

Exploring the Values of Education  
Using Student Viewpoints to Redesign the Educational Structure to  
Achieve Optimal Experiences

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Using Student Viewpoints to Redesign the Educational Structure to Achieve Optimal  
Experiences

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## Abstract

A study was performed to understand students' viewpoints on how well a high school cared for their emotional wellbeing. Q methodology was utilized to gain quantitative and qualitative results. Quantum analysis extracted three distinct viewpoints. *Individualists* believe the school values emotional wellness when it recognizes the personal talents, strengths, interests, needs, and stressors of its students. *Flowers* feel most valued when they are challenged to achieve at their highest ability levels. *Distressed in School* believe the school must do more to care for students' emotional needs as much as their academic success. All three viewpoints agree that schools should value students' emotional wellbeing, which includes involving them in decisions that affect the educational climate. Students also agree that high levels of stress created by standardized testing does not help them learn or perform better. The viewpoints also identified specific teacher behaviors as being supportive or detrimental to their emotional wellbeing. Implications center on restructuring the educational system based on Csikszentmihalyi's concept of Flow. Suggestions feature elements of curriculum design and delivery, teacher training programs, student empowerment strategies, and repurposing stressors to stimulate positive emotions.

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## Dedication

I dedicate the work of this dissertation to my family and friends.

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## Chapter 1

Although American public schools have always valued academic performance, most offer activities and programs that help to develop the *whole child*. This philosophy derives from a set of beliefs that all students hold individual worth, and that caring for emotional and psychological wellbeing is as important as academic success. However, in the age of accountability, teachers have been forced to shift their attention from students' overall wellbeing to their achievement levels on standardized assessments. This is a result of the federal government's determination to use students' test scores as the primary measure of a school's success.

In 2001, the Bush administration passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The primary objective of NCLB was to increase accountability for school districts by targeting students' academic performance on standardized assessments, specifically in the areas of math and reading. A school's overall effectiveness was determined using students' scores, which were also compared to previous scores on a yearly basis. Individual schools and districts that failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) were forced to develop improvement plans (Executive Summary of the NCLB Act). Focusing exclusively on results from standardized exams, NCLB did comparatively little to promote students' "civic responsibility and their social, emotional, physical, and mental health" (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], 2013, p. 1).

Eight years later, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Created to stimulate the economy and invest in other public

sectors, such as education, \$4.35 billion were allotted for the Race to the Top (RTTT) fund. RTTT essentially served as a competitive grant with conditions that schools adopt common standards, implement statewide longitudinal data systems, and standardize teacher evaluations using students' scores as one of the main components of a teacher's overall rating (Race to the Top Program, Executive Summary). These conditions not only magnified the importance of student performance on standardized assessments but also fortified the accountability movement in education.

Although school improvement initiatives, based on higher levels of accountability and a more challenging curriculum may seem justified, researchers in the fields of education and psychology began to question how the stress to demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills affects the emotional levels in adolescents. Elias (1989) argued that "placing an overlay of strong academic demands on the current educational climate is likely to result in few increases in learning and instead exasperate current stress-related problems and lead to further alienation among our student population" (pp. 393-394). In 2003, the Search Institute surveyed the nation's youth on the costs of valuing academics over social, emotional, and ethical development. Devaney, O'Brien, Tavegia, and Resnik (2005) reported the survey's findings, claiming

29% of adolescents feel they think through the consequences of their choices and plan ahead- but 71% do not; 35% say they respect the values and beliefs of people from different races and cultures- but 65% do not; and only 24% report feeling their teachers really care about them as individuals- but 76% do not. (p. 108)

## **Context of the Study**

By high school, Klem and Connell (2004) reported that as many as 40% to 60% of students become chronically disengaged from school; while there are multiple reasons for this, it appears that engaging students, emotionally, is a major contributing factor. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011, p. 405) explained that in a national sample of 148,189 sixth to twelfth graders, only 29%- 45% reported having “social competencies such as empathy, decision-making, and conflict-resolution skills, and only 29% indicated that their school provided a caring, encouraging environment.” The authors further reported that “approximately 30% of high school students engage in multiple high risk behaviors (e.g., substance use, sex, violence, depression, attempted suicide) ... [which ultimately] interferes with school performance and jeopardizes their potential for life success” (p. 405).

Statistics reporting the number of children diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and other related disorders, profile a disturbing impression of American adolescents. Patton et al. (2000) cited multiple studies that report surveys documenting the frequency of mental health problems in adolescence, with around one in five describing some form of emotional disorder. Moreover, rates of more serious depressive disorders rank highest in the stages of early childhood and late adolescence (Bland, Orn, & Newman, 1988; Christie, Burke, Regier, Rae, Boyd, & Locke, 1988; Kessler, McGonagle, Zhao, et al., ([as cited in article], 1994). Considering that Patton et al. (2000, p. 587) reported that “by the year 2020 depression is predicted to lie second only to heart disease as a cause of disease burden in the developed world”, it becomes imperative that schools quickly

demonstrate a more serious commitment toward supporting students' emotional wellbeing.

The mental health of young people is a major public concern, and strategies to promote emotional wellbeing should include an understanding of its effects. The National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) asserts that “about 8 percent of teenagers (ages 13-18) have an anxiety disorder, with symptoms commonly emerging around age 6” and “about 11 percent of adolescents have a depressive disorder by age 18” (NIMH Fact Sheet, n.d.). High levels of anxiety can have debilitating effects, causing excessive fears of otherwise normal situations. The disease affects over 40 million Americans (ages 18 years and older), paralyzing its victims with irrational fears and uncertainty (NIMH Fact Sheet, n.d.). Davidson (2012, p. 148) described depression as causing “the sufferer the inability to experience pleasure and other positive emotions, such as satisfaction, joy, and pride,” which are the exact emotions education is tasked to inspire in students.

### **Rationale for Studying Students' Emotional Wellbeing**

Most would agree that schools have a higher moral obligation than to simply provide children with a basic education. Along with parents, schools do the most to establish the foundations for a person's sense of self. Because children are mandated to receive a free and appropriate education, schools have access to young people at a time in their lives when the concepts of emotional and self-awareness issues are promoted and explored, and antisocial behaviors are addressed and remedied.

Schools provide the social environment that allows students to learn social intuition, develop relationships, reinforce self-esteem, and discover their own uniqueness. Instructional activities, programs, and the school culture should therefore create a habitat

for happiness by providing the mechanisms students need to achieve personal growth and self-discovery. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011, p. 406) reviewed multiple studies on developmental research that indicated “affective mastery of social-emotional competencies is associated with greater well-being and better school performance whereas the failure to achieve competence in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social, and academic difficulties” (Eisenberg, 2006; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1998). Moreover, McBride, Midford, and James (1995) reported, that, if left untreated, some of these illnesses can have long-lasting, harmful effects on emotional wellness.

The reason to consider the emotional and psychological aspects of children not only indulges the moral responsibility of schools, but, there is evidence that the human mind performs better when experiencing happiness. When levels of positivity are raised, the brain experiences what has been called *The Happiness Advantage*. According to Achor (2011)

the brain performs significantly better when in a positive emotional state than it does at negative, neutral, or stressed levels. Furthermore, intelligence, creativity, and energy levels are elevated and the brain is 31% more productive when at positive than at negative, neutral, or stressed levels.  
(TedTalk)

While pragmatists may argue that it is not the purpose of schools to ensure students’ emotional wellbeing, it seems increasingly important and relevant that schools

teach students the skills necessary to build positive relationships and develop elements of the emotional mind that help to maintain a positive outlook.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study was conducted with the objective of using students' viewpoints to improve the learning climate within a rural Western Pennsylvania high school. Five hundred ninety-five (595) students- approximately 62% of the school population- participated in a voluntary survey that gauged their opinions regarding the overall school climate. Questions were classified to gain students' viewpoints regarding how well the school valued their emotional wellbeing, taught them techniques to effectively manage their emotions, engaged them with instructional activities that utilized their personal strengths and talents, and explored the concepts of personal growth and self-discovery. Senior and juniors were asked to participate in an additional constructed-response survey that consisted of five questions related to the research questions of the study. These responses allowed students to offer detailed explanations related to their individual school experiences. Generally, responses from both surveys indicated that students had an overall negative viewpoint of how the school values their emotional wellbeing. These results were presented to the Board of Directors, which intensely supported changes to policies, procedures, and curricular programs and activities that improved the overall social and learning experience, particularly those that targeted students' emotional wellbeing.

Approximately 12 to 16 students will be asked to participate in a Q sort study that will be designed using statements gained from the constructed-response survey. The results of this study will give administrators and teachers information needed to change,

add, or eliminate elements of the school climate that students find lacking, inadequate, ineffective, or unnecessary to care for their social and/or emotional needs. Specific goals and changes to current practice will be developed using ideas generated from students' responses; however, targeted outcomes include:

- (a) Concepts aligned with Social and Emotional Learning will be reflected in the District Comprehensive Plan, with at least one District goal devoted to the emotional wellness of students;
- (b) District courses and programs will be modified or introduced to promote the concepts of emotional wellbeing and/or self-awareness;
- (c) Specific responsibilities will be assigned to personnel that include addressing antisocial behaviors and communicating available resources with parents;
- (d) Modifications will be made to: Attendance and related (i.e. truancy) policies- changing from punitive consequences to ones that support the importance of school attendance, particularly when attendance issues are identified as manifestations of a negative or neglectful home environment; and
- (e) Discipline practices- changing from ineffective procedures (ex. after-school detentions) to ones that positively impact behaviors and improve student performance.

Responses to the future HS Climate surveys will indicate that more students agree to statements that the school: values students' emotional levels as much as their academic achievement; provides courses that teach the importance of developing and maintaining

positive emotional levels; provides opportunities for students to identify and utilize personal interests, strengths, and talents in the educational setting; provides information regarding the importance of maintaining a positive outlook; and teaches the mechanisms that relate enjoyment with challenging activities. Additionally, responses to the future HS Climate surveys will indicate that fewer students agree to statements that stress to perform at high levels, or when involved in challenging activities, create levels of anxiety or depression.

### **Research Questions**

This study attempts to gain students' viewpoints on how the school values their emotional wellbeing. Questions guiding the research include:

1. Do students feel the school values their emotional wellbeing as much as their academic success?
2. What statements, actions, or behaviors do school personnel (teachers, counselors, administrators) engage in that students find supportive or destructive to their emotional wellbeing?
3. How does the stress to demonstrate mastery of knowledge or ability affect students' emotional levels?
4. Do students feel it is the school's responsibility to care for their emotional wellbeing?

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

*Adolescent* - a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood, generally ages 12-18;



*Anxiety* - a mental disorder that causes fear, nervousness, apprehension, and worrying;

*Depression* - a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest;

*Emotional Wellbeing* - a positive, emotional outlook or attitude that enables an individual to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life;

*Flow*- spontaneous joy that occurs through full immersion in an intensely interesting, challenging activity;

*Optimal Experience*- accomplishments that produce deeply felt, positive mental states;

*Positive Education*- education for both, traditional skills, and for happiness;

*Positive Psychology*- the study of positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive accomplishment, and good relationships;

*Project-Based Learning*- a teaching method that engages students in applying knowledge and skills using authentic questions in a student-centered learning environment

*School (or Classroom) Climate* - the quality and character of school life, or the school environment, reflecting norms, values, customs, goals, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures;

*Social and Emotional Learning* - a skills' approach to education that involves the ability to manage emotions and respond confidently and appropriately in social settings; and

*Standardized Assessments* - tests that are designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner.

*Subjective Happiness*- an individual's perceived level of happiness

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The following review will summarize literature researching the connection between emotions and achievement, with specific attention focused on the benefits received from positive emotion. The science of Positive Psychology and the concept of *Flow* are introduced. Flow is a self-reported optimal experience that produces high levels of enjoyment, with a simultaneous loss of self-consciousness occurring when one overcomes an intensely challenging, but, personally interesting activity. The section will also review current social and emotional learning programs and offer examples of their effectiveness not only in improving students' emotional levels, but also in increasing achievement levels. The review concludes by exploring the emotional benefits of engaging learning activities, supportive learning environments, and opportunities for students to participate in decisions that influence the learning and social climate.

### Engagement, Emotions, and Learning

Although Davidson (2012) contended that understanding emotions are centrally important to understanding how the human mind functions, he suggested that emotions are traditionally viewed by science as merely interrupting the cognitive process. Reporting to the contrary, he argued that a complete understanding of the mind will never be accomplished without including a study of emotions, stating that "if science couldn't figure out emotion, it would never figure out personality, temperament, illness such as anxiety disorders and depression, or (possibly) cognition" (p. 18). Stickel's and Callaway's (2007) research in neuroscience confirmed that emotion is a critical factor in learning and acts as a pathway to transform data into meaningful information.

Explorations into neuroscience continue to provide new information regarding the functionalities of the brain. Zull (2006) explained that all nervous systems have the same fundamental *bauplan*, which directs sensory elements gained from outside stimuli into an arrangement that allows the organism to sense changes to its environment. Zull insists that the brain actually undergoes physical changes as we learn, claiming that the more regions of the cortex and neo-cortex that are engaged, the more change occurs. Since all regions of the neocortex are connected to emotions, via its connection to the brainstem, where emotions are created, emotions naturally exist in the very foundations of learning.

In addition to advancing the learning process, research in the field of neuroscience supports that required skills needed to be successful in school and the workplace derive from emotions. Referencing Damasio's research, Folsom (2005) argued that "emotion is integral to the processes of reasoning and decision-making" (p. 41). Growing support for this conclusion can be found in results from cognitive studies that claim an interconnectedness exists between thinking and emotion. Jensen (2005) cited the research of LeDoux (1994) and Damasio (1994) to suggest that "emotions drive attention, create meaning, and have their own memory pathways" (p. 69). More than simply a side effect of cognition, Jensen suggests that emotions:

- constitute the passion for learning;
- help orchestrate our attentional priorities;
- support either persistence or retreat;
- are sources of information about the outside world;
- evoke necessary empathy, support, or fear;
- associate our learning with either pain or pleasure;

- help us make meaning out of our learning, work, and lives;
- push the pursuit of rewarded behavior;
- improve social problem-solving;
- provide incentives for desired social behavior; and
- allow us to enjoy and even celebrate our learning success (p. 69).

Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) reported that teaching and learning also have strong social, emotional, and academic components, and social and emotional skills have been shown to influence whether students hold the capacity to engage in learning and benefit from instruction. A good deal of research exists that correlates students' engagement in learning activities with more positive emotional levels and higher academic success. One reason, cited in Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011), is that students generally "do not learn alone but rather in collaboration with their teachers, and the company of their peers, and with the encouragement of their families. Emotions can facilitate or impede children's academic engagement, work ethic, commitment, and ultimate school success" (p. 405). Engaged students are attentive and participate in class discussions, exert increased effort in instructional activities, and demonstrate interest and motivation to learn (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Marks, 2000; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Early adolescents who reported higher levels of engagement were 75% more likely to earn higher grades and have higher attendance than those who reported lower levels of engagement (Klem & Connell, 2004).

On the contrary, disengaged students are more disruptive, less likely to hold goals of higher education, earn lower grades, and more likely to drop out of school (Kaplan,

Peck, & Kaplan, 1997). Skinner and Belmont (1993) explained that students who are less engaged, but are more passive learners, report being bored, anxious, or even angry about being in school. Therefore, successful learning has been found to be contingent to the extent students are engaged in learning activities (Chen, 2005; Finn & Rock, 1997; Osterman, 2000; Wang & Pomerantz, 2009).

In a study that assessed connections among students' emotional dispositions, negative academic affect, coping strategies, academic stress, and overall grade point average (GPA), Arsenio and Loria (2014) found that disengaged academic coping mediated the connections between negative academic affect and lower GPA and also mediated the connection between academic stress and negative overall moods. While these results tend to highlight the general importance of considering socioemotional needs of students' school-related experiences, the most striking finding relevant to educators is that "adolescents who used more disengaged academic coping (i.e., denial and avoidance of academic problems) not only had lower GPAs but also reported higher levels of academic stress" (p.87). The major implications of this is that by the time students reach high school, they have accumulated years of emotional experiences which will most likely influence their expectations about themselves as learners and about learning in general.

McLaughlin and Clark (2010) connected an individual's emotional well-being with the ability to learn because it includes psychological, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development. These different aspects of human development influence a person's ability to sustain satisfying relationships, develop a sense of right and wrong,

and, to not only resolve problems, but to learn from them (Mental Health Foundation, 1999).

