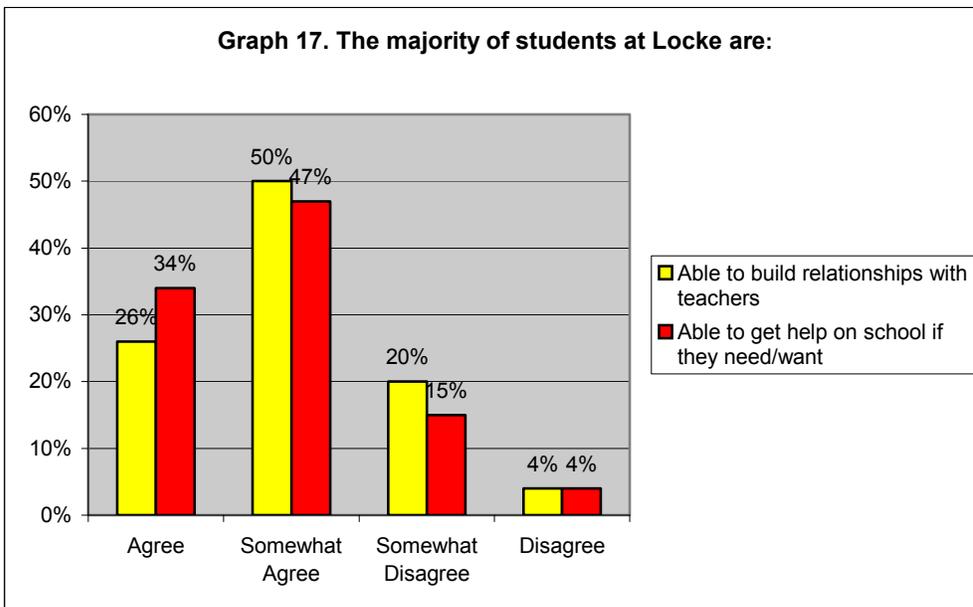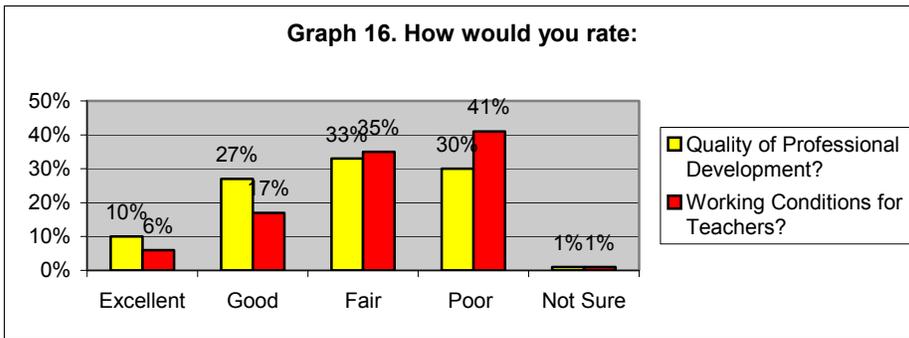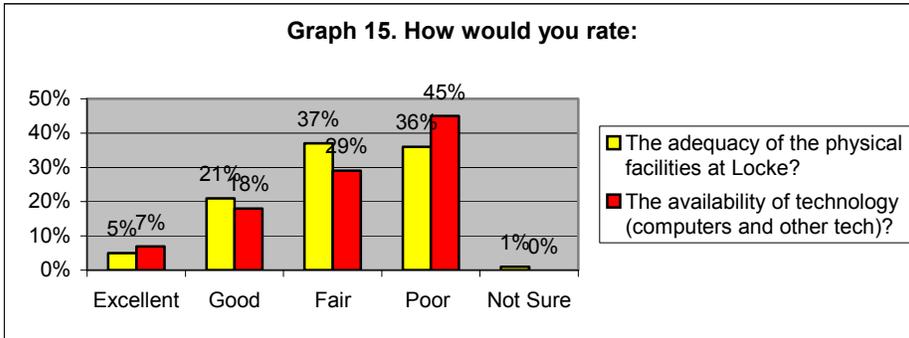
Graph 15. How would you rate:

- The adequacy of the physical facilities at Locke?
- The availability of technology (computers and other tech)?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
Physical facilities	5%	21%	37%	36%	1%
Technology	7%	18%	29%	45%	0%

Graph 16. How would you rate:

- Quality of Professional Development?
- Working Conditions for Teachers?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
Professional Development	10%	27%	33%	30%	1%
Working Conditions	6%	17%	35%	41%	1%

Graph 17. The majority of students at Locke are:

- Able to build relationships with teachers
- Able to get help on school if they need/want

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
Build relationships with teachers	26%	50%	20%	4%
Get help on school	34%	47%	15%	4%

Testing and Curriculum

For students to be successful in their attempt to attain admittance to college, both the provision of a college preparatory curriculum and preparation for standardized tests such as the PSAT, SAT, and ACT is necessary. This requires that schools provide all students with college preparatory curriculum that will ensure their eligibility to apply to college, as well as adequate standardized test preparation. Therefore, we asked students about their homework and coursework, and teachers about the appropriateness of tests and curriculum, student engagement in the curriculum, and teacher's ability to engage students.

Students were asked a series of questions regarding whether they think the school gets them ready for college, how much homework they do, and whether they think they will have taken the appropriate courses in order to get into college by the time they graduate. Table 4 indicates that the majority of students (68%) think Locke High School prepares them for college. The next two questions and corresponding graphs ask students specifically about homework. First in Graph 18, we can see that 53% of students indicated they are doing 0-2 hours of homework per week, and another 30% are doing 3-4 hours per week. In year 4, we altered the response choices to this question to get a better feel of the actual amount of hours of homework students were doing. In Year 4, 13% of students did 0 hours of homework per week, 44% did 1-2 hours of homework per week, 25% did 3-4 hours of homework per week, 9% did 5-6 hours of homework per week, 5% did 7-10 hours of homework per week, 3% did more than 10 hours, and 2% did not know. The distributions between the two question types are comparable. Mainly we wanted to disburse the scale of the 0-2 hours per week response because it includes the option of doing no homework and doing some homework, which can be construed as a big difference.

Graph 19, displays student responses regarding how many hours of homework they think they should be doing in order to get into a 4-year college, and only 4% of the students indicated that 0-2 hours of homework per week is sufficient for going to a 4-year college. Thirty percent of students indicated that they did not know how many hours of

homework they should be doing in order to get into a 4-year college, and the rest of the responses to this question were fairly evenly distributed across the remainder of options. Finally, as shown in Graph 20, students were asked if they think they will have taken the courses necessary to get into college, and 63% indicated "yes," 30% "no," and 7% did not know. It is encouraging that 63% think the school is providing the appropriate courses, but we cannot surmise whether or not the students actually are aware of the course requirements for getting into college. We do know that advising for course taking patters should begin at the middle school level before students enter high schools; however, this does not often occur. Therefore, it is imperative that Locke High School reaches students as early as possible, meaning the beginning of their 9th grade year.