### **Self- and Social Awareness in Adolescent Development**

Michael Rutter (1987) provided clear reasons for schools to address emotional issues in adolescents. Not only has he defined the middle-level schooling years as a time of convergence of biological, personal, social, familial, and cultural development, but, in earlier research (1980), explained that many social and emotional problems that surface in high school- for example smoking, alcohol, drug use, and violent behaviors- have their roots in middle school. Elias (2001) explained “the changes brought on by puberty combined with cognitive and social development changes make middle school transition a complex situation” (p. 20).

The complexities of these changes occur in children as they enter adolescence. Particularly of interest is how emotional changes shape adolescents’ value and belief systems and the impact this has on the development of their self-identity.

During adolescence emotions noticeably become the basis of identity and ideals. What adolescents care about is usually what they feel strongly about- not only feel intensely but also feel variably... Adolescents become aware of feeling everything, and this transforms their values and their understanding. (Haviland-Jones, Gebelt, and Stapely, 1997, pp. 244-245)

Kress and Elias (2006) offered insight into the stages of emotional development in adolescence. At the beginning stage, which typically occurs in the middle-level grades (5-8), students become

increasingly self-aware and, often, self-critical. Their socio-cognitive skills are making great strides. They are able to understand multiple sides of arguments and disagreements. They are sensitive to perceived social norms and often judge their own abilities and self-worth by others' reactions to them. Although they are increasingly able to articulate goals, both long and short-term, it is often difficult for them to modify actions to come into line with achieving those goals. Belonging becomes an important issue to students at this stage, and friends strive to develop ways to deal with conflict and solve problems while maintaining friendships.

(p. 607)

Middle school provides opportunities to learn and apply social and emotional skills; however, Elias (2001) believed that, in general, educators often underestimate the importance of these demands. Suggesting that the energy for learning depends on the nature of these skills, he believes "many trips to the school nurse and phantom ailment-related absences are the result of students trying to cope with the kinds of fears or problems and the strong feelings they engender" (p. 20).

McLaughlin and Clark (2010) described early- to mid-adolescence as a time when young people are "developmentally concerned with increasing their autonomy and with

shifting the balance in their relationships with peers and adults” (p. 91). Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) described this as a highly potent period, stating “nowhere in the lifespan other than in infancy is the interplay of individual and collective factors in the composition of human life more pronounced than in the early adolescent years” (p. 443).

As they mature and enter high school, adolescents become even more self-aware. They connect meaning and relevance to their own interests. Searching for emotional and social contentment, most place a high value on future goals and demonstrate an interest in questions concerning continuing education or skill development needed for a career.

They value

personal meaning, transcendence, and goals for personal accomplishment. One's own decisions and behaviors, including those regarding friendships and peer relations, school functioning, balancing independence and interdependence within one's family, all become crucial pieces in an ongoing process of self-definition. (Kress & Elias, 2006, p. 608)

Puolakka, Haapasalo-Pesu, and Astedt-Kurki (2013) explained that the later years of adolescence also coincide with the years of a person’s development that impact future goals and training, and where life-long habits, values, and beliefs are formed. Because these developmental years hold such great importance in a person’s overall well-being, Somersalo (2002) believed that school is an environment in which the growth of the young person can be either seriously advanced or disrupted.



## **Valuing Emotions through Positive Education**

A fundamental American belief is that each generation will achieve higher socio-economic levels than the one before it, and, thereby, enjoy a higher life satisfaction. However, Seligman (2011a) stated that in the past, this has strictly related to personal achievements, such as higher incomes, more leisure time, and other measures of material gain. He and others question whether real progress should be measured using concepts of “an improved sense of self, a healthier emotional state, and a higher positive outlook” (p. 96). In his book *Flow*, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) agreed with this contention, stating that “material success, advances in technology, scientific breakthroughs, a more sophisticated world” (p. 12) are actually a betrayal of this dream because they do not include components of personal happiness.

An expert in the field of Positive Psychology, Seligman (2011b) promoted the value of focusing on personal skills and strengths and advocates for schools’ curriculum to include knowledge of mechanisms that improve levels of emotional well-being, particularly during adolescent development. Calling the movement *Positive Education*, Seligman (2002, 2011b) and others have devoted countless hours of research to conclude that schools should not robustly include standards and competencies focused on emotional wellness. Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, and Linkins (2009) defined Positive Education as “education for both traditional skills and for happiness” (p. 293). Understanding that happiness is too general of a term to study, Seligman (2002) divided the concept into three different categories, each of which are skill-based and measurable.

### **The Pleasant Life**

The first concept involves a mostly hedonic perspective, or a life full of positive emotions (e.g., happiness, pleasure, satisfaction) - in other words, the *Pleasant Life*. While experiences in this category generally raise individual levels of happiness, they are also fleeting, temporal, and dependent on external situations and environmental conditions. Seligman (2002) pointed out, that, although this pursuit of pleasure will not bring lasting emotional well-being, it is a life-style heavily marketed to adults and children. However, he introduces two alternatives of happiness that he suggests should be taught in schools to instill long-term positive emotions and higher levels of life satisfaction.

### **The Engaged Life**

The *Engaged Life* is characterized by more deeply felt and lasting moments of positive emotion (e.g. joy, contentment, love). These emotions are stimulated and maintained through regular episodes of optimal experiences called *Flow*. Mandigo and Thompson (1998) described optimal experiences as events or accomplishments that include high levels of intrinsic motivation, perceived freedom, positive affect, concentration, challenge, skill development, and clear objectives, while producing equally high levels of enjoyment, satisfaction, peak performance, positive mental states, and perceived success.

Generally credited as coining the term Flow, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) used common characteristics of optimal experiences to define the state of Flow as

A sense that one's skills are adequate to cope with the  
challenges at hand, in a goal-directed, rule bound action

system that provides clear clues as to how well one is performing. Concentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant, or to worry about problems. Self-consciousness disappears, and the sense of time becomes distorted. An activity that produces such experiences is so gratifying that people are willing to do it for its own sake, with little concern for what they will get out of it, even when it is difficult, or dangerous. (p. 71)

### **Concentration, Self-Discovery, and Personal Growth**

It is the absence of emotion and an individual's ability to offer complete attention to a task that is at the heart of Flow. Seligman (2002) suggested that "consciousness and emotion are there to correct your trajectory; when what you are doing is seamlessly perfect, you don't need them" (p. 116). The reason this is important is because Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggested that our ability to master control of our consciousness allows us to maintain concentrated levels of attention, which is "our most important tool in the task of improving the quality of experience" (p. 33).

There is also evidence that Flow experiences produce powerful, lasting effects, specifically in the areas of self-discovery and personal growth. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggested these experiences offer the individual "a deep but effortless involvement that removes from awareness the worries and frustrations of everyday life, the concern for the self disappears, yet paradoxically the sense of self emerges stronger after the flow experience is over" (p. 49).

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) continues to point out that this loss of self-consciousness does not involve the loss of self, nor a loss of consciousness, but a loss of consciousness of the self.

What slips below the threshold of awareness is the *concept* of self, the information we use to represent to ourselves who we are. And being able to forget temporarily who we are seems to be very enjoyable. When not preoccupied with our selves, we actually have a chance to expand the concept of who we are. Loss of self-consciousness can lead to self-transcendence, to a feeling that the boundaries of our being have been pushed forward. (p. 64)

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) reported that losing this sense of self-consciousness is necessary for self-discovery and growth. Using Flow as the concept structure, he explains that a stronger, more confident self-concept emerges from these episodes.

In Flow a person is challenged to do her best, and must constantly improve her skills. At the time, she doesn't have the opportunity to reflect on what this means in terms of the self- if she did allow herself to become self-conscious, the experiences could not have been very deep. But afterward, when the activity is over and self-consciousness has a chance to resume, the self that the person reflects upon is not the same self that existed before the Flow experience:

it is now enriched by new skills and fresh achievements.

(pp. 65-66)

Seligman (2002) believed this continual growth experience, stimulated by personal achievements of overcoming higher-level challenges, is what is necessary to improve positive emotions and develop clear visions of self-identity.

The ideal self is the image we hold of the very best we are capable of, our highest strengths realized and active. When we feel that we are living up to the ideals that we hold most dearly, we are gratified, and exercising these strengths produces more gratification. (p. 199)

### **The Meaningful Life**

The third realm reported by Seligman is the *Meaningful Life*. According to Seligman (2002), “meaning consists in knowing what your highest strengths are, and then using them to belong to and serve something you believe is larger than the self” (p. 296). Seligman believed that the concepts of meaning and purpose are valid curricular topics, reporting that “substantial evidence from well controlled studies that skills that increase resilience, positive emotion, engagement, and meaning” (p. 293) can not only be taught in schools, but provide compelling reasons why they should be valued equally as significant as other academic content. Seligman et al. (2009) cited numerous studies on the effects of positive emotions on the skills needed to be successful in school and in life, such as

Positive mood produces broader attention (Fredrickson, 1998; Bolte, Goschke, & Kuhl, 2003; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Rowe, Hirsh Anderson, & Smith, 2007), more creative thinking (Isen, Duabman, & Nowicki, 1987; Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1994), and more holistic thinking (Isen et al., 1991; Kuhl, 1983, 2000), in contrast to negative mood which produces narrower attention (Bolte et al., 2003), more critical thinking, and more analytical thinking (Kuhl, 1983, 2000). Both ways of thinking are important, but schools emphasize critical, rather than creative thinking, and the negative mood so often found in the classroom facilitates only critical thinking. (pp. 294- 295)

Seligman (2011b) also summarized other results that demonstrate how positive education programs increase students' reports of enjoyment and engagement in school. Even teachers who did not actually deliver the positive education curriculum, and were blind to whether students participated in the program, completed measures that demonstrate these programs improved students' strengths related to learning and engagement in school (e.g., curiosity, love of learning, creativity). Additionally, according to both parent and teacher reports, these programs also improved social skills (e.g., empathy, cooperation, assertiveness, self-control).

### **The Emotional Impact of Learning Environments**

While research supports *Positive Education's* ability to enhance curriculum and improve learning environments, the traditional approach, which focuses solely on

cognitive development, while mostly overlooking students' emotional needs, continues to dominate the American educational system with possible damaging effects. The American Psychological Association reports that 27% of teenagers (ages 13-17) said they experience extreme stress during the school year, while only 13% feel the same stress during the summer months. Thirty-four percent expected their stress to increase in the coming year. Teens expressed irritability and anger (40%) or anxiousness (36%) as consequences of stress. About one-third said stress produced feelings of depression, sadness, or being overwhelmed. The survey's findings also reiterated that unhealthy stress behaviors that start early may continue through adulthood (Jayson, 2014).

Part of the findings from a large-scale study of the World Mental Health Survey was that elevated levels of anxiety and mood disorders were directly related to school or the school environment, such as failing to graduate (Lee et al., 2009). Another study involving 83 clinically depressed adolescents found that depressive symptoms were related to "perceptions of impairment in functioning, such as the ability to do well in school, concentrate on or complete their homework, concentrate in class, attend class, and deal with other students" (Humensky et al., 2010, p. 378).

When learning environments disregard emotional needs, "students report high levels of stress, negative perceptions of their school environments, and problems in the social, emotional, and behavioral areas, such as bullying, conflicts with peers, and externalizing and internalizing mental health problems" (O'Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009, p. 62). When teachers and students have negative relationships, students are less likely to be engaged in school, but more likely to exhibit low academic achievement (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta, & Howes, 2002; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; National

Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD) Early Child Care Research Network, 2003b; Raver et al., 2008).

Because of the great influence the overall school culture and classroom climates have on students' emotions, schools must devote the necessary resources and personnel to ensure students feel emotionally safe and comfortable in school. Patton et al. (2000) concluded, based on Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, and Smith's (1979) landmark study, *Fifteen Thousand Hours*, that "differences in student academic success and behavioral outcomes were largely a result of the school's organizational and building climates, not differences in the demographics of students within the schools" (p. 588).

Judy Wallis (2013) expressed a need for classrooms to redefine themselves as places where intelligence grows out of inquiry and talk and wonder. She directs teachers to instruct with energy, allow for hope, and, to include as meaningful outcomes, the feelings of pleasure and happiness. She wonders if schools have "become sanitized from the very emotion that fuels learning" (p. 27), and whether the reason so many teachers have left the profession is because of the joyless culture created by our constant attention to test results.

Furthermore, making appropriate connections and developing personal relationships with teachers and peers seem of even greater importance for children who show early signs of mental or emotional illness, particularly with responsive behavior and in utilizing coping strategies. Children with even mild emotional disabilities tend not to be accepted by their peers, and they display deficiencies in the way they interact with others (Elias, Blum, Gager, Hunter, & Kress, 1998, p. 220). Supported by Dodge (1980), Kress and Elias (2006) suggested that children who exhibit "difficulties with behavior



and aggression problems may misread ambiguous nonverbal cues and make hostile attributions for the behaviors of others” (p. 608). Brenner and Salovey (1997) found that depressed children and early adolescents were less likely to use cognitive strategies for coping with negative mood states, but, more likely to use negative behaviors to cope in such situations than non-depressed peers.

Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, and Salovey (2012) defined the classroom as the “primary microcontext in which students and teachers interact” (p. 700). The quality of interactions between and among students and teachers create the *classroom emotional climate* ([CEC] Daniels & Shumow, 2003; Jia et al., 2009; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008; Ryan & Patrick, 2001). Considering the amount of time American youth spend in school, CEC has been found to influence learning outcomes for students (Brophy, 1986, 1988; Konstantopoulos, 2009; Stuhlman & Pianta, 2009).

Reyes et al. (2012) explained that teachers in classrooms high in CEC “are aware of their students’ emotional and academic needs and respond to their students by choosing age appropriate activities that both encourage self-expression and cater to their interests and points of view” (p. 701). Based on the Teaching Through Interactions Framework, classrooms characterized as high in CEC have

- teachers who are sensitive to students’ needs;
- teacher-student relationships that are warm, caring, nurturing, and congenial;
- teachers who take their students’ perspectives into account; and

- teachers who refrain from using sarcasm and harsh disciplinary practices (p. 701).

These classrooms are ones in which the teacher fosters comfort and enjoyment by encouraging positive relationships and respect, demonstrates interest in student opinions and daily activities, and encourages cooperation between and among students.

Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, and Salovey (2012) cited numerous studies in which students in emotionally supportive learning environments report greater interest, enjoyment, and engagement (Curby et al., 2009; Marks, 2000; Rimm-Kaufman, La Paro, Downer, & Pianta, 2005; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wentzel, 1998; Wooley, Kol, & Bowen, 2009), engage in more complex cognitive activities (Howes & Smith, 1995), and perform better academically, as evidenced through both grades (Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007; Wentzel, 1998) and standardized test scores (LaRocque & Mvududu, 2008).

Klem and Connell (2004) found when students had better quality relationships with their teachers, which is another characteristic of emotionally supportive climates, they reported them as being about three times more engaged in learning activities than students who did not. Students who have high quality relationships with teachers also have better social adjustment and higher academic competence (Mashburn et al., 2008, Raver, Garner, & Smith-Donald, 2007; Pianta, 2003).

Reyes et al. (2012) reported that, from as early as elementary school, students who have a greater emotional bond with their teachers are more engaged in learning (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001), even after controlling for academic performance (Wentzel, 1997). Mashburn et al. (2008) found the quality of teacher-student relationships was actually a better predictor of academic adjustment than other

factors, such as teacher education and teacher-student ratio. For students, “this has offered greater opportunities for developing positive attachments to individual teachers and allows for experiences of success in the school environment” (Patton et al., 2000, p. 590).

### **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs**

In addition to parents’ demands that their children be emotionally safe, schools have also been pressured from business and industry to prepare students with skills needed in the workplace, such as ability to manage emotions, make good decisions, work effectively with colleagues, understand their own strengths and weaknesses, and maintain high ethical and safety standards (NASBE, 2013). To respond effectively, some schools have refocused efforts to implement programs that not only prepare students with the cognitive skills necessary for success in the work environment, but, also care for students’ emotional and mental health needs.

Although most schools desire to care for students’ emotional needs, pressures for increased proficiency scores on standardized exams have resulted in deficiencies in delivering emotional programs. Proponents of social and emotional programs have pushed for an increase in emotional services. Pfeiffer and Reddy (1998), the American Academy of Pediatrics (2004), and Weist (2005) all recognized schools’ potential at providing prevention and well-being services. Schools currently list as one of the major providers of mental health services in the United States (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2004; Foster et al., 2005). With guidelines and standards provided by the federal government, some states now mandate character education, and most have

standards or strongly encourage programs that teach skills related to social and emotional learning (Cohen, 2006; CASEL, 2009).