Table 4. College Preparation

| This School Gets Students Ready For College	68% of Students Agree

Graph 18. Average Percentage Of How Many Hours Students Do Homework A Week*

|	
■	0-2 Hours
□	3-4 Hours
■	6-10 Hours
■	11-15 Hours
■	More Than 15 Hours
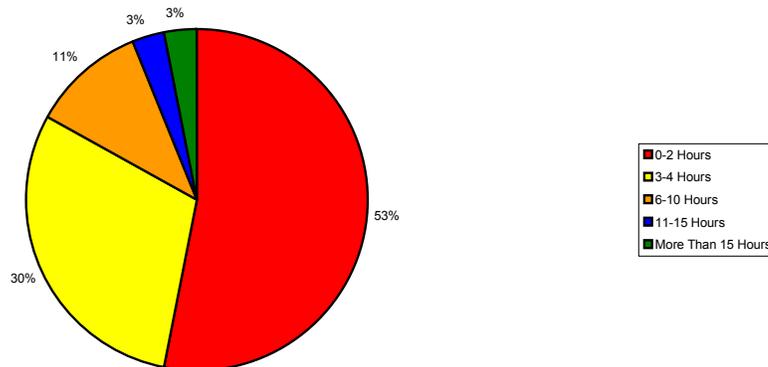
* This question was asked in this format during years one through three

Graph 19. Average Percentage of How Many Hours of Homework A Student Thinks He/She Needs to Go To A 4 Year University

0-2 Hours
4%

3-4 Hours
19%

Don't Know
31%

6-10 Hours
21%

More Than 15 Hours
14%

11-15 Hours
11%
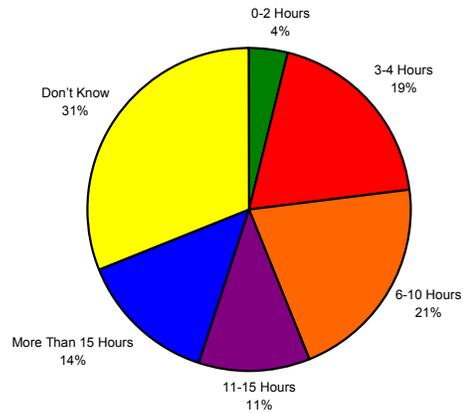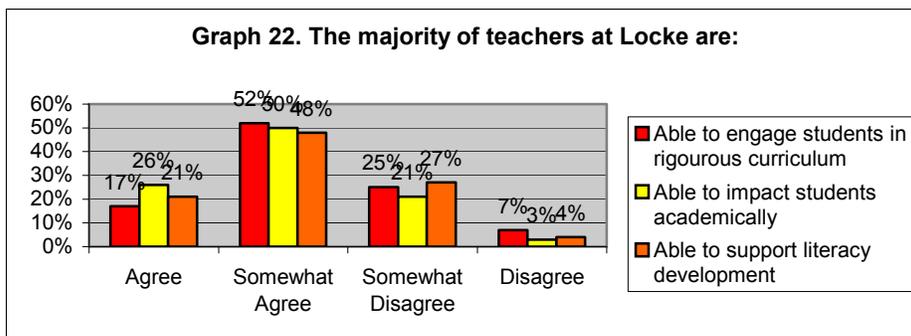
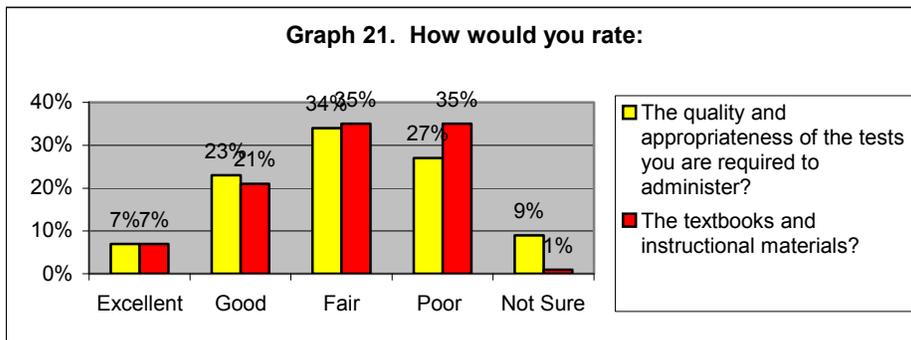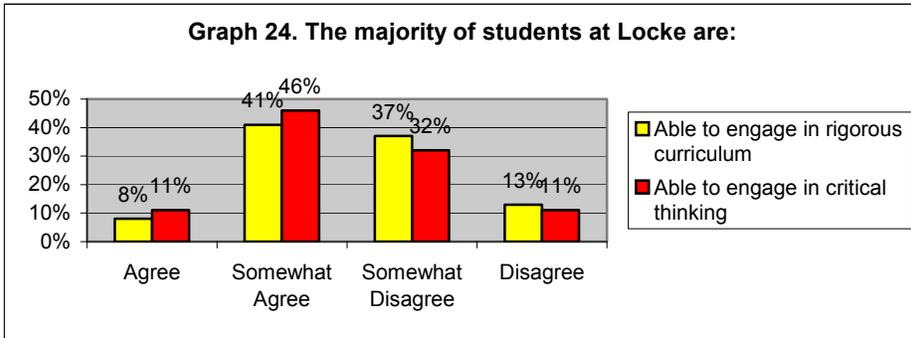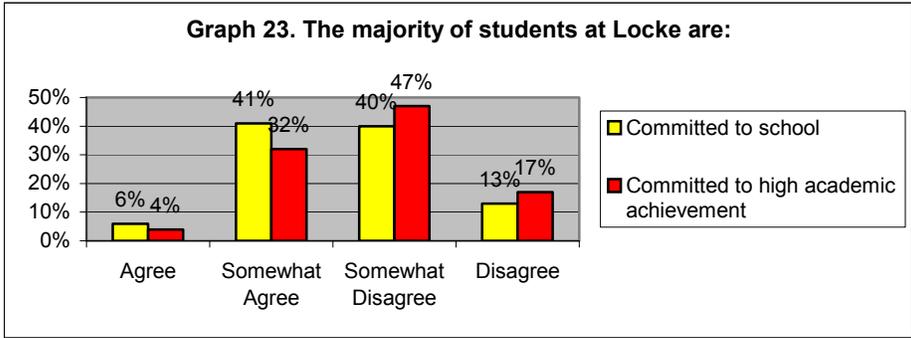**Graph 20. Average Percentage of Students' Thinking They Have Taken the Courses Required For College Admission**

Not Sure
30%

Yes
63%

No
7%
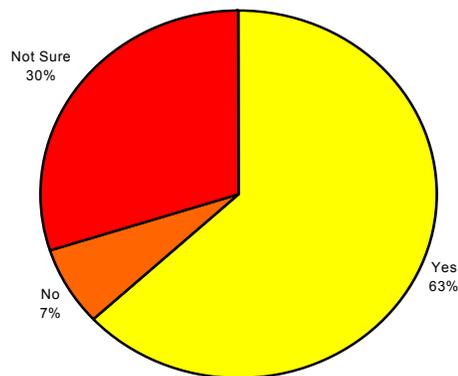
Teachers and staff were also asked questions about testing and curriculum. Graphs 21 through 24 represent their aggregate responses over the past three years. Sixty-one percent of teachers and staff felt that the quality and appropriateness of tests

they are required to administer was "fair" or "poor" (Graph 21). In regard to textbooks and materials, the majority of teachers (70%) indicated that they think the textbooks and materials they are provided with are "fair" to "poor" (Graph 21). On the subject of students, teachers were asked if they are able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum, and 69% "agreed" or "somewhat agreed" (Graph 22). The majority of teachers also "agreed" or "somewhat agreed" that they were able to impact students academically (76%), and support literacy development 69% (Graph 22). Regarding teacher perceptions of students' ability to engage with curriculum, their responses were split, but leaned more to the negative side. Teachers "somewhat disagreed" or "disagreed" that students were committed to school (53%), high academic achievement (64%), and their ability to engage in rigorous curriculum (51%) (Graph 23, Graph 24). However, 57% of teachers felt that students were able to engage in critical thinking (Graph 24). This may indicate that teachers question student devotion to their studies, but do not question their ability to achieve.

Graph 21. How would you rate:

Legend:
- The quality and appropriateness of the tests you are required to administer?
- The textbooks and instructional materials?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
The quality and appropriateness of the tests	7%	23%	34%	27%	9%
The textbooks and instructional materials	7%	21%	35%	35%	1%

Graph 22. The majority of teachers at Locke are:

Legend:
- Able to engage students in rigourous curriculum
- Able to impact students academically
- Able to support literacy development

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
Able to engage students in rigourous curriculum	17%	52%	25%	7%
Able to impact students academically	26%	50%	21%	3%
Able to support literacy development	21%	48%	27%	4%

Graph 23. The majority of students at Locke are:

Committed to school: Agree 6%, Somewhat Agree 41%, Somewhat Disagree 40%, Disagree 13%

Committed to high academic achievement: Agree 4%, Somewhat Agree 32%, Somewhat Disagree 47%, Disagree 17%

Graph 24. The majority of students at Locke are:

Able to engage in rigorous curriculum: Agree 8%, Somewhat Agree 41%, Somewhat Disagree 37%, Disagree 13%

Able to engage in critical thinking: Agree 11%, Somewhat Agree 46%, Somewhat Disagree 32%, Disagree 11%

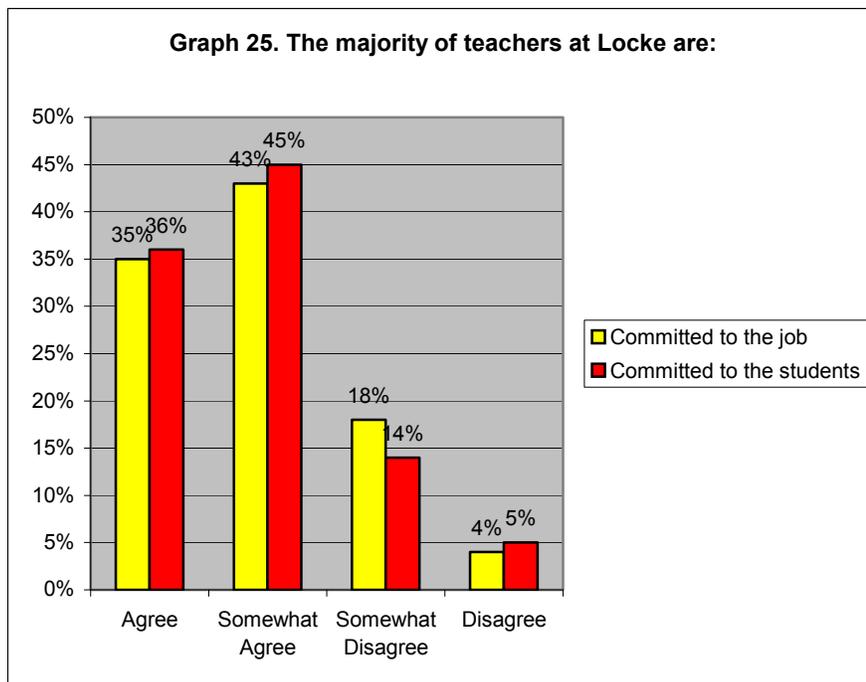- These questions were only asked in years two and three.
-

     Once again, the results of this portion of the survey indicate that there is a deeper level of questions that students, teachers and staff should be asked regarding what resources and information they need. In the case of both students and teachers, there is a true need to create dialog regarding the information and resources available at Locke, and creating better avenues of access to the resources that are currently available. There should also be discussion with the district regarding the resources that are not available and the appropriateness of those resources.
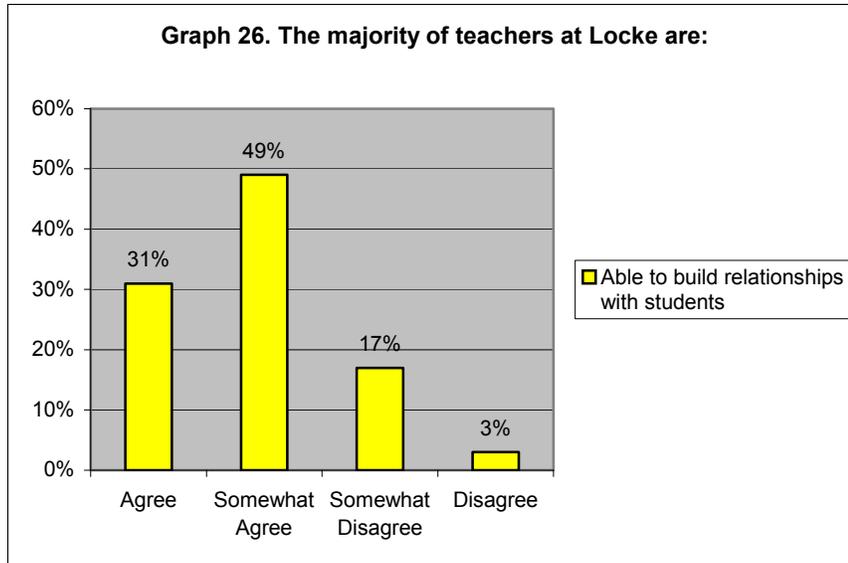
Faculty and Administration Involvement