### **Background and History**

While caring for students' emotional levels has always been a component of public education, recent movements involving social and emotional learning (SEL) can be traced back to the 1990s, when findings from brain research indicated that emotions were controllable and that people held the capacity to be "more conscious of their own emotional states, more skilled at regulating them, and more capable at navigating interpersonal relationships" through concentrated efforts and practice (NASBE, 2013, p. 2). Popularized by best-selling author, Daniel Goleman, in his book, *Emotional Intelligence*, this concept asserts that inasmuch as a person can increase the skills of their hobby or profession, so, too, can people learn and apply emotionally regulating mechanisms that make them better students, friends, employees, daughters, or husbands. Corresponding with the relatively new science of Positive Psychology, these mechanisms helped to establish a new pattern of thinking. Davidson (2012) reported that these new patterns, which could be integrated into schools' curriculum or delivered through stand-alone programs, "alter brain activity in fundamental ways, enabling people to leave behind unhealthy patterns and go forward with new, healthier patterns that give them a renewed sense of joy" (p. 174).

The concept of Positive Psychology originated in psychologist Abraham Maslow's book, *Motivation and Personality*, but gained more recent attention in 1998 when Dr. Martin Seligman chose it as a theme for his term as president of the American

Psychological Association, defining it as “the study of positive emotion, of engagement, of meaning, of positive accomplishment, and of good relationships” (2011b, p. 70).

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, researchers and practitioners continued to endorse the initiative. The SEL movement has continued to expand, finding support with prominent organizations, such as

- Research Center and Institutes: The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, the University of Washington’s Social Development Research Group, and the University of Pennsylvania’s Master of Applied Positive Psychology;
- Foundations: The NoVo Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York; and
- Public Attention: 2011 White House Conference on the topic of School Bullying and 2013 National Beyond Bullying Summit held at Columbia University. (NASBE, 2013, p. 3)

Another popular trend, operating in the late 1990s, and continuing today, that is relevant to the understanding the emergence of SEL, was the push for evidence-based interventions, specifically in the fields of education and other social service programs. Those who funded these services, particularly state and local governments fueled by accountability, were interested in measurable results (Kress & Elias, 2006). These accountability measures were felt strongest in public education, with legislation and funding initiatives such as the NCLB (2001) and the RTTT grant in 2009, both of which measured students’ performance levels on standardized assessments.

In 1994, the Fetzer Institute hosted a meeting to address concerns for the disappointing results realized by existing prevention and health promotion efforts in schools and other organizations. Attended by researchers in the field of education and social services, the meeting addressed interventions and school reform initiatives to address the alarming rates of risky behaviors, specifically in adolescents, such as drug and alcohol use, violence, and risky sex (Kress & Elias, 2006).

The Fetzer group first introduced the term *Social and Emotional Learning* (SEL) as a conceptual framework to address both the needs of young people and the fragmentation that typically characterizes the response of schools to those needs. They believed that, unlike the many categorical prevention programs that targeted specific problems, SEL programming could address underlying causes of problem behavior while supporting academic achievement. A new organization, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), also emerged from this meeting with the goal of establishing high quality, evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school education. (p. 593)

The implications of these objectives were not missed on educators who quickly identified that if students could be taught to regulate their emotional levels by focusing on their strengths and talents, they would be less likely to demonstrate disruptive or aggressive behaviors in and outside of school. From a more positive perspective, it was

believed that by teaching these mechanisms, teachers would be able to create more encouraging and supportive classrooms, which would not only decrease levels of anxiety and depression in students, but also increase positive behaviors, engagement in learning activities, and motivation to learn. Congruent with goals that learning should have a more lasting impact, Myers (1992) reported that children who learn techniques and mechanisms that increase emotional levels will learn to live happier lives.

### **Supporting Social and Emotional Learning**

Current research findings suggest the new SEL models have a significant and positive impact on students' overall well-being, behavior, and academic performance (Reyes et al., 2012).

### **SEL Defined**

According to the CASEL Guide (2013), SEL involves the processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (p. 6)

SEL “refers to a holistic approach to education, one that addresses not only students’ academic needs but also their development as individuals, classmates, neighbors, and citizens” (NASBE, 2013, p. 2).

The SEL approach integrates social and emotional competencies and youth development frameworks to reduce factors associated with at-risk behaviors (Benson, 2006; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002; Guerra & Bradshaw,

2008; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003). SEL provides the avenues for acquiring the skills to identify and regulate emotions, develop compassion and empathy for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and respond to challenges (Devaney E., O'Brien, M., Tavegia, M., & Resnik, H., 2005).

### **SEL Explained**

CASEL divides SEL into five key competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2005). The belief is that these components provide students with the mechanisms and skills necessary to maintain healthy levels of positive emotions and academic performance, which results in fewer behavioral problems, less emotional stress, and improved academic achievement (Durlak et al, 2011; Greenberg et al., 2003). Seligman (2002) believed positive emotions accomplish these goals in specific ways. At fundamental levels, it promotes exploration, which results in higher levels of understanding, or, mastery. He concludes that mastery of knowledge or skills “produces more positive emotion, creating an upward spiral of good feeling, more mastery, and more good feeling” (p. 210).

Based on Bear and Watkins (2006), Durlak et al. (2011) claimed that over time, mastering SEL competencies results in a developmental progression that leads to a shift from being predominantly controlled by external factors to acting increasingly in accord with internalized beliefs and values,



caring and concern for others, making good decisions, and taking responsibility for one's choices and behaviors. (p. 406)

### **Target Competencies**

Kress & Elias (2006) reported that efforts are needed to build and reinforce skills in four major domains of SEL, including:

1. Life skills and social competency;
2. Health promotion and problem prevention skills;
3. Coping skills and social support for transitions and crises; and
4. Positive, contributory services. (p. 595)

Specifically, SEL targets students' emotional processes, social/interpersonal skills, and cognitive abilities. Jones, Bouffard, and Weissbourd (2013) described these areas in more detail.

*Emotional processes* include understanding and labeling feelings accurately, regulating emotions and behaviors for the situation, taking another's perspective, and displaying empathy. *Social/interpersonal skills* include understanding social cues, correctly attributing the intent of others' behaviors, interacting positively with students and other adults, and acting in prosocial ways. *Cognitive regulation* includes maintaining attention and focus, engaging working

memory, inhibiting impulses that are not appropriate to the situation, and flexibly shifting gears when needed. (p. 63)

One emotional skill that is commonly agreed upon by parents and educators as necessary to success in life is resiliency. Luthar (2006) defined a major focus of most SEL programs as resiliency or the ability of the individual to recover from adverse events and circumstances. Resilient children tend to be happier, healthier, and achieve higher success levels in school (Adi, Killoran, Jammohammed, & Stewart-Brown, 2007). As adults, they are likely to live longer, are more secure in relationships, and are less prone to depression (Reivich & Shatte, 2002). Patton et al. (2000) also noted that “an individual's capacity to deal with adversity is in part dependent on the availability of support in the immediate social environment, as well as the skills he or she has for making appropriate connections at times of stress” (p. 587).

Kress and Elias (2006) concluded by noting that, while these skills are important at all developmental levels, “the level of cognitive emotional complexity with which they are applied, as well as the situations in which they will be used” are critical in adolescent developmental theory (p. 593). Weissberg and Greenberg (1998) supported a differentiated and continuous approach, indicating that skill gain in children is cumulative in nature, so programs must emphasize consistent objectives and extend over multiple years.

### **Design and Organization**

Although designs for SEL programs vary, and should be developed using the knowledge and understanding of the specific needs of the student population, evidence suggests that the most successful SEL programs:

1. Continue across multiple grades;
2. Reinforce lessons across a number of school settings;
3. Reach out to parents and other caregivers;
4. Are integrated into the regular academic curriculum;
5. Help all school staff learn and practice the very same emotional and interpersonal skills they are supposed to help students develop; and
6. Adhere to a well-designed and realistic implementation plan, including everything from an initial needs assessment to efforts to choose appropriate SEL goals and programs.

(NASBE, 2013, p. 5)

Another recently discovered insight about successful SEL programs is that they are integrated into the structure, climate, and organization of the classroom (CASEL, 2003). Kress and Elias (2006) found that “successful programmatic approaches include a combination of direct instruction in social and emotional skills as well as opportunities to practice these skills in a variety of situations” (p. 595). Explaining that direct instruction “involves introducing students to the basic components of complex social and emotional skills”, they also suggested that SEL skills “are best taught when infused throughout the school day and in all aspects of the student’s experience” (p. 596).

### **Models**

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) identified and explained the three main models for SEL programs. The first involves integrating social and emotional skills into the established curriculum. Based on results from Ladd and

Mize (1983), and Weissberg, Caplan, and Sivo (1989), Durlak et al. suggested that “through systematic instruction, SEL skills may be taught, modeled, practiced, and applied to diverse situations so that students use them as part of their daily repertoire of behaviors” (p. 406). Additionally, such programs help students apply emotional skills in preventing specific behaviors such as substance use, interpersonal violence, bullying, and academic underachievement (Zins & Elias, 2006).

Two examples of integrated programs include the 4R’s Project (Reading, Writing, Respect, & Resolution) and the Teaching for Intellectual and Emotional Learning (TIEL) program. Designed to support and enhance SEL curriculum, the 4R’s Project features opportunities to read, write, and discuss topics such as empathy, diversity, and bullying (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013). TIEL provides a common language that allows teachers to integrate the concepts of cognition with emotional learning into the curriculum, which establishes a connection between curriculum development and practice (Folsom, 2005).

A second model designs SEL as part of stand-alone programs that nurture intrinsic motivators, which influence outcomes such as better academic performance, healthier choices, and greater involvement in community and civic events (Greenberg et al., 2003). These programs often produce smaller units within schools, which help to build relationships and trust between teachers, students, and families. These relationships provide avenues of support and guidance from school staff and other students (Felner et al., 1997). An example includes The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, co-founded by Morningside Center and the New York City Department of Education, which trains teachers in developing “group activities and discussions focusing on themes such as

empathy, social responsibility, stereotyping, harassment, and bullying” (NASBE, 2013, p. 4).

A third area of programming impacts the whole school climate. These programs foster safe and caring learning environments involving peer leadership and family involvement, improved classroom management and teaching practices, and whole-school community-building activities (Cook et al., 1999; Hawkins, Smith, & Catalano., 2004; Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 2004). Patton et al. (2000) suggested this approach shifts the focus of schools from single, segregated areas of content to one that allows for a more coordinated response to identified needs. One example involves the Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Understanding and Regulation (SECURE) program, which includes the Stop and Stay Cool strategy. This program teaches techniques of managing emotions and making smart decisions while under levels of stress that are higher than normal (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013). Other more general programs have been designed to prevent bullying, introduce mentoring programs, and increase opportunities for students to participate in decision-making at different levels within the school (Patton et al., 2000).

### **Performance and Results**

When compared to peers, students who were randomly chosen to participate in SEL programs showed modestly significant improvements in their social and interpersonal skills, classroom and social behavior, general attitudes about school and life, and their academic performance (NASBE, 2013).

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) reported that since the mid-1990s, there have been extensive reviews of SEL programs targeting the following outcomes: academic performance (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997; Zins,

Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004), antisocial and aggressive behavior (Losel & Beelman, 2003; Wilson & Lipsey, 2007), depressive symptoms (Horowitz & Garber, 2006), drug use (Tobler et al., 2000), mental health (Durlak & Wells, 1997; Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001), problem behaviors (Wilson, Gottfredson, & Najaka, 2001), and positive youth development (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2002). Although these reports examined different student populations, intervention strategies, and behavioral outcomes, Durlak et al. (2011) concluded that “universal school-based interventions are generally effective” (p. 407).

Additionally, impressive results associated with better coordination of responses to adolescent needs have been found when schools utilize a health team structure comprised of school personnel. Curriculum design and delivery that integrates these concepts positively affect the school culture and ultimately strengthens sustainability (Patton et al., 2000).

However, Durlak et al. (2011) found no review that explored the effects of SEL programming across multiple outcomes; therefore, they performed a meta-analysis involving over 270,000 kindergarten through high school students of how SEL programs affected social and emotional skills, attitudes toward self and others, positive social behavior, behavioral problems, emotional distress, and academic performance. They found that “compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected in an 11 percentile-point gain in achievement” (p. 405).

A two-year study by Columbia University researchers found that children receiving substantial Resolving Conflict Creativity Program (RCCP) instruction from

their teachers developed more positively than their peers. Students viewed their social world in a less hostile way, viewed violence as an unacceptable option, and resolved conflicts in nonviolent ways (RCCP, 2014).

Similar success was found in younger adolescents and children in elementary schools. The introduction of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) has helped teachers learn about their students' backgrounds, interests, strengths, and needs, which has increased their understanding and tolerance of their behaviors. SEAL has also been credited with significant improvements in children's emotional well-being and ability to manage emotions (Hallam, Rhamie, & Shaw, 2006).

Evaluating a program based on *mindfulness education*, using students in grades four and five, Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor (2010) reported a 15% increase in math achievement, and significant increases in positive outlook, the ability for students to be happy, and in efforts to help others. Jones, Brown, and Aber (2011) found that elementary students participating in integrated school-based, social-emotional interventions showed improvements in "hostile attributional bias, aggressive interpersonal negotiation strategies, and depression, and in teacher reports of attention skills and aggressive and socially competent behavior" (p. 533). Additionally, these students' math and reading achievement levels improved, which support the value of universal, integrated interventions in elementary schools that promote social-emotional and academic skills.

Seligman (2002) believed the reasons for such success is that SEL programs concentrate on the same competencies that, when ignored, generate the symptoms of

depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses found in adolescents. A well-respected and nationally recognized psychologist, Seligman believed

What progress there has been in the prevention of mental illness comes from recognizing and nurturing a set of strengths, competencies, and virtues in young people- such as future-mindedness, hope, interpersonal skills, courage, the capacity for flow, faith, and work ethic. The exercise of these strengths then buffers against the tribulations that put people at risk for mental illness. Depression can be prevented in a young person at genetic risk by nurturing skills of optimism and hope. (p. 27)

These premises support the need to consider how social and emotional learning programs can positively impact students' emotional well-being, increase levels of life-satisfaction, and improve learning and performance. However, it is also important to know how students value schools' attempts to improve their emotional well-being. Do students want to participate in programs that support their emotional levels? Do they feel it is the role of the school to address these issues? What features and characteristics of such programs are valued by students? Would students be willing to participate in the design of social and emotional programs in their own school?

### **School Connectedness: Empowering through Engagement**

Schools not only have the responsibility of developing cognitive skills but must also care for students' emotional well-being. Research indicates that a caring and nurturing environment is a vital component for learning. Cotterell (2007) wrote "the



fundamental task of schools is to create a community where students feel they belong and that their contribution is valued” (p. 199). Rutter (1991) and Howard, Dryden, and Johnson (1999) identified schools as critical sites for the healthy development of adolescent mental health. Vostanis (2007) also found that schools manage factors that are significant in protecting and promoting adolescent well-being, such as securing relationships, developing coping strategies, and strengthening attributes of self-awareness, such as self-efficacy, self-reliance, self-reflection, and a positive outlook.

Therefore, it is increasingly important for students to view schools as places that care for their social and emotional development. The ability of a child to connect to school has been shown to lower the likelihood of health-risk behaviors, while also enhancing academic achievement (Resnick, Harris, & Bloom, 1993; Resnick, 2000; Glover, Burns, Butler, & Patton, 1998; Blum & Libbey, 2004; Libbey, 2004). Finn (1993), Newmann (1992), and Marks (2000) agreed that the ability of adolescents to connect with school is not only important to their social and cognitive development but also improves levels of academic achievement, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Conversely, young adolescents who are disengaged from school and have poor relationships with peers and teachers are likely to demonstrate symptoms of depression and anxiety, engage in risky behaviors, and are less likely to graduate (Resnick, Bearman, Blum, and Bauman, 1997; Bond et al., 2004; Barclay & Doll, 2001; Doll & Hess, 2001; Marcus & Sanders-Reio, 2001; Catalano et al., 1996).

One of the most influential factors of school connectedness is the relationship that exists between students and teachers. When exploring the key factors of motivation and success at school, Wentzel (1998), Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff (2000), and Weare and

Gray (2003) found that relationships with teachers emerge as central to establishing positive levels of emotional well-being. Research suggests that instruction students describe as motivational correlate with elements of teacher support, which include characteristics of positive emotional support and statements of caring (Meyer & Turner, 2006).

Finn (1993, 1997) argued that to develop a sense of connectedness with school, students should feel a strong sense of belonging with the school in some way. Children who feel connected to their school and feel cared for by school personnel report a higher degree of well-being (Resnick, Bearman, Blum, and Bauman, 1997; Eccles et al., 1997; Steinberg, 1996; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). McLaughlin and Clark (2010) reported research that shows adolescents value engagement in decision-making. Positive relationships enable teachers to identify individual strengths, talents, and interests of students allowing them to view students as active learners. Building on previous research, Meyer and Turner (2006) concluded that positive teacher support is associated with students' positive emotions and promotes higher levels of intrinsic motivation in learners. Their findings suggest that "engaging students in learning requires consistently positive emotional experiences, which contribute to a classroom climate that forms the foundation for teacher-student relationships and interactions necessary for motivation to learn" (p. 377).

A researcher in the area of motivation and achievement, Daniel Pink (2009) believed

A sense of autonomy has a powerful effect on individual performance and attitude. According to a cluster of recent

behavioral science studies, autonomous motivation promotes greater conceptual understanding, better grades, enhanced persistence at school and in sporting activities, higher productivity, less burnout, and greater levels of psychological well-being. (p. 88)

### **Motivation and Performance**

Meyer and Turner (2006) maintained “motivation and emotion as integrated and simultaneous” (p. 384), because higher levels of cognition, which include activities involving application, evaluation, and creativity, require active engagement from learners. Coleman (1965) supported this idea by noting that real learning inspires interest and curiosity but must lead to authentic outcomes. “The adolescent has abundant energy, but he will not spend it on his studies unless there is possibility for positive action” (p. 54).

In explaining motivational systems theory, Ford (1992) stated that emotions were “an integrated part of motivational patterns” (p. 8). Pink (2009) explained that while “intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity,” attempts to control behavior through extrinsic motivation “is detrimental to creativity” (p. 29). This understanding is important for educators attempting to create conditions that promote opportunities for optimal experiences, or Flow. An assumption of Flow theory is that optimal learning experiences are intrinsically motivated and related to positive emotions and enhanced cognitive processing (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988); Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 1989; Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993). Pink relates the importance of a student’s ability to focus time and efforts on authentic activities stating

that when “people are conscious of what puts them in flow, they’ll have a clearer idea of what they should devote the time and dedication to master” (p. 123).

Moreover, Eccles et al. (1993) reported that education that fails to recognize students’ strengths and needs is likely to have negative consequences on motivational and engagement levels. Pink (2009) also reminded us of the unintended consequences of attempting to control behavior through the use of extrinsic rewards. “People use rewards expecting to gain the benefit of increasing another person’s motivation and behavior, but in doing so, they often incur the unintentional and hidden cost of undermining that person’s intrinsic motivation toward the activity” (p. 37).

Careful consideration of reward effects reported in 128 experiments lead to the conclusion that tangible rewards tend to have a substantially negative effect on intrinsic motivation. When institutions- families, schools, businesses, and athletic teams, for example- focus on the short-term and opt for controlling people’s behavior, they do considerable long-term damage. (Pink, p. 36)

Because outcome goals can often cause anxiety, performance and process goals have been found to be more effective since they are based on aspects within the performers’ control (Judge, Bell, Bellar, & Wanless, 2010). Pink’s research found that *if-then* rewards require a loss of autonomy, which drains the activity of its enjoyment. For example, giving students performance goals (i.e., high test score) “was effective for relatively straight-forward problems but often inhibited children’s ability to apply the concepts to new situations” (p. 120). Instead of using rewards as motivators, Pink

suggests creating environments in schools and in the workplace that gratify individuals' needs.

McLaughlin and Clark (2010) cited the U.S. National Research Council's report (2003) which stated that "if students are to invest themselves in the forms of mastery required by schools, they must receive the general enterprise of schooling as legitimate, deserving of their committed effort and honoring them as respected members" (p. 92). Harris (2008) reported that even small changes in patterns of relationship, such as "giving pupils a 'fresh start', a keen sense of being cared for, a tolerance for relapses in behavior, allowing choices, and scaffolding learning all signal to secondary students that they matter" (p. 377).

Hiebert (2002) suggested that although the world continues to change, educational systems are only beginning to identify and respond to the nature of these changes. One major difference is the willingness for schools to listen to the needs and wants of students in order to provide the appropriate instruction and support necessary for them to succeed. Schools are beginning to accept the expansion of their role from the distribution of knowledge to include aspects of social and emotional learning (Ainley, 1995; Jarvenoja & Jarvela, 2005; Patrikakou, 2004). Fullarton (2002) described this as being a shift from a focus on what is learned to a focus on what it takes to develop the learner. Silins and Murrar-Harvey (1998) also recognized the growing responsibility of schools to provide and encourage a range of experiences that enable the psychological, emotional, social, and physical development of students. A major component of this development consists of including students' viewpoints and opinions on the school climate.

## **Valuing Students' Perceptions**

Groves and Welsh (2010) reported that students “have well articulated views regarding their learning and school experiences” (p. 101). Ainley (1995) agreed that students’ views offer accurate insights into what they want and what they need from the school environment. Ainley (2004), Fullarton (2002), Martin (2003), and Romanowski (2004) maintained that to effectively engage students in their school experience, adults must value students’ perceptions of the factors they consider are important to learning, teaching, and the school environment. The report *Listening to Student Voices* (Education Evolution, 2005) highlighted the ‘traditional’ educational system’s expectation of “students [having the] responsibility to adapt” (p. 2) to a one-size-fits-all system. However, the changing landscape of education, which is moving from a system of teacher-centered teaching to a practice of student-centered learning, demonstrates that the traditional response of because *I said so* is no longer effective (Barry & King, 1998; Education Evolution, 2005).

Not surprisingly, many researchers agree that the best way to gain insights into students’ opinions regarding educational matters is to listen to their preferences. Although students often share their preferences about teaching and learning with their peers, educators, for the most part, do not listen to or act on them (Cook-Sather, 2001, 2003; Van Zundert, Brand-Gruwel, & Van Merriënboer, 2007). Traditionally, students’ viewpoints have been underrepresented or ignored when it comes to discussing their wants and needs in terms of learning and school experiences (Roberts & Kay, 1997). An interesting finding was that Shaughnessy (2001b) noted that the group’s voice absent in the discussion of ideas and viewpoints is that of the students.

However, Edwards-Leis (2010) explained that students are not just consumers of education, but hold their own perspectives on educational practices and ideas about how curricular activities should be designed. Osborne and Ireland (2000), and Shaughnessy (2001b, 2001c) reported that students have demonstrated in many cases that they prefer to hold certain measures of control in their learning and will make decisions that allow for their empowerment, engagement, and success. Before decisions are made, however, “students need opportunities to speak their truth and be heard so that they are actively involved in shaping their school’s future” (Harris, 2008, p. 377).

Saul (2005) pointed out that only students can accurately define what helps them learn and what does not. For example, Holt, Denny, Capp, and De Vore (2005) claimed that research showed that teachers are not able to assess their students’ preferences in learning more accurately than by guessing. Therefore, understanding students’ learning preferences is important in the process of gathering the necessary information when designing effective and adaptive education (Konings, Brand-Gruwel, & Van Merriënboer, 2005; Smyth, 2001). Additionally, a mismatch between students’ preferences and educational goals can result in motivational problems and disengagement of students (Eccles et al., 1993; Hijzen, Boekaerts, & Vedder, 2007).

Another consideration of including students’ perceptions of learning and the factors that influence their views is that they are continuously evolving. MacBeath (2001a), and Shaughnessy (2001b) identified several areas where adults can learn from listening to students’ opinions and input, including classroom management, learning and teaching, and school as a social and learning space. Contrary to popular opinion, it appears, at times, that personal influences do not necessarily affect students’ insights as

to which educational factors lead to their individual success. Postlethwaite and Haggarty (2002) reported that students demonstrate clear perceptions of the factors that promote or impede their learning regardless of the extent to which they found learning to be enjoyable, rewarding, or purposeful. Other studies indicated that students' preferences were more likely to be related to achievement since students prefer methods they feel are best related to their ability levels (Furnham, Christopher, Garwood, & Martin, 2008).

### **Involving Students in Design Elements of the School Environment**

Groves and Welsh (2010) revealed that the most effective means for attaining reliable and valuable information about students' views regarding factors that impact their academic success is to ask the students. "It is only through listening to students' views that the most beneficial and enjoyable teaching and learning strategies will be unveiled" (p. 89). In their study, they found that students considered their involvement "in learning and school experiences and having the opportunity to have a voice and to be heard by teachers, and other adults to be 'important'" (p. 101). The students indicated they valued and appreciated the opportunity to have a voice on aspects of their learning, but, it was not often made possible by teachers. They felt strongly, that, since they are most "directly affected by any decisions made within the school or within the classroom, they should be consulted and allowed the opportunity to have 'their say'" (p. 96).

Students also expressed clear views about personal characteristics of aspects that directly affect their learning experiences, such as their relationships with teachers, preferring those who demonstrate "passion, enthusiasm, honesty, trustworthiness, subject area knowledge, and a sense of humor" (p. 97). Results showed that students are affected by the attitudes of teachers and prefer teachers "who employ a teaching style that is



appropriate to the abilities of the class and allows interactive learning” (p. 98). Students desire positive relationships with teachers and find individual attention received from teachers to be important (Education Evolution, 2005; Osborne & Ireland, 2000; Saul, 2005).

In a study of underachieving, gifted, high school students, Kanevksy and Keighley (2003) found that students wanted “choice, challenge, and intellectual complexity” in their learning, and teachers who cared about “their teaching and their students” (p. 25). Folsom (2005) found that the absence of these qualities in their educational experience “resulted in academic underachievement, suspension, and dropping out of school” (p. 79). Overall, the students were very clear that they wanted “encouragement, support, and honesty from teachers” (p. 99).

Students also identified specific teacher characteristics that they viewed as being significant, such as subject area knowledge, enthusiasm, approachability, consistency and fairness, respect, acknowledging both good and bad behavior, and making learning authentic and applicable (Betts, Zau, & Rice, 2003; Postlethwaite & Haggarty, 2002; Roberts & Kay, 1997). The general viewpoint among students is that diversity of teaching, learning, and school experiences positively affects their views about learning and the overall school experience (Batten, Withers, Thomas, & McCurry, 1991a, 1991b; Postlethwaite & Haggarty, 2002).

Another major influence in students’ perceptions of their school’s climate is their level of personal involvement in educational matters. Research suggests that accepting greater responsibility for their learning motivates students to succeed and increases participation in learning (Education Evolution, 2005; Osborne & Ireland, 2000;

Shaughnessy, 2001a, 2001c). Groves and Welsh (2010) reported the extent to which students are responsible, or the degree to which they share responsibility for their learning, influences how they perceive the school climate.

### **Desired Characteristics of Healthy School Environments**

Puolakka, Haapasalo-Pesu, and Astedt-Kurki (2013) believed that adolescent mental health promotion should be developed by “drawing on the views of different parties, such as school employees, adolescents and their families, and also, by combining and comparing existing evidence” (p. 23). In a grounded research study of mental health promotion in high schools, they found that, when given the goal to create a school conducive to mental health, students wanted the opportunities to influence changes, particularly when problems in the school environment have been recognized and possible solutions were being considered.

Herbert (2005) considered promoting emotional well-being in schools as supportive of adolescent developmental theory. Harris (2008) believed that if “teachers are to support young people's development then they will need to work within a climate in which love of students it is not only tolerated but also embraced as essential for learning” (p. 373). Kendal, Keeley, and Callery (2011) studied students’ perceptions on how their emotional well-being was supported in the school setting. Asking for students’ opinions on the structure and deliverance of programs designed to support their emotional well-being, they found that

Friendliness and trustworthiness in the helper were seen as most important, followed by their practical skills.

Participants said they did not want help from individuals

who wanted to criticize them or control the agenda, which many reported from their encounters with teaching staff. (p. 249)

Practical advice was viewed as “more accessible when delivered in a friendly and respectful way, while emotional support was more helpful when also seeking to address identified problems” (Kendal, Keeley, & Callery, 2011, p. 251). Students in the study expressed privacy as a major component of programs designed to support emotional well-being, particularly noting that they wished to avoid embarrassment or exposure. They also recommended facilitating students’ influence on the agenda, designing activities to teach practical skills (i.e., problem-solving), and ensuring that adults display elements of warmth, acceptance, empathy, and trustworthiness, while also holding credible and relevant experience.

Students did not particularly support peer mentoring systems because they lacked “trustworthiness and credibility” (Kendal et al., p. 251). Although teachers were perceived as helpful, they were also viewed as “potentially untrustworthy and lacking in empathy” (p. 251). Weare (2009) suggested these weaknesses may emphasize insufficient input from students at the design level. This is significant because Jacobson et al. (2002) reported that the expectation of a poor experience can deter students from seeking necessary help, which means these programs and resources will go underutilized or eliminated due to lack of support if students feel uncomfortable or unable to use them.

Based on their research, Groves and Welsh (2010, p. 90) believed that “students’ perceptions, related to their learning and school experiences, are as valid and important as those of other members of the school community, such as teachers, parents, and

administrators.” MacBeath (2001b, p. 13) suggested “students, together with teachers, and parents can play a much more active, participative, reciprocal role”, in the development and reinforcement of policies, practices, and conditions of the school environment. Roberts and Kay (1997) proposed that schools need to become more consistent in their approach toward including students’ viewpoints to increase levels of comfort, confidence, and success.

Groves and Welsh (2010) also contended that, if schools are seriously taking on the challenges of improving teaching and learning, then “the students’ experiences of schools and classrooms and their views about them should be important considerations” (p. 87). From their research, they suggest that schools provide students “with a voice in an effort to bring to light what it is they want, need, like and dislike about the learning and school experiences they are involved in now, and will be in the future” (p. 87).

## **Conclusion**

It becomes apparent that the most effective school initiatives, activities, and programs are ones in which students’ ideas and opinions have been intentionally sought and seriously considered. Research demonstrates students’ willingness to share their perspectives about the school environment and the importance of using their viewpoints in the design, development, and implementation of programs and procedures that impact the school climate. It is also evident that certain elements of the school experience have a positive impact on the development of the emotional mind, particularly activities that engage learners, foster positive relationships with adults, and include students in the decision-making process. Activities such as these result in higher emotions levels, and the science of Positive Psychology asserts that positive emotions produce greater

performance. Considering that new accountability measures now force schools to prioritize students' achievement levels over all other elements of their wellbeing, it seems ironic that schools would do better to realize these results by implementing programs that care for students' emotions as part of the normal school experience.

## Chapter 3

### **Methodology**

Effective social and emotional programs should be designed to develop specific knowledge levels, skills, and competencies in students. Because the ultimate goal of this study is to gain and use information from students to improve the learning climate within a specific school district, a methodology is needed that not only gathers responses to research questions, but also derives individualized meaning from those responses.

Oftentimes, school administrators and teachers prefer to deal with empirical data to avoid addressing subjective responses. This occurs because subjectivity, or an individual's personal point of view on a given topic, is difficult to study. However, understanding students' opinions, particularly in programs that support their emotional levels is important and research that focuses on understanding the meaning of responses requires a methodology that involves responders at a more personal level.

#### **Q methodology: Definition and Explanation**

According to McKeown and Thomas (1988), Q methodology is an exploratory research technique used to provide researchers a "systematic and rigorously quantitative mean for examining human subjectivity" (p. 3). In other words, the Q method delivers a natural, mixed-method approach to research by quantifying the subjectivity inherent in responses typically gained through qualitative research methods. More simply, Q methodology objectively measures qualitative data (Ramlo, 2008).

The Q method was developed in the 1930s by William Stephenson, a British physicist-psychologist (Stephenson, 1935) in an attempt to quantify analysis of subjectivity. Stephenson was interested in using factor analysis to correlate people with

their opinions to demonstrate the multiple points of view that could exist on any topic (Brown, 1996). Because of this, the Q method is valuable for policymakers interested in finding similarities and differences in stakeholder positions (Dasgupta, & Vira, 2005).

According to Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 53), Q studies are “better suited to the exploration of specifics; the viewpoints of specific people, specific groups, specific demographics, or the viewpoints at play within a specific institution.” The strength of Q for this study lies in its ability to characterize different perspectives among the various personalities that exist within the student population of a high school, which will enable the researcher to determine consensus on certain components of the building climate. Therefore, this method has been chosen because results not only produce a deeper understanding of the types of perspectives that exist on a particular issue, but also attempt to answer *why* participants hold their individual perspectives.

### **Data Collection**

In the actual Q sort activity, data collection occurs through a forced sorting process, where participants categorize (by level of agreement) statements that have been developed to represent an entire opinion domain about a particular topic (Ramlo, 2008); however, most Q studies begin with a pre-sorting activity that breaks down the relevant subject matter into subsets of themes or issues. This study used the results from a climate survey that was administered to all students of a particular Western Pennsylvania high school during the 2014-2015 school year. Survey statements were developed by the researcher; however, many of the statements were influenced by the Developmental Assets Survey available through the Search Institute -CSAP Prevention Content Assessment Workgroup- (2003), and the Pennsylvania School Climate Survey, which is

a survey that the Pennsylvania Department of Education encourages schools to administer to their faculty on an annual basis. The survey was then reviewed by district administrators and guidance counselors, then modified based on their recommendations.