     Faculty involvement within high schools is key to the creation and maintenance of a college going culture, because for many students and parents, faculty are their main points of contact with the school. Playing an active role in the college culture of a high school requires, among other things, that faculty members are up-to-date about college,
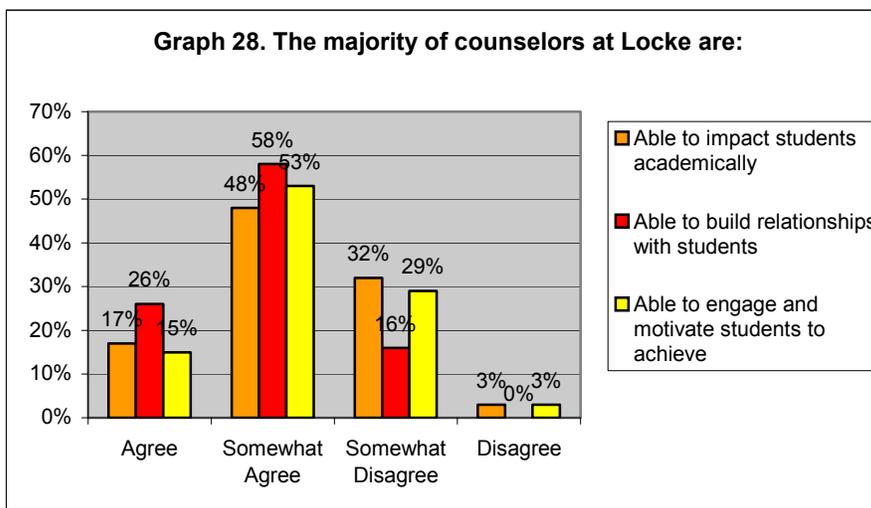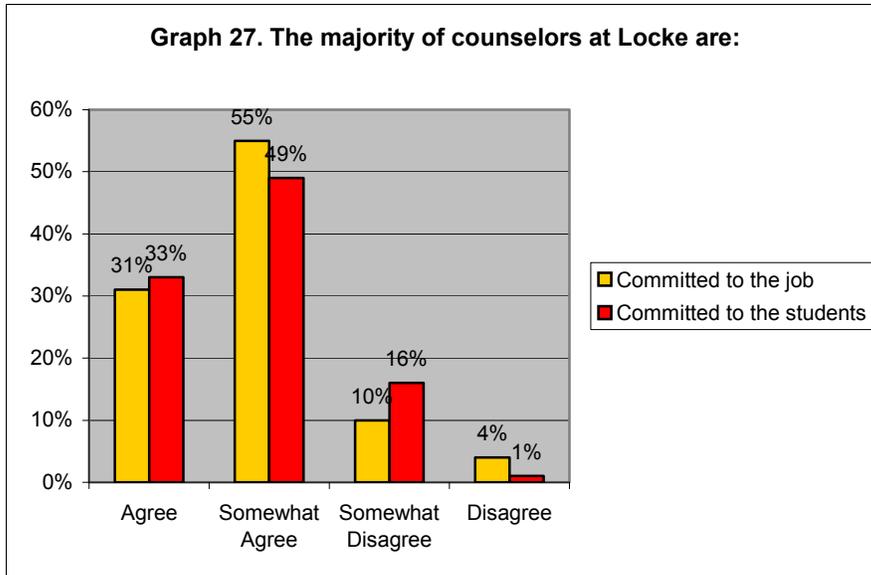
are actively speaking with students about college, and are integrating college knowledge into a rigorous curriculum. Although the questions included on the College Going Culture Survey asked about more general school involvement issues, we believe the results are indicative of the commitment that teachers and administrative staff have for Locke High School and the achievement of the students who attend school there.

Teachers and staff were asked about their beliefs regarding the overall commitment of other teachers, counselors, and administrators at Locke, and their ability to be affective. Teachers were specifically asked questions regarding their personal impact on students and achievement. The majority of teachers at Locke High School indicated that they think other teachers at Locke are committed to the job (78%), committed to students (81%) (Graph 25), and able to build relationships with students (80%) (Graph 26). In general, teachers and staff seem to have very high opinions regarding the commitment of their colleagues.
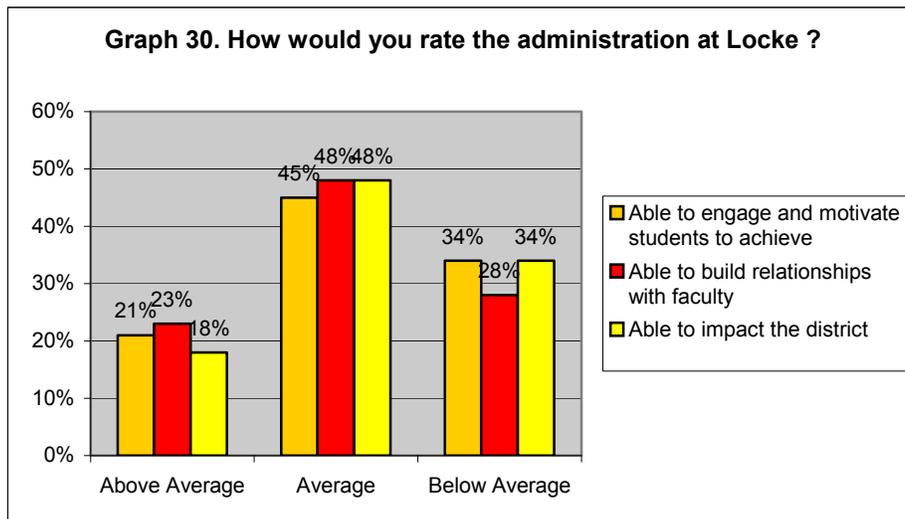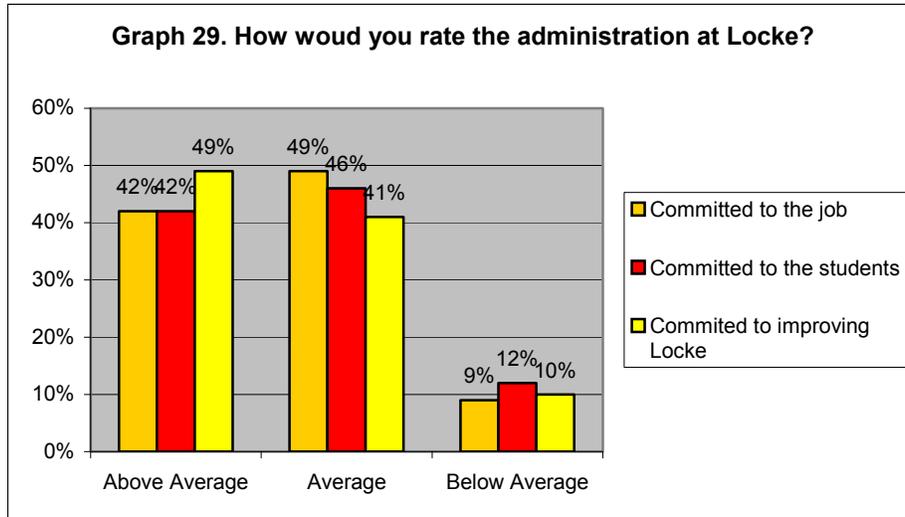
Graph 25. The majority of teachers at Locke are:

	Committed to the job	Committed to the students
Agree	35%	36%
Somewhat Agree	43%	45%
Somewhat Disagree	18%	14%
Disagree	4%	5%

Graph 26. The majority of teachers at Locke are:

In Year 3, the staff were asked to rate the counselors at Locke High School. The rankings were rather high: 86% either "agreed" or "somewhat agreed" that counselors were committed to the job, and 82% either "agreed" or "somewhat agreed" that counselors were committed to the students. The staff at Locke High School was also asked a series of questions regarding whether they thought counselors were able to impact students through their work. Graph 28 indicates that the staff either "agree" or "somewhat agree" that counselors are able to impact students academically (65%), able to build relationships with students (84%), and able to engage and motivate students to achieve (68%). These are encouraging figures, but when considering the college going culture, it would be helpful to know specifically whether counselors are able to engage with students about college, as well as with teachers and parents.