Five hundred ninety-five (595) students- approximately 62% of the school population- participated in a voluntary survey that gauged their opinions regarding the overall school climate. Questions evaluated the school on how well it valued the importance of social and emotional skills, such as the degree to which students were encouraged to participate in activities, treat others with respect, advocate for their emotional needs, develop personal values, enjoy challenges, and effectively manage their emotions in stressful situations.

Additionally, a separate constructed-response survey was administered to seniors (Class of 2015) and juniors (Class of 2016), which provided the opportunity to offer additional explanations as to how students felt about their school experience. Originally, the constructed-response was only offered to members of the Class of 2015; however, a low participation rate, combined with overall results that revealed a much higher collective, negative viewpoint of the climate relative to other classes, indicated that another class set of students should be involved in this survey. The Class of 2016 – the junior class- was selected because it was believed that these students had enough school experience to effectively evaluate the building climate, but still care enough about the conditions of the environment to seriously participate in attempts to improve it. Constructed-response questions related to the research questions of the study, which included student opinions of whether the school values their emotional wellbeing as much as their academic achievement, how school personnel demonstrate that they care



about students as individuals, how the stress to perform on exams and in activities affects their emotional levels, and to what extent students believed the school should provide resources geared at improving their emotional wellbeing.

### **Concourse Development**

An important step in Q methodology is developing the concourse. The concourse contains all of the viewpoints that exist about the topic being investigated. The concourse can be developed using a variety of research techniques, such as questionnaires, surveys, interviews, or existing sources, such as professional literature and research reports. Responses from the climate survey, in particular, students' statements from the constructed-response survey, were categorized to develop a concourse from which statements, known as the Q set, have been generated. Q sort participants will be asked to force sort these statements into areas where they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree in relation to how the school has been designed to care for students' emotional wellness. To reduce bias, the researcher attempted to select an equal amount of positive, neutral, and negative statements. The researcher then edited the responses to produce a uniform Q set that consisted of statements that were grammatically correct and of similar length and tone. The goal was to provide a collection of statements (Q set) that represented all of the students' opinions of how the school cares for their emotional well-being that had been gathered from the surveys.

### **Survey Statements**

Students were instructed to indicate their level of agreement, based on the following scale- Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Agree, and

Strongly Agree- to selected-response items included in Table 1. Seniors and juniors were also asked to respond openly and honestly to the constructed-response items in Table 2.

Participation in both surveys was completely voluntary and anonymous.

Table 1. *Climate Survey*

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### Valuing Emotions

1. The school encourages me to participate in co- and extra-curricular activities.
2. Teachers treat me with respect.
3. The school has taught me to treat others with respect.
4. It appears to me that teachers in this school enjoy working with students.
5. It is clear that this school cares for my happiness as much as it does about my academic achievement.
6. I feel emotionally safe in school.
7. Teachers support my emotional wellbeing as much as my academic needs.
8. I clearly know where/ who I should go if I have emotional needs.
9. I feel the school has a responsibility to support students' emotional wellbeing.
10. Teachers care that I am enjoying learning the content in their classes.

### Social Development

1. I have been taught that mistakes are part of the learning process.
2. I feel supported by other students in this school.
3. "Being a good person" is one of the main values in this school.
4. The programs in this school help to enhance my social development (i.e., make good decisions, develop positive relationships, resolve conflicts with others, etc.).
5. School activities promote a sense of relatedness with the community as a whole.
6. There are many school sponsored, after school activities that promote social development (i.e., dances, socials, group study).
7. The school climate demonstrates that I am valued here.
8. I feel as if I am treated as an individual, rather than just a face in the crowd.
9. I have been taught that it is important for me to give back to the school and my community after graduation.

### Self-Awareness

1. Instructional activities and assessments are designed to allow me to demonstrate my strengths and talents.
2. Through regular coursework, I have been taught how to:
  - a. handle stress
  - b. manage my emotions
  - c. identify my individual strengths and talents
  - d. develop my own set of values

- e. identify my own set of interests and motivators
  - f. control impulses
  - g. express my emotions appropriately
  - h. develop and monitor progress toward goals
  - i. empathize with others
  - j. resist inappropriate social pressure
  - k. resolve interpersonal conflicts
  - l. advocate for myself when I have personal needs
  - m. make appropriate decisions
  - n. solve authentic (i.e., nonacademic) problems
  - o. enjoy challenges
  - p. live a happy and meaningful life
3. It is clear that the school structure has been designed for me to succeed.
  4. Learning activities challenge me at my highest ability levels.
  5. I find learning activities to be meaningful and relevant.
  6. My opinions and viewpoints are actively sought and valued in the decision-making process by teachers and administrators.
  7. I have been taught how to find personal happiness during my time in school.
  8. I feel stress to meet graduation requirements.
  9. I feel confident that I can succeed in life based on my experiences in this school.
  10. Stress to perform well in the classroom and in activities (ex. athletics, performing arts) impacts my emotions:
    - a. High Positive (i.e., high levels of enjoyment)
    - b. Low Positive (i.e., anxiety that improves performance)
    - c. Neutral (i.e., No affect)
    - d. Low Negative (i.e., anxiety that decreases performance)
    - e. High Negative (i.e., high anxiety or levels of depression)

Table 2. *Constructed-responses of Students' Viewpoints as to the Value the School Places on Their Emotional Wellbeing*

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1. Explain how/why you believe the school does or does not value your happiness level?
  2. What school-related activity has been the most meaningful to you?
  3. Do you believe it is the school's responsibility to care about your happiness/emotional wellbeing? (Please explain).
  4. Do you feel the school cares about what you are learning? (Please explain).
  5. What types of behaviors do school personnel (teachers, administrators, counselors) engage in to demonstrate that they care about your happiness/emotional levels?
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### **Concourse Statements**

Ninety-eight students (members of the Classes of 2015 and 2016) participated in the constructed-response portion of the climate survey. Statements reflecting students' open ended responses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Edited Concourse Statements*

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### **Positive Statements:**

1. I believe the school values my happiness level.
2. I believe the teachers in this school are helpful and respectful of students' needs.
3. I would define the school environment as "kind and caring".
4. I believe the teachers and staff treat students with respect and kindness.
5. I believe the school trusts students and provides a great amount of freedom.
6. I believe the school has a responsibility to care for students' emotional wellbeing.
7. I believe the school does a good job of providing useful and relevant skills that we will need later in life.
8. The school environment contributes to my happiness by allowing me time with friends, creating opportunities to make new friends, and providing activities that I enjoy.
9. Teachers and administrators actively listen to our concerns and consider our opinions.

10. I feel as if I am treated as an individual, rather than just a face in the crowd.
11. Teachers are passionate about what they teach.
12. When it comes to learning, I feel our school 100% cares.
13. Most teachers know how to help students succeed.
14. Teachers here are pleasant, nice, and laid back.
15. Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I am valued here.
16. The school has helped me to become aware of personal strengths, talents, and interests.
17. I feel confident the education I am receiving is preparing me to have a successful life.
18. Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.
19. Most teachers express how much education is valued here and how they are happy with their jobs.
20. The school climate demonstrates I am valued here.
21. Coursework and programs have helped me to develop and work towards goals.
22. I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the school's priority, but the school should be concerned about the overall mental and emotional state of its students.
23. The school provides opportunities for me to develop social skills.
24. I like it when teachers go out of their way to make sure I understand the material before a test and give students opportunities to bring up grades.
25. I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tests and in activities if I am in a positive mood.
26. I feel teachers who seem happy and have a sense of humor demonstrate a sense of caring for their jobs and for students.
27. I feel emotionally supported in this school.
28. I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning.

**Neutral Statements:**

1. I do not care how the school values my happiness.
2. I believe it is unrealistic for the school to care for all of the students' different emotional levels.
3. I believe a school shows it cares about students when coursework allows for personal talents to be identified and demonstrated.
4. I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering challenging and career-focused courses.
5. This school cares for my happiness as much as it does about my academic achievement.
6. I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering additional help or remedial courses to help students graduate.
7. Teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.
8. I think it is important to have a strong teacher-student relationship.
9. I feel the teachers do a pretty good job.
10. The school structure has been designed for me to succeed.
11. I sit through classes every day, do what I need to do, then go home.

12. When teachers act in a positive way, the students act the same way back.
13. I believe good students do not cause problems.
14. I feel the school is trying to teach stuff that may or may not be beneficial in the real world.
15. The school has a responsibility to care for students' emotional wellbeing.
16. Teachers show they care when they try to give students advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future.
17. The school shows it cares by offering new courses every year.
18. The only thing I am concerned about are my grades.
19. Teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.
20. Teachers show they care when they talk to students when they notice their grades dropping or when they seem sad or distracted.
21. Teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond with students in the class.
22. Teachers show they care when they teach to the standards and prepare students for exams
23. Counselors are helpful but they need to see all of the students.
24. The teachers teach you to be respectful and how to learn.
25. The teacher's mood determines the mood of the classroom; students feed off of positive and negative attitudes.
26. Teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school.
27. Teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students' concerns and consider their opinions.
28. I feel physically and emotionally safe at school.
29. Teachers show they care when they have planned lessons and cover the curriculum.
30. Teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policy and discipline enforcement.
31. The counselors help students with college applications and learning about scholarships.
32. Teachers who care the most reach out and try to bond with students in the class.
33. I believe students feel respected when a school shows it values students' emotional wellbeing.

**Negative Statements:**

1. I believe this school cares about students' test scores but not how much is actually learned.
2. I believe the school is forced to focus on test scores rather than our emotional levels.
3. I believe the school does not consider students' opinions or happiness levels.
4. I believe the teachers are intimidating and uncaring to many of the students.
5. I am overloaded with work and often feel anxious and depressed.
6. Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over standardized test results (ex. Keystones, PSSAs, SATs).

7. The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school.
  8. The school should teach students how to resist inappropriate social (peer) pressure.
  9. I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests.
  10. Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over grades.
  11. I believe the school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with coursework and extracurricular activities.
  12. I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing.
  13. I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing.
  14. I feel that this school is a very stressful place.
  15. I believe the school is just trying to fulfill requirements of the state government.
  16. The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized exams creates anxiety that negatively impacts my performance.
  17. I believe the school is not responsible for students' emotional wellbeing or happiness; it is responsible for our education and starting us on the right path for our future.
  18. I believe the school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.
  19. I feel that the school does not care about students' happiness.
  20. I feel that the school focuses too much on raising test scores and not enough on the stress levels of students.
  21. I feel that nobody really cares if I succeed or not.
  22. Coursework does not help me to resolve interpersonal conflicts.
  23. The school only cares about the state standards and not about igniting a spark of learning and a thirst for knowledge in students.
  24. The way teachers approach their jobs makes me question life.
  25. I feel that many of our course offerings are things that you are never going to use in your life.
  26. I feel the school only worries about what is being tested on the Keystone exams.
  27. The stress to perform on standardized exams creates anxiety and negatively impacts my performance.
  28. I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with coursework and extracurricular activities
  29. There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning will not be used in "real life" and high school was just a waste, which is a cause for anxiety.
  30. I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones puts too much emotional stress on students and teachers.
  31. Everybody learns differently but we are all taught the same thing, at the same pace, instead of specializing to how the student learns.
  32. I feel that teachers forget how stressful high school is and feel that our problems are no big deal.
  33. The school does not seek students' opinions in the decision-making process, even on student-related issues.
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According to Watts and Stenner (2012), the size of the Q set should be dictated by the subject matter; however, the standard for the number of items has been established “somewhere between 40 and 80” (p. 61). The researcher selected 40 of the most relevant and reoccurring themes from the concourse to form the Q set. Another consideration for the distribution is its slope. The kurtosis, or degree of flatness or steepness of the distribution, is also influenced by the relationship between the participants and their knowledge of the subject matter. Brown (1980) suggested an eight point (-4 to +4) distribution for Q sets of 40 items or less, and Watts and Stenner (2012) recommended a more flattened distribution be used “for more straightforward topics or topics in relation to which the participant group are likely to be particularly expert and knowledgeable” (p. 80). Because it is believed that students will feel comfortable ranking and commenting on the statements, a relatively flat distribution was designed to use with a 40-item Q set. Each statement will be printed on a separate note card and coded with a unique identification number. A blank template will be provided to force participants to make decisions about the placement of the statements ranging from negative to positive (see Figure 1). Table 4 contains the statements selected by the researcher for the Q sort study.

Table 4. *Q sort Statements*

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### **Positive Statements**

1. I believe this school values my happiness level.
2. I would define the school environment as “kind and caring”.
3. I feel as if I am treated as an individual, rather than just a face in the crowd.
4. Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I am valued here.
5. I feel emotionally supported in this school.
6. The school environment contributes to my happiness by allowing me time with friends, creating opportunities to make new friends, and providing activities that I enjoy.



7. Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.
8. I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tests and in activities if I am in a positive mood.
9. I feel confident the education I am receiving is preparing me to have a successful life.
10. I believe the school has a responsibility to care for students' emotional wellbeing.
11. I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the school's priority, but the school should be concerned about the overall mental and emotional state of its students.
12. I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning.

### **Neutral Statements**

1. I believe a school shows it cares about students when coursework allows for personal talents to be identified and demonstrated.
2. I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering challenging and career-focused courses.
3. I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering additional help or remedial courses to help students graduate.
4. Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over grades.
5. I believe students feel respected when a school shows it values students' emotional wellbeing.
6. Teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school.
7. Teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students' concerns and consider their opinions.
8. Teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.
9. Teachers show they care when they try to give students advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future.
10. Teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.
11. Teachers show they care when they talk to students when they notice their grades dropping or when they seem sad or distracted.
12. Teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond with students in the class.
13. Teachers show they care when they teach to the standards and prepare students for exams.
14. Teachers show they care when they have planned lessons and cover the curriculum.
15. Teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policy and discipline enforcement.

## Negative Statements

1. I believe this school cares about students' test scores but not how much is actually learned.
  2. I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests.
  3. I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing.
  4. I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing.
  5. I feel that this school is a very stressful place.
  6. I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with coursework and extracurricular activities
  7. There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning will not be used in "real life" and high school was just a waste, which is a cause for anxiety.
  8. I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones puts too much emotional stress on students and teachers.
  9. Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over standardized test results (ex. Keystones, PSSAs, SATs).
  10. The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school.
  11. The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized exams creates anxiety that negatively impacts my performance.
  12. I believe the school is not responsible for students' emotional wellbeing or happiness; it is responsible for our education and starting us on the right path for our future.
  13. I believe the school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.
- 

## Participants

In a Q study, the participant group is known as the P set. According to Watts and Stenner (2012), participants should be those "who have a defined viewpoint to express and, even more importantly, participants whose viewpoint matters in relation to the subject at hand" (p. 71).

This study will involve members of the Class of 2016 because it is believed these students hold the most experience as students in the district, and whose viewpoints will be particularly helpful in not only evaluating the school climate, but also in offering design elements of social and emotional programs that students will find appealing and

effective. The Class of 2016 consists of 260 students- 133 males, 127 females; 257 students identify themselves as White, 1 as African American, and 2 as Hispanic. According to District records, 25% receive financial assistance through the federal school breakfast and lunch programs, and the cumulative GPA for the class is 3.18. To provide additional motivation, students will be guaranteed a \$25 Amazon gift certificate to participate.

### **Q sort**

Durning (1999) contended that Q methodology be used when seeking to understand, rather than to simply count the opinions of participants about a specific topic. Unlike R analysis, which attempts to generally explain characteristics of a population, Q methodology studies patterns of perspectives across individuals. As opposed to R studies that use participants as the study sample and research questions as variables, Q is unique in that the statements constitute the study sample and each participant becomes a variable for factor analysis. Subsequently, Brown (1980) insisted that no more than 40 participants are necessary to represent a specific populations' viewpoint on a topic. Watts and Stenner (2012) agreed that "large numbers of participants are not required to sustain a good Q methodological study" (p. 72), but, that "it may be sensible to stick to a number of participants that is less than the number of items in your Q set" (p. 73). van Exel and de Graaf (2005) suggested having four or five participants associated with each factor was sufficient. The researcher will seek 12 to 16 volunteers to participate in the sorting activity. Additionally, because participants should also represent the many different typologies that exist within a population, the researcher will select volunteers that represent different sets of personalities that are typically found in schools. To ensure

that the identified variety of personality types is represented in the study, the following student demographic information will be gathered from students' transcripts: (a) cumulative GPA, (b) involvement in school sponsored activities, (c) gender, (d) race. A self-reported emotional level will also be included as part of the student's profile.