Graph 27. The majority of counselors at Locke are:

A grouped bar chart comparing "Committed to the job" (yellow) and "Committed to the students" (red) across four categories:
- Agree: 31%, 33%
- Somewhat Agree: 55%, 49%
- Somewhat Disagree: 10%, 16%
- Disagree: 4%, 1%

Graph 28. The majority of counselors at Locke are:

A grouped bar chart comparing "Able to impact students academically" (orange), "Able to build relationships with students" (red), and "Able to engage and motivate students to achieve" (yellow) across four categories:
- Agree: 17%, 26%, 15%
- Somewhat Agree: 48%, 58%, 53%
- Somewhat Disagree: 32%, 16%, 29%
- Disagree: 3%, 0%, 3%

Teachers and staff were also asked to rate the administration at Locke, and the results were quite positive. Teachers and staff ranked the administration as "above average" in their commitment to the job (42%), commitment to students (42%), and commitment to improving Locke (49%) (Graph 29). They also ranked the administration as above average in their ability to engage and motivate students to achieve (45%), ability to build relationships with faculty (48%), and ability to impact the district (48%) (Graph 30).

Graph 29. How woud you rate the administration at Locke?

- Committed to the job (yellow)
- Committed to the students (red)
- Commited to improving Locke (light yellow)

	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Committed to the job	42%	49%	9%
Committed to the students	42%	46%	12%
Commited to improving Locke	49%	41%	10%

Graph 30. How would you rate the administration at Locke ?

- Able to engage and motivate students to achieve (yellow)
- Able to build relationships with faculty (red)
- Able to impact the district (light yellow)

	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Able to engage and motivate students to achieve	21%	45%	34%
Able to build relationships with faculty	23%	48%	28%
Able to impact the district	18%	48%	34%

Questions pertaining to teachers' own beliefs about their personal relationships with students are also positive. Teachers and staff responded that they feel empowered to make a difference in student lives (99%), encourage students to participate in extra curricular activities (88%), improve student's self esteem (96%), and help students prepare for college (92%) (Table 5).

Table 5. Teacher Impact on Students

I feel empowered to:	Agree/Somewhat Agree
Make a difference in students' lives	94%
Encourage students to participate in extra-curricular activities	88%
Improve students' self-esteem	96%
Help students prepare for college	92%

All of these responses are quite encouraging. Teachers, staff, and administration have respect for each other's commitment to the school and students, as well as their ability to impact the school and students. Bringing the focus back to the college going culture, means asking faculty, staff and administrators to place more focus on integrating "College" into every aspect of Locke High School. It is clear that the teachers, counselors, and administrators at Locke want students to succeed. Creating a college going culture means taking another step by looking beyond the goal of graduation (which is necessary for moving into postsecondary education), to helping students reach their own expectations for themselves. In order for faculty to do so, there must be constant communication between the college counselors and teachers so that they have the most up-to-date information available to then communicate to students. Faculty, counselors, and administrators must also work to integrate this information into every aspect of the curriculum and environment of the school.

Family Involvement

Family involvement is vital to building a college going culture. Schools can engage family members by creating opportunities for parents, guardians, and extended family members to learn about college along with their children in settings such as

workshops or meetings with teachers and counselors. In a meta-analysis of college choice studies, Hossler et al. (1989) attest to the importance of families in the process of preparing for college as well as the relationship between parental encouragement and school performance. They report that Carpenter and Fleishman found that student achievement rises with parental encouragement, as well as
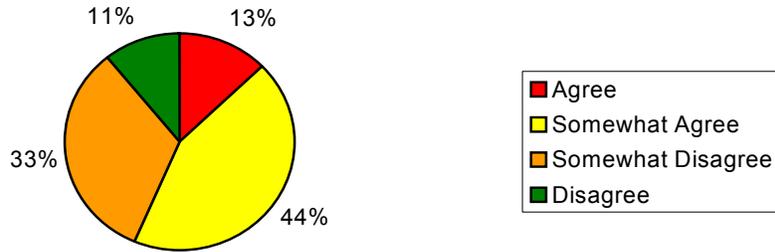
> …raises the possibility of a reciprocal relationship between parental encouragement, achievement, and predispositions," in other words "…as students perform better in school, parents provide more encouragement, which in turn provides further motivation for students to further improve their performance (p. 258)[20].

Therefore, we asked teachers and staff a series of questions regarding parental involvement with students at the school and of parental involvement with the school.
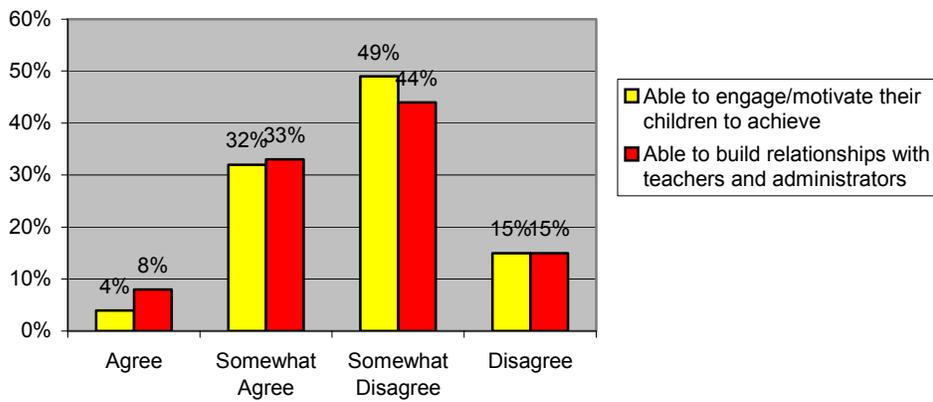
Fifty-seven percent of teachers and staff at Locke either "agree" or "somewhat agree" that the majority of parents at Locke are committed to their children's education, while 43% "somewhat disagree" or "disagree" (Graph 31). Moreover, the majority of teachers (64%) believe that parents are not able to motivate their children to achieve, 59% believe that they are unable to build relationships with teachers and administration (Graph 32), 68% indicate that parents are not talking to teachers about student academic work, 65% believe parents are not talking to teachers about student's attitudes and behavior, and 77% report that parents are not talking to teachers about how to get their children ready for college (Graph 33).

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[20] See footnote 10.