### **Instrumentation**

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS, 1999) is a four-item, self-assessment of a person's general state of happiness. The response format is based on a seven-point Likert scale. Responses range from 1 (low happiness) to 7 (high happiness). A single composite score is calculated by averaging responses to the four items, with the fourth item being reverse-coded. Developed by Sonja Lyubomirsky and Heidi Lepper (1999), the SHS was validated in 14 studies, using over 2,700 participants. Results indicate the scale has high internal consistency, "good to excellent reliability", and "construct validation studies of convergent and discriminant validity confirmed the use of this scale to measure the construct of subjective happiness" (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999, p. 137). Ensuring consistency and validity, these findings suggest that "responses to the happiness measure cannot be attributed to the respondent's current mood" (p. 152). Using this instrument, Uusitalo-Malmivaara (2014, p. 544) found an average score range of 4.5 and 5.5 in a study involving 339 Finnish ninth graders.

### **Procedure**

The sorting process will ask participants to rank order statements using a forced distribution format. The variation in the ordering of the statements will be subjected to statistical analysis to reveal dominant belief patterns. In this way, the Q method not only identifies how students with similar views perceived an issue, but, also how students with

different opinions perceive the issue (Durning & Osuna, 1996). Post-sort dialogue will provide opportunities to attach personal meaning to these viewpoints, thereby providing designers the information needed to develop a school climate that students find as supportive of their social and emotional development as it does of their academic performance.

A trained facilitator will explain and administer the Q sort process to the participants. There will be no time limit on the sorting process. With their permission, the sorting activity will be digitally recorded to capture their rationale for their rankings and later transcribed for analytical purposes. In addition, the facilitator will ask participants open-ended questions, reflective of the research questions and goals of the study, to ensure all research questions are addressed by each participant. Finally, each student will complete the four items' Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). The facilitator will be paid an honorarium.

## Chapter 4

### Results

Chapter 4 reports the results of a quantum analysis that was completed following the sorting of 40 statements by 14 high school seniors. PQMethod 2.35 for Windows, a dedicated Q methodological software package, was used to perform statistical analysis. Factor rotation identified four distinctive factors using eigenvalues greater than 1.00. However, factor four was comprised of only one statement. An analysis of the transcription of the conversation between the student and the facilitator, during the sort process, along with a review of the sort record, indicates that the student performed the sort incorrectly by placing statements of agreement at the top of the sort table, and disagreements at the bottom, instead of on the right and the left of the table, respectively. This disclosure allowed the researcher to dismiss the fourth factor.

Three factors were extracted, each consisting of a distinct viewpoint. Factor One, labeled *Individualists*, maintains that students should be recognized and treated as individuals, and that personal talents, skills, interests, and needs should be considered when designing learning environments. Factor Two, labeled *Flowers*, align the benefits of designing instructional and social activities with Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of Flow. These students achieve enjoyment when engaged in challenging activities and identify *caring* as providing opportunities for students to reach their fullest potential. Students in Factor Three, labeled *Distressed in School*, feel that the school is a stressful place. This viewpoint is indicative of schools' needs to implement curricular activities and programs that serve students who suffer from anxiety or depression, and, thus, require additional emotional services.

Model viewpoints were constructed for each factor using ranked statements that were considered significant with positive  $z$  scores greater than 1.00, and negative  $z$  scores larger than -1.00. Distinguishing statements, whose  $z$  scores were found to be significant at  $p < 0.01$ , defined and provided clarity to the major opinions of each viewpoint. Discussions that occurred between each student and the facilitator, during the sort process, were recorded, transcribed, and examined to uncover major themes, or issues, that exist in students' perspectives of the educational process. Quantitative and qualitative data were synthesized to deliver meaning and insight into the different viewpoints that exist when students are provided a platform to express their opinions on how the educational system supports their emotional wellbeing. Results of the analysis will be used to answer the original research questions.

Students' demographical data, and results from the SHS, were combined to develop a student profile for each participant, which will be examined when comparing the different viewpoints.

### **Data Analysis**

**Correlation matrix.** Kline (1994, p. 18) described the use of correlation statistics as useful to measure “the degree of agreement between two sets of scores [which were gathered] from the same individuals.” Correlations are scored on a scale ranging from +1.00 to -1.00. High positive correlations (e.g., over + 0.60) indicate a statistical relationship exists between two variables, whereas low correlations (e.g., under + 0.30) provide only minimal evidence that a relationship exists. Conversely, large, negative correlations (e.g., -0.85) suggest that high scores, relative to one variable, associate with low scores on the corresponding second variable and vice versa. A correlation of zero

suggests there is no association between two variables. The goal of the correlation matrix in a Q sort study is to identify similarities, or differences, in the opinions of the participants.

Table 5 provides the correlation matrix analysis between the 14 Q sorts.

Table 5.  
*Correlation Matrix: Between Sorts*

Sorts	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
JD112664(1)	-0.04	0.12	0.25	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.42</b>
MC11164(2)	1.00	0.12	0.23	-0.07	0.29	0.09	0.17	0.14	0.51	0.21	<b>0.33</b>	0.04	0.07
TH15664(3)		1.00	<b>0.30</b>	0.29	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>0.40</b>
F100215(4)			1.00	0.26	0.27	<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>0.41</b>	0.13	<b>0.41</b>	0.21	0.15
F21002(5)				1.00	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.37</b>	0.17	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.42</b>
MS1226(6)					1.00	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>0.30</b>	0.15	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.61</b>
KM95563(7)						1.00	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.74</b>	0.14	0.02	0.17	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.45</b>
DH15663(8)							1.00	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.33</b>	0.15	0.22	<b>0.37</b>	<b>0.62</b>
KC112663(9)								1.00	0.28	0.11	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.46</b>
JE95564(10)									1.00	<b>0.32</b>	<b>0.55</b>	0.16	0.26
B5111(11)										1.00	0.13	0.04	0.20
SA11163(12)											1.00	0.25	0.18
J1020(13)												1.00	<b>0.52</b>
MM156(14)													1.00

The results of Table 5 reveal many moderate-to-high correlations between participants, as indicated by values of 30 or higher ( $r \geq .30$ ). Results also reveal disparities and disagreements between responses ( $r < .30$ ). In an effort to define shared meaning and explain variability, continued analysis involved the identification and removal of common variance from the results. The two most common methods of Q analysis are the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and the Centroid Factor Analysis (CFA) methods. Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 99) reported that PCA “will resolve itself into a single, mathematically best solution.” Considering the rather straightforward approach needed to determine the number of extracted factors in this study, the Principal Component method was used for factor analysis.



## Cumulative Communality Matrix

The Cumulative Communality Matrix indicates the amount of common variance that a particular viewpoint, or individual Q sort has with all of the other viewpoints in the study. High communalities indicate that a Q sort is highly representative of the group, whereas a low communality signifies a different, or atypical, viewpoint. Table 6 provides the Cumulative Communalities' Matrix, which demonstrates that the first three factors account for 65% of the common variance.

Table 6.  
*Cumulative Communality Matrix*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sorts								
JD112664	0.52	0.52	0.78	0.79	0.80	0.82	0.87	0.90
MC11164	0.07	0.53	0.58	0.64	0.95	0.96	0.97	0.97
TH15664	0.33	0.34	0.74	0.74	0.78	0.84	0.85	0.89
F100215	0.24	0.37	0.37	0.56	0.75	0.75	0.97	0.97
F21002	0.60	0.61	0.71	0.80	0.82	0.83	0.84	0.86
MS1226	0.73	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.85	0.86	0.88	0.92
KM95563	0.51	0.62	0.65	0.79	0.79	0.80	0.87	0.88
DH15663	0.59	0.60	0.66	0.70	0.70	0.85	0.85	0.92
KC112663	0.72	0.75	0.75	0.77	0.78	0.81	0.88	0.91
JE95564	0.29	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.78	0.79	0.91
B5111	0.06	0.23	0.44	0.84	0.87	0.88	0.88	0.91
SA11163	0.32	0.56	0.82	0.82	0.83	0.83	0.84	0.85
J1020	0.48	0.58	0.59	0.61	0.67	0.74	0.89	0.95
MM156	0.46	0.50	0.54	0.59	0.64	0.88	0.89	0.91
Cum expl. Var.	<b>42</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>65</b>	72	78	83	88	91

## Unrotated Factor Matrix with Eigenvalues

Table 7 provides an unrotated factor matrix with eigenvalues.

Table 7.

*Unrotated Factor Matrix with Eigenvalues*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sorts								
JD112664	0.72	-0.05	-0.51	0.09	-0.14	0.11	-0.24	0.17
MC111164	0.26	0.68	0.21	-0.25	0.56	-0.11	-0.06	-0.06
TH15664	0.58	-0.05	0.63	0.03	-0.21	-0.24	-0.07	0.22
F100215	0.49	0.37	0.05	-0.43	-0.44	0.04	0.47	-0.03
F21002	0.77	-0.12	-0.32	0.30	-0.13	-0.10	0.08	-0.15
MS1226	0.85	-0.11	-0.02	0.06	0.32	-0.09	0.14	-0.20
KM95563	0.71	-0.33	0.17	-0.37	-0.04	-0.10	-0.26	0.11
DH15663	0.77	-0.11	0.24	-0.19	-0.05	0.38	-0.02	-0.27
KC112663	0.85	-0.18	0.02	-0.14	-0.06	-0.19	-0.27	-0.17
JE95564	0.54	0.68	-0.05	0.07	-0.03	0.16	-0.10	0.34
B5111	0.25	0.41	0.47	0.63	-0.19	-0.08	-0.05	-0.17
SA11163	0.57	0.49	-0.52	0.00	-0.04	-0.09	-0.05	-0.11
J1020	0.69	-0.32	-0.10	0.14	0.24	-0.27	0.38	0.24
MM156	0.67	-0.22	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.49	0.10	0.13
Eigenvalues	<b>5.90</b>	<b>1.80</b>	<b>1.43</b>	1.01	0.85	0.65	0.62	0.49
% expl. Var.	<b>42</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	7	6	5	4	3

According to Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 105), eigenvalues are “probably the most commonly used criterion” for deciding how many factors to retain in the final analysis. Before rotation, eigenvalues ranged from a high of 5.9046 (rounded 5.90) to a low of 0.4876 (rounded 0.49). The Kaiser-Guttman criterion, as cited in Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 106), suggested that factors with eigenvalues of 1.00 or higher should be considered for extraction. Extracting factors 1, 2, and 3 explained 65% of the common variance and included 13 of 14 students’ viewpoints. The eigenvalues of these three factors exceed the accepted 1.0 cutoff, with eigenvalues of 5.9, 1.8, and 1.4. Therefore, a three factor model was considered to be the most efficient and parsimonious model in explaining the perspectives of the individuals participating in this sort.

## Varimax Rotation

Watts and Stenner (2012) recommended using the varimax rotation method because of its ease of use, effectiveness, reliability, and its acceptance within the research community. It was also found to be most effective for studies using an inductive analytic strategy, and for studies concerned with the majority of viewpoints, both of which are conditions in this study. The rotation process “involves the physical movement or rotation of the factors, and their viewpoints, about a central axis point” (p. 122). In doing so, varimax positions the factors “so that the overall solution maximizes the amount of study variance explained” (p. 125).

Table 8 provides highlighted data that align participants with one of the extracted factors. An “X” indicates which factor each student connects to most strongly. Using a 3 factor solution, 13 of the 14 students are identified.

Table 8.  
*Factor Matrix with Defining Sort*

Factors	1	2	3
Sorts			
JD112664	0.2807	0.1202	<b>0.8265X</b>
MC11164	0.0557	<b>0.7770X</b>	-0.0893
TH15664	<b>0.7363X</b>	0.1545	-0.1050
F100215	0.3272	<b>0.6518X</b>	0.1016
F21002	0.3823	-0.0012	<b>0.7982X</b>
MS1226	<b>0.6442X</b>	0.1469	0.5408
KM95563	<b>0.8330X</b>	0.1153	0.1712
DH15663	<b>0.7680X</b>	0.2445	0.2155
KC112663	<b>0.7379X</b>	0.1832	0.4380
JE95564	0.0596	<b>0.7057X</b>	0.3825
<b>B5111</b>	0.0681	0.1678	0.0334
SA11163	-0.0425	0.5618	<b>0.7117X</b>
J1020	<b>0.5578X</b>	-0.1146	0.5328
MM156	<b>0.6262X</b>	-0.0578	0.3333
Sort Name	Individualists	Flowers	Distressed in School
% expl Var.	27	15	21

*Note.* X indicates significant factor loading

Student B5111 does not load significantly on any of the three factors. An analysis of B5111's transcripts (conversations with the facilitator during the study) indicates a consistent lack of committal to a strong viewpoint, in either direction, when responding to many of the Q statements. The individual used non-committal statements, such as "I guess", "I kind of agree (disagree)", "I'd go either way", or "I don't really agree (disagree) with that", a total of 33 times when considering 40 Q statements. There were also conversations where the student seemed confused as to where to place the statements in the distribution table. The facilitator recognized the confusion and attempted to direct the student to move the cards so that his opinions were recorded accurately: "just because you put them there doesn't mean they have to stay"; however, this appeared to have possibly led to more confusion.

An analysis of a record of B5111's distribution table illustrates that instead of placing statements of agreement into the *Agreement* columns [+1] and [+2], *Strongly Agree* [+3] and [+4], the student inverted the arrangement by placing statements he agreed with at the top of the table leaving the bottom of the table for those statements with which he disagreed. Therefore, 12 statements with which B5111 stated agreement, during conversations with the facilitator, were incorrectly placed under columns reserved for *Disagreement*: [-1] (4 statements), [-2] (2 statements), [-3] (4 statements), and [-4] (2 statements). Likewise, 7 statements the student expressed disagreement with were placed in columns +1 (3 statements), +2 (2 statements), and +3 (2 statements), which were areas reserved for *Agreement*.

Quantum analysis has provided strong evidence that three factors, or three main student viewpoints, exist when addressing the issue of how well the school values

students' emotional wellbeing. However, the question as to how these viewpoints agree and differ still exists. Table 9 provides information relating to which statements held the highest levels of agreement (positive  $z$  scores) and disagreement (negative  $z$  scores) for Factor 1. Only those statements with  $z$  scores greater than 1.00 were included in the table.

Table 9.  
*Ranked scores for Factor 1, Z scores Greater Than 1.00*

No.	Statement	Z Scores
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tests and in activities if I am in a positive mood.	1.53
33	In general, I believe that that a positive atmosphere in a school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning.	1.50
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones puts too much emotional stress on students and teachers.	1.28
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students concerns and consider their opinions.	1.22
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students when coursework allows for personal talents to be identified and demonstrated.	1.19
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond with students in the class.	1.18
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but not how much is actually learned.	1.17
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.	1.01
20	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school.	0.98
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	-0.94
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policy and discipline enforcement.	-0.96
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring."	-1.08
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotional wellbeing or happiness; it is responsible for our education and starting us on the right path for our future.	-1.20
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, rather than just a face in the crowd.	-1.20
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I am valued here.	-1.40
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.	-1.46
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.	-1.52
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.	-1.57
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing.	-1.72

Complete results for the information listed in Table 9 are provided in Appendix

A. Tables 10 and 11 display similar results for Factors 2 and 3, respectively.

Table 10 provides ranked  $z$  scores for Factor 2.

Table 10.

*Ranked  $z$  scores for Factor 2*

No.	Statement	Z Scores
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students concerns and consider their opinions.	1.62
24	In general, teachers and show they care when they reach out and try to bond with the students in the class.	1.59
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give students advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future.	1.36
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering challenging and career-focused courses.	1.33
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tests and in activities if I am in a positive mood.	1.30
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at the school, rather than just a face in the crowd.	1.23
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to students when they notice their grades dropping or when they seem sad or distracted.	1.14
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering additional help or remedial courses to help students graduate.	1.03
2	I would define our school environment as “kind and caring.”	0.97
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing.	-0.87
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing.	-1.13
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.	-1.23
14	I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with course work and extracurricular activities.	-1.30
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students’ emotional wellbeing or happiness; it is responsible for our education and starting off on the right path for our future.	-1.36
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school.	-1.43
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.	-1.65
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.	-1.72
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests.	-2.07

Complete results for the information listed in Table 10 are provided in Appendix A.

Table 11 provides ranked z scores for Factor 3.