**Graph 31. The majority of parents at Locke are committed to their children's education**

11%   13%

33%

44%

- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree

Graph 32. The majority of parents at Locke are:

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
Able to engage/motivate their children to achieve	4%	32%	49%	15%
Able to build relationships with teachers and administrators	8%	33%	44%	15%

Graph 33. The majority of parents at Locke are:

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
Talking to teachers about students' academic work	6%	25%	49%	19%
Talking to teachers about students' attitude and behavior	7%	29%	46%	19%
Talking to teachers about how to get their children ready for college	5%	18%	48%	29%

40
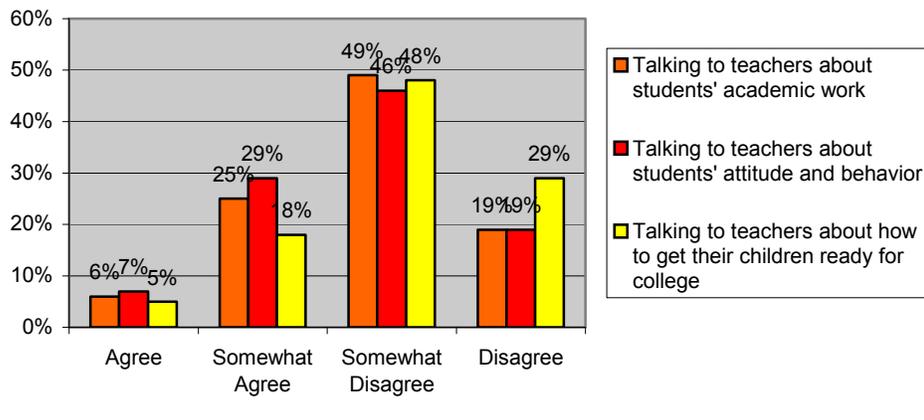
Students often rely on parents and other family members for information about college, and it is parents who are most responsible for creating college expectations and providing continued encouragement for their children. They "…influence student's perceptions of subjective norms (perceptions of what students believe others thought they should do), which in turn [are] strongly related to postsecondary enrollment[21]" (p. 257). However, parents who are uninformed of how the college choice process functions and what they can do to support their student is like the blind leading the blind. This is where high schools can be instrumental in providing that information, informing parents of how the process functions, and how they can be most helpful for their child. In an attempt to understand how teachers perceived the involvement of parents at Locke High School, they were asked a question that focused on how well they think the school involves parents. Graph 34 indicates that 75% of teachers and staff believe that Locke High School does a "fair" to "poor" job of involving parents. Involving parents in the college going process can be accomplished through the creation of college fairs for parents and students, evening and weekend workshops to inform parents about college preparation such as course taking patterns, important exams, and application deadlines. Workshops can also help with financial planning and at the most basic level, reassure parents that college is a possibility for their student[22].

Graph 34. The way the school involves parents is:

- Not Sure, 3%
- Excellent, 6%
- Good, 18%
- Fair, 31%
- Poor, 44%
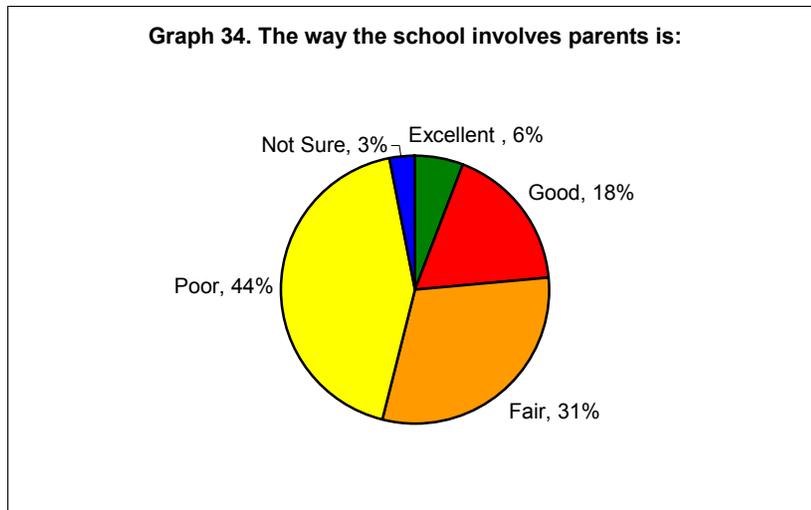
[21] Hossler et al. (1989).
[22] For more a more detailed and expanded list of ideas for involving parents, please see MacDonald, M. & Aimée Dorr (2006). "Creating a College Going Culture: A Resource Guide."

These are not encouraging figures. Staff at Locke High School are unsatisfied with the manner, frequency, and quality of interaction they are having with parents, as well as the encouragement that they believe parents are providing to their students.

Extra Measures

This next section covers two areas of concern that emerged throughout the four years of this study. Several of the questions included on the student and on the teacher surveys asked each group respectively to rate whether or not students were "good" students. On the whole, students rated themselves as "good" students, as did teachers. However, "good" is a rather vague word when not placed in reference to another descriptive word. Graph 35 represents student responses to questions asking whether they think they are a "good" student, and whether they think others, such as friends, teachers, and family believe they are "good" students. As you can see, an overwhelming number ranked themselves as "good" students (94%), and believed that friends (86%), teachers (90%), and family (91%) thought they were good students as well.

Teachers were asked a similar question about the staff and families at Locke High School. The responses varied quite a bit and are represented in Graph 36. Forty-two percent of teachers agreed that teachers were good, and 31% agreed that counselors were good, while only 20% agreed that students were good, and 15% agreed that parents were good. Teacher ratings of fellow colleagues are much higher than the ratings of students and their parents.

Students and staff both rated themselves higher than if rated by someone else. Students seem to believe in themselves and think that others do too. Their belief in their ability as students may tie into high expectations that they think others have for them. Although student perceptions are mostly even across the board, the teacher perceptions of teachers, counselors, students, and parents are quite varied. As we discussed earlier, the perceptions that teachers hold about their students can greatly influence students' own personal expectations and beliefs. Even though it is unclear as to what the meaning of

"good" is, we suspect that believing in students and families at Locke High School could only contribute to fostering the college going culture.