Table 11.  
*Ranked z scores for Factor 3*

No.	Statement	Z Scores
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	1.87
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to student concerns and consider their opinions.	1.40
37	In general, I believe a school shows that it cares about students by offering additional help or remedial courses to help students graduate.	1.40
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over grades.	1.30
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized exams creates anxiety that negatively impacts my performance.	1.27
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning.	1.22
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over standardized test results (e. g., Keystones, PSSAs, SATs).	1.18
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to students when they notice their grades dropping or when they seem sad or distracted.	1.10
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond with the students in the class.	0.83
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I am valued here.	-0.97
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing.	-1.10
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is preparing me to have a successful life.	-1.13
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.	-1.32
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	-1.43
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.	-1.46
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at the school rather than just a face in the crowd.	-1.55
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.	-1.57
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotional wellbeing or happiness; it is responsible for our education and starting us on the right path for our future.	-1.60

Complete results for the information listed in Table 11 are provided in Appendix A.

## Factor Arrays

The main purpose for using Q methodology is to capture people's beliefs about a particular topic in an attempt to understand perspectives as a whole. Factor arrays allow the factors that were discovered to stand alone and be constructed as model viewpoints.

Watts and Stenner (2012) explained that a factor array is simply a

Q sort configured to represent the viewpoint of a particular factor... The purpose of a factor array is to provide a best possible estimate of the relevant factor and, in doing so, to give a sense of what its 100% or a perfectly loading Q sort might actually look like. (p. 141)

This study used 40 statements to capture 14 individual viewpoints, with the goal of reducing these viewpoints based on common opinions identified in the data. Results of the factor extraction and rotation process have effectively reduced these 14 individual viewpoints to three. The analytic process has achieved its data reduction goals. Three common viewpoints remain, and through the creation of factor arrays, each is represented by its own unique Q sort. Figures 2 through 4 present the unique sorts.

*Figure 2. Model Sort for Those Students Who Loaded Significantly on Factor 1.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree				
	-4	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	+4
7		2	5	3	16	4	8	1
13		11	6	15	18	12	9	21
25		17	10	23	26	14	24	33
		28	22	27	31	19	32	
		40	36	30	34	20	35	
			39	37	38	29		

Variance = 6.00

St. Dev.= 2.45



*Figure 3. Model Sort for Those Students Who Loaded Significantly on Factor 2.*

Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
-4	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	+4
11	14	1	3	5	2	17	19
13	20	7	6	10	4	21	24
27	25	9	8	15	16	31	35
	39	32	12	18	23	34	
	40	36	28	22	29	37	
		38	30	26	33		

Variance = 6.00                      St. Dev.= 2.45

*Figure 4. Model Sort for Those Students Who Loaded Significantly on Factor 3.*

Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
-4	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	+4
17	3	2	1	4	18	26	35
25	6	5	8	16	21	30	36
40	7	10	9	19	24	33	37
	11	15	12	20	29	34	
	13	23	14	22	32	38	
		28	31	27	39		

Variance = 6.00                      St. Dev.= 2.45

### **Interpreting Model Viewpoints: Identifying Similarities and Differences**

Watts and Stenner (2012) suggested attentiveness to the whole configuration, and examine how each factor, or viewpoint, is distinct in relation to the other factors. In other words, each ranking should be examined for meaning related to the participants in each factor. In addition to identifying similarities and differences between the factors, the following section also links data with student profile information and transcriptions taken during the sorting process.

An initial correlation analysis examining the relationships between the factors (Table 12) shows a moderately low correlation exists between factors 1 and 2, but, a moderately high relationship exists between factors 1 and 3. The data also indicate a moderately low relationship exists between factors 2 and 3. This demonstrates that factor 2 clearly holds an outstanding viewpoint. Table 8 identified three students, or 23% of the participants, as loading into factor 2. This result holds the potential that approximately one-fifth of the student population maintains a viewpoint that is defined and significantly different than the others, but also suggests that, while over two-thirds of the population embrace differing opinions regarding the school environment, some opinions are held consistent across the factors.

Table 12.  
*Correlations Between Factor Scores*

Factors	1	2	3
1	---	0.34	0.60
2	0.34	---	0.34
3	0.60	0.34	---

Additional information comparing how particular statements rank in each of the factors can be found in Appendix A. *Z* scores were used to facilitate comparisons between statements. For example, statement 1 ranks high (3) in Factor 1, but ranks low (32) in Factor 2, and (25) in Factor 3. This information provides evidence as to which issues the different viewpoints found to be the most and least important.

### **Quantum Analysis of Factors: Understanding the Meaning of Viewpoints**

The following section augments the established model viewpoints by including an analysis of distinguishing statements for each factor. These distinguishing statements define the major opinions of each viewpoint, provide sharper insights as to the values of

each viewpoint, and identify commonalities and differences between factors. Tables 13, 15, and 17 identify the statements each factor has ranked in a significantly different way (higher or lower) compared to the other factors. A difference at the  $p < 0.01$  level is represented with an asterisk. For example, Table 13 ranks statements 1, 8, 9, 14, and 12 significantly higher, and statements 37 and 22 significantly lower than the other factors.

### Factor 1: Individualists

Table 13.

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 1: Valuing Individuality*

No	Statement	1		2		3	
		Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones puts too much emotional stress on students and teachers.	4	1.28*	-2	-0.68	-1	-0.35
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students when coursework allows for personal talents to be identified and demonstrated.	3	1.18*	-1	-0.00	-1	-0.25
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.	3	1.01*	-2	-0.65	-1	-0.47
14	I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with course work and extracurricular activities.	2	0.91*	-3	-1.30	-1	-0.30
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for students' emotional wellbeing.	2	0.89*	-1	-0.36	-1	-0.40
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering additional help or remedial courses to help students graduate.	-1	-0.51*	3	1.03	4	1.40
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school.	-2	-0.64	-3	-1.43	2	0.68
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned lessons and cover the curriculum.	-2	-0.90*	1	0.45	1	0.44

$P < 0.05$ ; Asterisk (\*) Indicates significance at  $P < 0.01$

Both the Factor Q Sort Value (Q-SV) and the Z-Score (Z-SCR) are shown

Distinguishing statements reveal the stress felt by students in the current educational system. Additionally, comments made during the sorting process clearly expose the need for students to be treated as individuals. This viewpoint's results emphasize that schools must recognize the accumulated stressors that exist in students' lives, particularly at secondary levels, where students are still not only developing physically, mentally, and emotionally, but also begin responding to the responsibilities associated with adulthood. Students indicate they come to school with individual stressors emanating from their home environments and personal situations, social relationships, expectations from parents and other adults, pressures to master academic standards and perform at high levels in activities, concerns about the future, and other hopes and fears that exist in every person's mind. Distinguishing viewpoints of disagreements produce a viewpoint that respects the importance of mastering content, but believes a caring environment does more than prepare students to achieve academically, and that teachers must recognize each student's individuality to establish a positive environment based on trust.

Figure 2, the model viewpoint for Factor One, highly ranks the same issues with which the students strongly agreed. For example, in addition to believing standardized assessments are cause for additional stress on individuals (statement 1), this viewpoint's findings also confirm a belief that a positive atmosphere creates an environment into which students want to come, and, consequently, perform better (statements 21 and 33). In addition to demanding that instructional activities be designed to utilize personal talents, interests, and strengths (statement 8), and that learning be fun and interesting

(statement 9), this viewpoint's findings consistently support the value of individuality by expressing the importance of positive teacher-student relationships (statement 24). Subsequently, the viewpoint's results confirm that these relationships would be enhanced by actively listening to students' concerns and opinions (statement 35). Unfortunately, this factor held a high agreement that the school cares more about test results, but not about how much is actually learned (statement 32).

Students extracted for Factor One strongly disagreed with statements that the current school environment was "kind and caring" (statement 2). Supporting this opinion, the respondents expressed disagreement of feeling personally valued (statement 28), or recognized and treated as individuals (statement 17). For the most part, these students do not feel they are treated as individuals because they are not asked to participate in the decision-making process.

Students also disagreed strongly with the opinion that the school does not have the capacity (statement 7), responsibility (statement 40), or doctrine (statement 11) to be concerned about students' emotional wellbeing. This viewpoint strongly upholds that caring is reflected by respecting an individual's potential (statement 13) but strongly disagreed that stressors produced by placing graduation requirements on standardized test results helps students to focus on doing their best (statement 25).

Student profile information that includes the demographical, academic, social, and emotional measures of the students extracted to create the Factor One viewpoint is included in Table 14. In addition to providing a cumulative grade point average over three years (based on a 4-point scale), the table also provides the number of co- and

extra-curricular activities listed on the students' transcripts, and the mean score reported on the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS).

Table 14. *Student Profile Information for Factor 1*

Student	Gender	GPA	Activities	SHS
TH15664	Male	3.53	0	5.0
MS1226	Female	2.90	4	4.5
KM95563	Female	3.02	0	3.5
DH15663	Female	3.22	9	5.5
KC112663	Female	2.63	0	3.5
J1020	Male	3.69	10	4.3
MM156	Male	3.98	15	5.0
Average		3.31	5.4	4.5

An analysis of the students whose statements and opinions comprise the model viewpoint demonstrate an average GPA of 3.31 and SHS of 4.5. The 4.5 mean score settles on the average range reported in Uusitalo-Malmivaara (2014, p. 544). Student MM156 has participated in the most total activities (15) of any member of the group and three students had listed 0 school-sponsored activities. However, six of M1M56's activities occurred by continuing the same activity for multiple years, and TH15664 has no listed activities because he had just transferred into the district.

A review of students' transcriptions produced during the actual Q sort process introduces many interesting and relevant opinions that support the themes found in the reported analysis above. A summary of these discussions are listed below.

Student MM156 commented negatively on the push for students to master concepts in math and science at the expense of pursuing their more personal creative skills in the arts: "Yeah, this is just an example – something I've seen, guidance gets all the kids in to talk about next year and they say 'Colleges care more about math', and then they, like, gear students toward math. Personally I don't like math. Then there's the kids

who like arts- like singing and stuff like that – but they don't gear anything towards them. So the students that are focused on math- they enjoy math or science- they're getting the full treatment while the other students are not. You know what I mean?" Continuing with the perception that the school's curriculum has become increasingly standardized to a college and career focus, he said, "It seems to me that the school is focusing more on STEM, more than something like the arts. You look in the world there's so much of the arts in music, advertising- you look at advertising, the drawing of something, that's art. In a world where it's just math, science, computers- that's not very fun and there are a multitude of people in the school that actually feel the same way."

He also recognized the need to personalize instruction based on a student's cognitive ability, which includes how the student learns and finds enjoyment when learning: "I believe that there are a bunch of learning styles and the way teachers teach is just interesting to me because one student can learn this way and one student can learn that way... You're gonna enjoy it more if you're doing well. You're gonna do more if your teachers show they're caring about what grades you get and that you're not just there to get an A in the class."

Student TH15664 expressed grief over the use of graduation exams, relating the practice of high stakes testing to one of imposing unnecessary barriers to achieving success: "Most of the time you're already trying your hardest... it's more of like a wall." The student explicitly expressed the importance of valuing a person's individuality: "To be valued, you really have to be individualized", particularly when initiating relationships: "You have to know someone's there- it doesn't even matter that they'll go to them- you know someone's going to be there for them. The availability, that's the

real thing, that would improve a lot- like a teacher saying- ‘Hey, if you ever need help with anything, I’m always here.’ There’s tutoring and all that but... make them feel individualized and at the same time make them feel emotionally stable.”

Student MS1226 expressed a perception that the school environment “is not kind and caring” but neither implicated or defended the administration for the culture stating, “the higher you get from students one-on-one the less you care about them.” This student also expressed the need to be recognized and treated as an individual when talking about personal problems, stating that “I think I’d rather talk to a teacher about it because I see the teacher every day and they know me better.” Other opinions included preparing for and participating in Keystone exams to be “irritating”, “wasteful”, and “unnecessary”. Aligned with an individualistic viewpoint, the student listed opportunities to “work on projects”, “work in groups”, “be more creative”, and “come up with our own ideas”, when asked how to academically motivate students.

The student also made it clear that adolescence is a time to begin challenging current practices, customs, and traditions, but adults should not be so quick to respond to these opinions because “we just like to complain... but when we complain about things (that means that) some things do need to change but not everything.” The student, however, was very serious about her opinion regarding the school’s responsibility to care for emotional wellbeing: “I think they should cause they’re supposed to get us ready for real life –all I’m getting is academics not how to cope with stress or grieving, which is important because in every life there is going to be death that’s one thing you need to know how to handle. You’ve got people cutting themselves or killing themselves over things they never knew how to handle – I feel like they should do something about it.”



KM95563 commented strongly on the individuality of students and for the expectation that the school system cares for students' emotional wellbeing: "We're humans – we feel all these different emotions – we go through hard times, we go through really good times – that's just a part of living life and I feel like some teachers really do not care. If you're on the verge of breaking down in class there are some teachers that will take the initiative and pull you out and ask, 'Is everything ok? Do you need to go down to the office?', Those are the teachers... I highly respect – they're able to look past just getting the job done and 'Whatever these kids do isn't my problem.'"

The student also expressed a negative viewpoint towards standardized testing, claiming that the experience left her mentally and emotionally exhausted: "Whenever I took my 1<sup>st</sup> Keystone exam I –it was in the morning – and the rest of the day I was exhausted. I could not do anything else for that day... the Keystones infuriate me." The student implored teachers to respect students as individuals and take into account the pressure of these exams: "You can't just go from having that huge amount of pressure and stress and do it well and the rest of the day you're like 'Whew.' You need to take a step back – but as soon as you're done with that you have tests or you're loaded with homework."

The student also expressed the need for teachers to recognize the differences in how students learn and the pace at which learning occurs for individuals: "Not everybody is the same... we are not all programmed the same way... you gotta recognize that and you can't get frustrated with those kids either – it's your job, you have to deal with us every day. You chose to work here. You have to realize there are going to be kids here that are all different – and you have to learn how to respond appropriately instead of

being like, ‘Good job, didn’t you learn that in 4<sup>th</sup> grade?’ No, cause you might think that’s funny and Jim goes ‘ha-ha’ and later on in the evening he’s thinking about ‘Wow, I’m such an idiot.’”

DH15663 held a strong opinion that the school should recognize students as individuals and demonstrate consideration for students’ lives outside of school: “I think we all want to know that other people recognize us as people... but you definitely have a responsibility to, like, care about your students because how would a student learn if they feel like they’re just a face in the crowd... The school forgets that we do other things and school is important but other things are important too...”

Considering the role of the teacher, she expressed an importance for teachers to let students know they care and to show a passion for teaching: “It’s really so important that we feel good here. I feel like if I was a teacher, I would, like, make sure that my students would know that I care about them and I want them to do well, and I want them to be happy here because this is where we spend most of our time... You went to college to be a teacher- at some point I wanna be a teacher- this is what I want to do with my life, and now you just look at some and say, ‘Why are you a teacher? You look like you hate your life! Why are you here if this isn’t what you want to do?’” She also explained how external pressures have taxed her emotionally, particularly in the last year: “A lot of people pressure themselves into getting good grades but a lot of peoples’ parents pressure them and they’re like, ‘You need to get good grades or your grounded’ or ‘I’ll take your keys’ and stuff like that. And obviously parents need to make sure you’re doing your best but I know my parents are always saying, ‘This is good but is this your best?’ I have honestly cried so many times this year.”

KC112663 expressed feeling stressed over the lack of time in her day to meet the multitude of pressures and responsibilities she shoulders. She states that at one time she was an A-B student, but now her grades have dropped. She worries about failing. “I have cried over grades. I am crying now because I am failing.” She states she suffers from depression, anxiety and ADHD, and sees an outside therapist to deal with these issues.

She states students do not do their best with the added pressure of exams. The added pressure of the Keystones makes her anxiety go up and she performs worse. It also makes her more depressed. She believes that teaching to the standard is not caring and feels she is not alone in this feeling. The student mentioned that she has some teachers who seem to care but she has little time to make friends and thus has few friends who care.

She does not find school to be kind and caring, although she does believe the school values her happiness. She feels it is a school’s responsibility to care about her emotionally: “They should care about my emotional wellbeing since they see me most.”

Supporting the viewpoint, she believes the school system does not recognize students as individuals: “Students can be overwhelmed and teachers don’t care. When my brother was in the hospital after trying to commit suicide I still had to hand in all my work.” She is not known as an individual, which is why she wears a hat: “Teachers have given up telling me to take it off.” She is known for her hats and feels it is part of her identity: “My hats give me comfort and allow me to exist in my own little bubble.”