Graph 35. Average Percentage of Belief That The Student Is A Good Student Over 4.0 Years
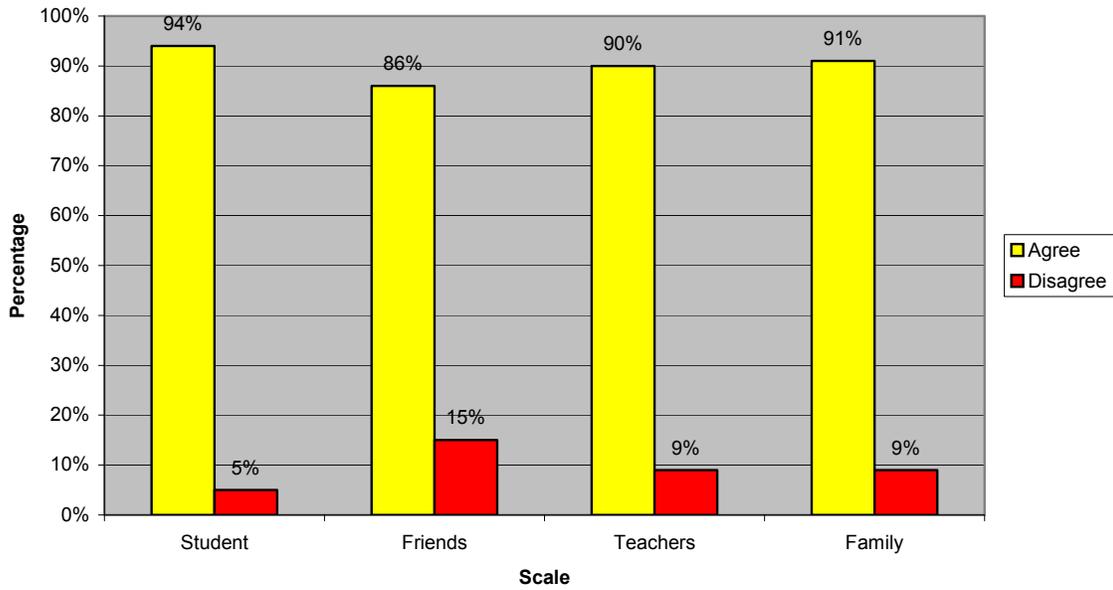
**Graph 36. The majority of teachers, counselors, students, and parents are "good":**
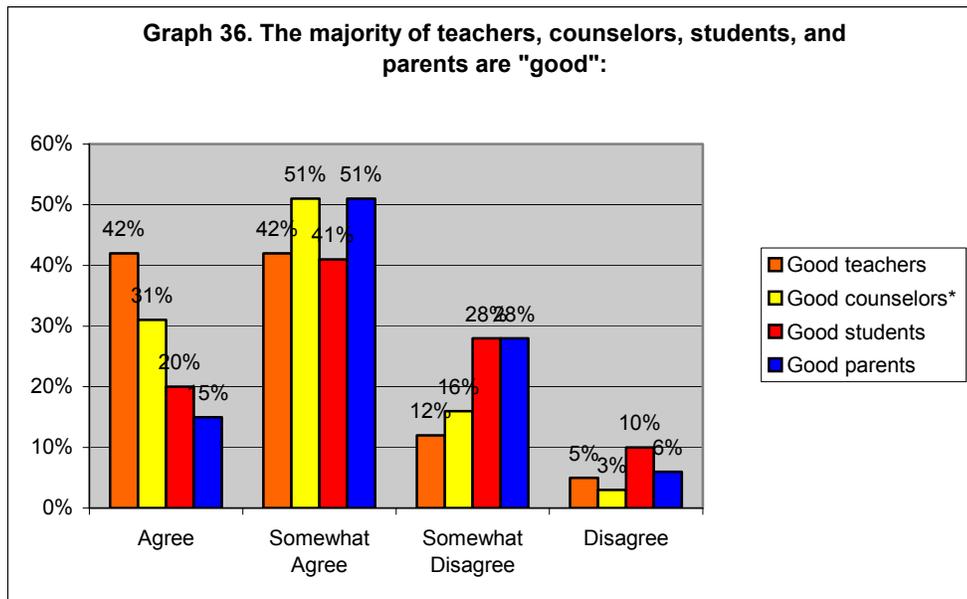

- This question was only asked in year three
-

To better understand what "good" may mean to students and teachers, we looked at several of the responses that both groups provided to questions about certain behaviors that may or may not be considered as contributing to the label of "good student." These included asking students about their school attendance. The majority of students reported that they attend school "all of the time" (65%), and 30% of students indicated that they attend school "most of the time" (Graph 37). When asked about their friends' attendance at school, students indicated that 33% of their friends go to school "all of the time," while 50% of their friends go to school "most of the time" (Graph 38). Just as students and teachers ranked themselves highest when asked about their agreement of whether they were "good students", it seems that friends are also the hardest critics of each other when reporting attendance.

Additionally we asked teachers about certain student behaviors that may contribute to the label of "good student." The evaluation team thought that in some cases teachers may be referring to student respectfulness or not being disruptive in class. Graph 39 indicates that 53% of teachers believe that students are not respectful of each other, but 52% did think that students are respectful of teachers, staff, and administrators.
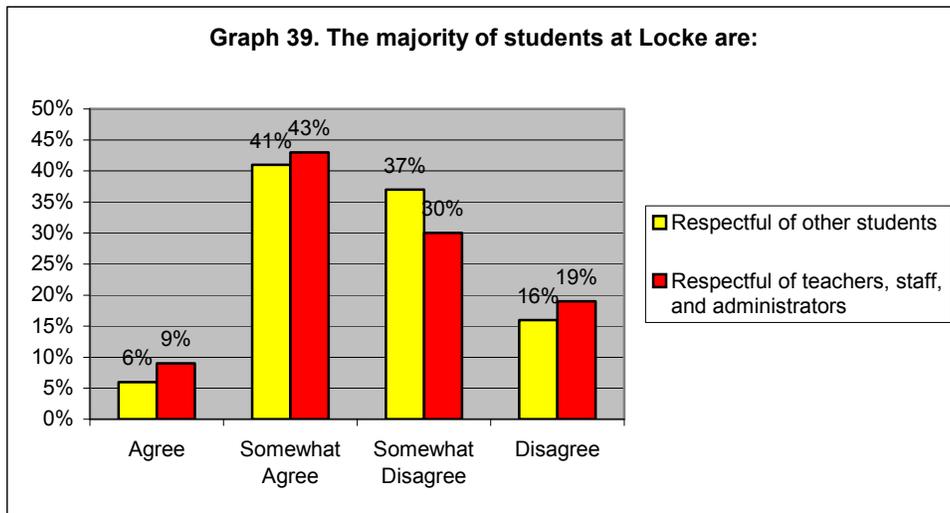
Graph 37. Average Percentage of Students' Beliefs That They Go To School Over 4 Years
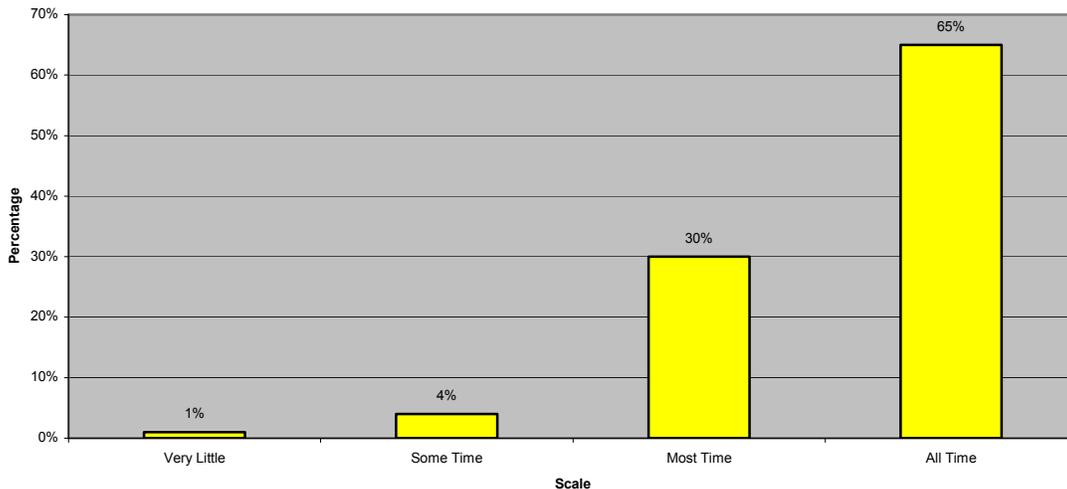
**Graph 38. Average Percentage of Students' Beliefs, Over 4 Years, That
Their Friends Go To School**
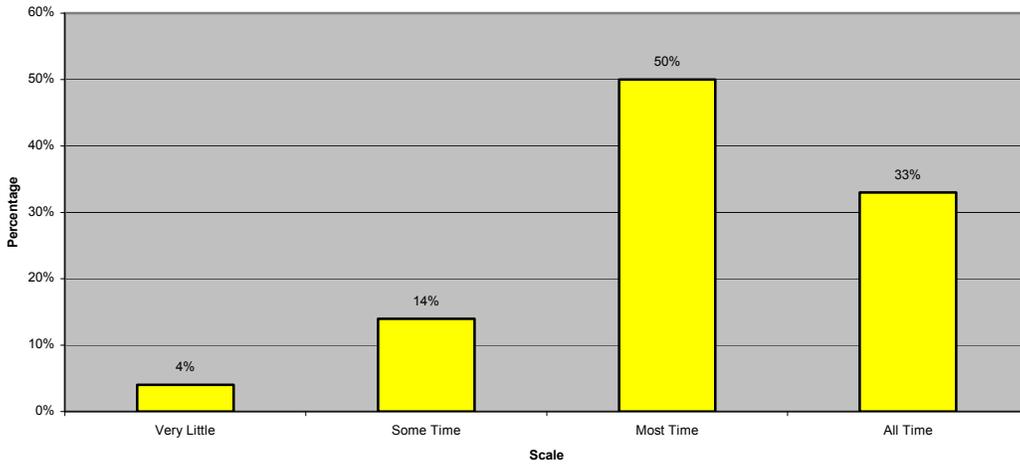
Graph 39. The majority of students at Locke are:

Another question that emerged during the course of the study was what obstacles students felt they faced on their path to college. We placed a question on the survey during Year 2 addressing this issue, because knowing what obstacles students deem most daunting may provide information on areas the school can focus on in an attempt to better assist students on their path to post-secondary education.

Students were asked what obstacles they thought they needed to overcome to go to college. Students were provided with several options as well as open space to write their ideas. They were allowed to check off all that applied; therefore, the numbers in Table 6 represent frequencies aggregated over the last three years. The most cited response by students were financial concerns, school support, and family support. These were followed by residence status.

Students' biggest concerns are issues that can be addressed within the school. Concerns about school support must be expanded on. What does this mean? Does this mean that students expect to see counselors more, or that they expect the school to be doing something different than it is currently doing? Financial support is another area where the school can be instrumental in providing students and families with information regarding financial aid and scholarships. Although the school is not directly responsible for family support, as discussed in previous sections, there is much the school can do to inform families of the needs their students are likely to have while preparing for post-secondary education. It is likely that many of the families with students at Locke high school have limited exposure to the higher educational system, and demystifying colleges and universities can make a big difference in student perceptions regarding what they think is possible.

Table 6. What Obstacles Do You Think You Need to Overcome to go to College?

Rank Order of Obstacles A Student Thinks He/She Will Need to Overcome To Go To College	Total Frequency Over 3 Years
1. Financial	1753
2. School Support	1068
3. Family Support	1034
4. Residence Status	534
5. None	362
6. Other[23]	165
Total N for years 2-4	3558

Note: Data only available for years 2-4 because question was only on the survey for years 2-4.

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[23] The types of "other" obstacles were family members, grades, and internet.

Conclusion

Much discussion around the data and issues related to building a college going culture as well as areas that seem to be impediments or places where work is needed in order to build a stronger college going culture have already been covered. However, in this final section, we would like to highlight and reiterate some of the areas that we found most compelling. These areas include communication between teachers and high school counselors, relationship between the school and parents (families), keeping students in the educational pipeline, and finally, the mismatch between teacher and student expectations.

Teachers and Counselors

It is apparent, based on the aggregate results of this survey, that there is a need to increase communication between teachers and counselors at Locke High School. In general, teachers have very high opinions of counselors regarding their dedication to the job, but doubt their ability to engage with and impact students. As mentioned previously, the student to counselor ratio at Locke is incredibly high, and it is not surprising that students have less contact with these important figures than would be desired; therefore, it is imperative that teachers and counselors communicate about the college information that students need. This is because it is teachers who take on the role of "college counselors" on a daily basis. Teachers are the individuals that students see more often than any other figure in the school. Teachers and counselors need regular opportunities to meet about a myriad of topics including college preparation and communicating up-to-date information about the college choice process.

School and Parents

Another area of concern is communication between members of the school community — specifically teachers and parents. Teachers are often quite negative in their opinion of parents, specifically in regard to parent's interest and dedication to their child's education, college preparation, academic performance, and behavior. This is alarming, because research indicates that this relationship is imperative to building a

strong college going culture. At a school where a great majority of the parents and supporting family members do not have much familiarity with college, making parents aware that college is a possibility for their children and letting them know what they can do to help in the preparation process is a responsibility of the school, and this responsibility requires a great deal of effort to involve these important members of the school community.

Starting College Preparation Early and Keeping Students in the Educational Pipeline

The data from this survey as well as the 2005 Locke Senior Survey indicates that a great majority of students who make it to the end of their Senior year are going on to some form of secondary school. This is a very positive indicator. The not so positive side of this coin is that the majority of 9th graders who begin high school at Locke High School do not make it through their Junior year for one reason or another. This could be do to a number of factors, including transferring and dropping out (behavior issues, as well as frustration with the schooling process). Because so many students who stay in school are going on to post-secondary schooling, this indicates that the college preparation process must begin as early as possible. Since articulation between middle schools and Locke High School is sometimes difficult, communication with students about college and what they should do to prepare for the next step in the educational pipeline should begin the moment students walk into Locke High School. This means the first semester of the 9th grade year. However, efforts to improve articulation between middle schools and Locke should continue. Additionally, if there is a need for remediation in order to place students on track for college attendance, this should be strongly suggested as soon as it is detected, and efforts to do so should begin immediately, such as in summer school or evening classes. Many students do not realize that the choices they are making in 9th and 10th grade have an impact on their opportunities four years later.

Mismatch of Student and Teacher Expectations

Another area that has come to the attention of the evaluation team over the past four years is the mismatch between student expectations for themselves and what they perceive their teachers to expect of them, versus what teachers indicate they expect students to do following high school. In general, students have extremely high expectations for themselves and think that other important figures in their lives also have high expectations for them. Teachers on the other hand, tend to be more pessimistic regarding their expectations of students. High expectations are one of the strongest indicators of students developing aspirations for college attendance, and teachers are an important aspect of the indicators students perceive while developing their expectations. Although teachers are slightly negative in their expectations of students, they are very positive about their belief that students are capable of building relationships with teachers and administrators at the school and of accessing the help they need. Teachers are also very positive about their ability to engage with students and affect them positively, including their ability to help students prepare for college.

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