J1020 expressed negative feelings toward standardized exams and opposed the concept that the added pressure helps students to focus on preparing for them: “No. It

makes people freak out.” He noted a more individualistic approach to managing emotions: “Yeah it can be tough but in my opinion it’s not too difficult –just do the work and don’t worry about your emotions. You can worry about your emotions when you get home. I had one day where I was like super emotional for a reason – I’m not gonna get into it –but I was so upset, I was like almost crying and I had a test next period. I was like ‘No, ok, worry about it later’ so I kinda just turned my emotions off, did the test- and actually ended up getting a B plus, I think on that- and then at lunch I was like, “Ok well I’m really sad now but at least I did good on the test.”

### **Factor 2: Flowers**

Labeled *Flowers*, the opinions included in the Factor Two viewpoint correspond to the tenets of the Flow theory, which were examined in Chapter 2. A concept popularized in the research and writings of Csikszentmihalyi (1990), a Flow experience produces high levels of enjoyment that lead to decreased levels of self-consciousness, but increased levels of self-awareness. This expansion of self occurs by accomplishing difficult challenges when participants learn to trust their abilities and perform at their personal best. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), environmental conditions needed for Flow include an engaging activity that the participant finds intensely interesting and challenging. In most cases, participants actually enjoy the challenge of the activity as much as the activity itself. Characteristics of the activity include clear rules and objectives, the ability to concentrate, and constant and continual feedback that provides the information needed to adjust to changing conditions. Sometimes called optimal experiences, these conditions and outcomes seem to directly address the negative opinions about traditional schooling. Recounting research in the areas of motivation and

performance, Pink (2009) believed that when “people are conscious of what puts them in flow, they’ll have a clearer idea of what they should devote the time and dedication to master” (p. 123).

Factor Two’s distinguishing statements (Table 15) and model viewpoint (Figure 3) report that the viewpoint holds a mainly positive viewpoint about the school environment.

Table 15.

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 2: A Habitat for Flow*

No	Statement	1		2		3	
		Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR
31	In general, I believe the school shows it cares about students by offering challenging and career-focused courses.	1	0.16	3	1.33*	0	0.08
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at the school rather than just a face in the crowd.	-3	-1.20	3	1.23*	-4	-1.55
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring."	-3	-1.08	2	0.97*	-2	-0.83
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowing me time with friends, creating opportunities to make new friends, and providing activities that I enjoy.	-1	-0.39	2	0.74*	-2	-0.47
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policy and discipline enforcement.	-2	-0.95	1	0.55*	-2	-0.83
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the standards and prepare students for exams.	-2	-0.88	0	-0.00	-2	-0.91
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I am valued here.	-3	-1.40	-1	-0.07	-2	-0.97
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	-2	-0.94	-1	-0.23	-3	-1.43
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but not how much is actually learned.	3	1.17	-2	-0.42*	2	0.83
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized exams create anxiety that negatively impacts my performance.	1	0.69	-2	-0.68*	3	1.27
20	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school.	2	0.98	-3	-1.13*	1	0.64
14	I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with course work and extracurricular activities.	2	0.91	-3	-1.30	-1	-0.30
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school.	-2	-0.64	-3	-1.43	2	0.68
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests.	-1	-0.36	-4	-2.07*	1	0.10

$P < 0.05$ ; Asterisk (\*) Indicates significance at  $P < 0.01$

Both the Factor Q Sort Value (Q-SV) and the Z-Score (Z-SCR) are shown

Statements also align to the belief that challenging students and holding them to high expectations is a sign of caring, in that it affords the opportunity to achieve at higher than expected levels. The viewpoint feels more strongly than the others that students *are* respected as individuals and that caring is demonstrated by preparing students with challenging coursework in a positive, supportive environment. Respondents used in the Factor Two viewpoint enjoy clear and equitable policies, consistent and fair discipline procedures, and the opportunity to be appropriately social. It maintains that, although academics is the main purpose of schooling, educational systems have a responsibility to care for students' emotional wellbeing because emotions directly impact performance.

The highest values of agreement of distinguishing statements connect caring educational environments with ones that offer challenging and relevant courses, hold students accountable with clear and appropriate procedures and policies, and respect the individuality of students. Likewise, the highest statements of agreement found in the model viewpoint are ones that associate caring with actions, such as offering advice about problems or concerns about the future (statement 19), interacting and bonding with students (statement 24), and actively listening to students' concerns and opinions (statement 35). Other, highly agreed upon statements included statements relating the environment with performance, specifically noting the belief that students learn and perform better when in a positive mood (statement 21). Results also strongly endorsed teachers actively reaching out or offering remediation or emotional support when they notice dropping grades or negative changes of behavior (statements 34 and 37).

Holding a mostly positive viewpoint about how the school cares for their emotional wellbeing, respondents of the Factor Two viewpoint generally accept life's

stressors, but deny that negative outcomes result from that stress. Feeling valued, students highly disagreed with statements such as, “I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests” (statement 27), and “I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing” (statement 20).

Students reject the belief that stress to get good grades or proficient test scores has a negative impact on performance, which is consistent with the model viewpoint’s finding that stress from getting good grades negatively affects school attendance (statement 39). However, although students do not feel stress has a negative impact on their performance, they equally deny that the pressure of a graduation exam helps students to focus on doing their best (statement 25). The notion that the school is not responsible (statement 40), or should not be concerned with students’ emotional wellbeing (statement 11), is also an area of disagreement, which correlates strongly with the other factors.

Profile information of those students extracted to create Factor 2 are presented in Table 16.

Student	Gender	GPA	Activities	SHS
MC11164	Male	3.15	5	5.5
F1100215	Female	3.46	2	4.3
JE95564	Male	3.61	3	4.8
Average		3.41	3.3	4.8

An analysis of this information shows that three students, or 23% of the participants of the study, hold beliefs that curricular and school-related activities should challenge them to perform at their personal best in order to achieve high enjoyment and



personal satisfaction levels in school. The factor was represented by both males and females, and these students held above average levels of GPA and SHS. A review of students' transcriptions produced opinions that related to the themes and outcomes of Flow. A summary of these discussions are listed below.

Student MC11164 holds the opinion that the educational system should be responsible for students' emotional wellbeing and happiness because of the potential it has on guiding students on the path to self-awareness and self-discovery. "We're here for 12 years of our life. High school is mainly where you find out who you are and I think the school should have an effect on that; not telling you who you should be but guiding you in the right path." Specifically, he recognized that adulthood will consist of stressful situations and the ability to deal with stress is a necessary skill. Additionally, he stated his own knowledge of self has helped him manage personal stress: "I think there's a lot of students here that deal with a lot of stress and a lot of it is because they don't know how to cope... I deal with many stress problems- everybody's gonna have that stress... but I found who I am; I found my path- the only stress I have is trying to keep on succeeding." The student also promoted the concepts of individual support, remediation programs, and second-chance learning, noting: "When I do something and know I have a back-up it helps me relax and reduces anxiety."

The student recognizes the importance for learning environments to maintain components of socialization, enjoyment, and that curricular content and activities contain meaning and relevance. He promoted engaging activities such as those found in project-based learning: "School is a place for work but it's also a place for enjoyment- of being around others. I think high school really shows you how to interact with people... When I

am excited for a class- say my Introduction to Engineering Design course- I wake up in the morning and think, 'Hey, I get to do my project today and not just sit there' - I'm pretty excited about it and it helps me when I know I can apply it to something."

The student also believes that while the school has a definite responsibility to care for students, the students share the responsibility to care for themselves and bring a positive attitude into the schoolhouse: "I believe when I walk in the school I should have a smile on my face. The same as when I start my career in my first job, I should have a smile on my face because I'm starting my life and how I want it to be." This student agreed with the statement that the added pressure of passing the Keystone (graduation) exam or from getting good grades helps students to their best, but believes he is in the minority, stating: "The pressure helps me...when I look at a report card and I see a percentage go from 85 to 89 that makes me want to go back the next day."

Student JE95564 held strong beliefs that the primary role of education is to develop students' cognitive needs, but that educating students about stress and how to manage it are part of that responsibility. The student recognizes that some stress can be positive and improve performance and has noticed a decrease in personal anxiety levels when he prepared for the stressor (e.g., studied for a major exam). Additionally, the student expressed beliefs that the school plays a key role in the socialization and development of a person's sense of self: "The first true place you get to socialize and develop as the person you are is school. You discover who you are, what you like and don't like about certain things...."

The student not only agreed that schools should care for their students' emotional wellbeing, but observed the fact that America's youth may be in trouble if teachers ignore

these issues: “Yeah, that’s really important cause they’re the first people that would notice something, so if they don’t seem to care, the problem may not even be discovered....” The student believed his personal connections with teachers have helped to establish a positive relationship with the school.

This student also held strong beliefs that clear and consistent discipline problems should exist, that teachers should consider the instructional and assignment workloads implemented during testing days, because of the increased levels of mental and emotional stress, and that regularly planned instructional activities should be designed to respect students’ needs to socialize, communicate, and collaborate with friends and peers.

Student F1100215 confessed, during the sorting process, that she was diagnosed with an anxiety disorder and takes medication to control it. Consequently, she understands that if “you don’t feel emotionally well in school (then) you’re not gonna be able to focus... if you’re not emotionally stable- if you are not happy, you’re not gonna be able to learn.” Feeling that school should focus on academics, she believes there should also be a class that teaches students how to manage stress and anxiety.

The student feels emotionally connected with school personnel because of the way the school responded to her personal needs in the past. After missing about of month of school last year, teachers would “check up on” her on a regular basis. In fact, one teacher that she had last year continues to ask her if she is OK, which shows the student that the teacher “cares about me more than just a name in his grade book... he sees me as a person... it’s a nice feeling when a teacher will go out of their way to ask you how you are cause you know they’re busy but you also know they care.”

The student expressed feelings of high anxiety over high stakes tests, such as the SATs, stating that “I took the SATS in May and I went home, I was so nervous- I was shaking the entire time cause I was thinking ‘This is my entire future... my entire future rides on one test.’” However, she admitted that “School isn’t the only place you feel stressed- there is stuff that happens at home; that happens with friends” but recognizes that school activities provide avenues for stress relief and socialization, calling her softball team “a family cause you see them every day for 2-3 hours a day and game days really bring you close together.”

The student also expressed a belief that, although some people experience success because of natural talent, others achieve success through effort and practice: “I think it’s impossible not to get good at it if you keep trying day after day. If you give up, you’re not going to get good at it, but if you keep going then maybe that could be something that you become personally talented at and, you’re like- Oh wow, I did this? And now I’m good at it!”

The student states that she has learned to reduce stress levels by intentionally focusing on positive aspects of life and preparing for potential stressors: “If I come in with the mindset that I’m gonna make this a good day... I did all my homework and I’m ready for all my tests... it’s not going to be stressful.”

### **Factor 3: Distressed in School**

The results of an analysis of Factor Three report a more somber and disturbing viewpoint as to how stress to earn high grades, demonstrate proficiency on standardized exams, or to meet expectations beyond ability levels negatively impacts students’ emotional wellbeing. In fact, the four distinguishing statements for Factor Three found in

Table 17 all relate to how academic stress corresponds to high levels of anxiety and negatively impacts school attendance. This is consistent with analysis of the factor's model viewpoint (Figure 4).

Table 17.  
*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 3: Distressed in School*

No.	Statement	1		2		3	
		Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	-2	-0.52	-2	-0.52	4	1.87*
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over grades.	1	0.09	1	0.00	3	1.30*
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over standardized test results (Keystones, PSSAs, SATs).	-1	-0.49	-1	-0.19	3	1.18*
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school.	-2	-0.64	-3	-1.43	2	0.68*
14	I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with course work and extracurricular activities.	2	0.91	-3	-1.30	-1	-0.30
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	-1	-0.15	1	0.33	-2	-0.83
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is preparing me to have a successful life.	-1	-0.08	-1	-0.26	-3	-1.13

P < 0.05; Asterisk (\*) Indicates significance at P < 0.01  
Both the Factor Q Sort Value (Q-SV) and the Z-Score (Z-SCR) are shown

This viewpoint strongly confirms the idea that school is a very stressful place (statement 36) and this stress has caused high anxiety levels resulting in crying outbursts over grades (statement 26) and standardized tests (statement 30). In general, these students affirm that teachers and school personnel show they care when they actively listen to students' concerns and opinions (statement 35), talk to students when they notice

dropping grades or changes in behavior (statement 34), and when they offer support to help students improve (statement 37).

This viewpoint asserts that students do not feel they are recognized and treated as individuals in the school environment (statement 17), or that the school values their happiness (statement 6). These students also believe the education they are receiving is not preparing them to be successful in life (statement 3). Not surprisingly, this viewpoint holds that the school should actively care for students' emotional levels by disagreeing with statements the school is not responsible (statement 40), does not have the capacity (statement 7), or does not serve the purpose (statement 11) of caring for students' emotional wellbeing. The viewpoint does not consider the added stress of graduation exams as positive motivation toward higher achievement levels (statement 25), but also does also not agree that teachers demonstrate caring by maintaining low expectations of students (statement 13).

Student profile information used for the construction of Factor 3 are presented in Table 18.

*Table 18. Student Profile Information for Factor 3: Distressed in School*

Student	Gender	GPA	Activities	SHS
JD112664	Male	3.11	5	4.5
F21002	Female	2.42	5	4.5
SA11163	Male	3.45	6	4.3
Average		2.99	5.3	4.4

Three students' viewpoints were extracted for the creation of Factor Three, which is the same as Factor Two, which means that, while 23% of students look for challenges to realize their potential and personal growth, an equal amount of students view school as a place of stress and potential failure. Represented by both males and females, students

in Factor Three held the lowest average GPA and SHS levels of all the factors.

Surprisingly, however, students in Factor Three held the second highest average level of activity participation, having an average of 2 more school sponsored activities, when compared to students in Factor Two. A summary of the transcriptions used to craft the *Distressed in School* viewpoint is detailed below.

Student JD112664 offered the opinion that school is a stressful environment and recognized that increased levels of stress negatively impacts performance: “School is really stressful... It’s a stressful place overall. I think there should be a balance between emotional wellbeing and happiness and education because both of them go hand in hand. If you’re emotional in a negative way you won’t be able to focus or perform the way you could.”

He believed that caring for students’ emotional wellbeing should be “part of their [teachers’] job” because “this is like a student’s second home- they spend almost all their time here. Where else are they supposed to go?” He added the importance of a person’s happiness and related it to how positive emotions influences behavior: “I feel (the school) should be worried about our happiness cause we need happiness in life, in our future. I like accounting but if I was upset all the time I probably wouldn’t like it.”

The student feels the school does not value students’ opinions or their emotional levels as much as their academic success, but recognized that this value may be inherent in the educational system and not isolated to his school. Feeling more like a statistic than an individual, he said, “I don’t think they really listen to the kids as much... and they don’t really listen to what the students say. I feel like they focus more on how we’re doing –grade-wise and academically. The bosses want the best of the school to be

represented. They want to be known for good test scores, which every school does, but I feel (our school) puts too much emphasis on it.” He also expressed anxiety that the school is not preparing him to be successful by offering real world skills he will need as an adult, stating “I really don’t think the school does well with the education to be successful in life cause so far I’ve learned all this crazy stuff about triangles and Pythagorean identities but I don’t really know how to pay mortgages or how to run a house and pay taxes.”

The student offered ideas for improving the environment by allowing more team projects and team building exercises that promote the values of socialization, cooperation, and communication, increased counseling components, including additional personnel to allow more individual attention for personal issues and concerns, information on how to manage and alleviate stress, and recognizing individual success instead of focusing attention on sports teams or special groups.

Student SA11163 strongly agrees that the school is stressful, which negatively affects his attendance. He placed most of this stress on standardized exams, such as those used for graduation (i.e., PA Keystones) and college-entrance (i.e., SATs, ACTs). He expressed an increase in anxiety over the curriculum and wonders if what he is learning will be applicable when he graduates. This dissonance and mistrust of the use of his time “stresses me out; it confuses me, and it makes me angry.” He believes the school should care about students and could take more proactive steps, like teaching coping skills and skills needed to be successful “in daily life”, to demonstrate this value. He states, “They should care and they should help you have a positive feeling about school- like, you would want to come... if they offered classes that would help you in your daily life today



and not what's going to be happening in 20 years when you're out of school... for example, they don't teach you how to apply for college – you do that on your own- they don't teach you how to write checks, how to balance your checkbook- that's all optional classes. I think they should include that in the main classes somewhere because not many kids know how to write a check or balance a checkbook.” He also felt the school could demonstrate a higher level of caring by providing more academic support (i.e., individual tutoring sessions) for those who need it.

Contributing to the viewpoint that caring is not demonstrated by making coursework or evaluations easy to accomplish, the student expressed higher feelings of self-worth when being pushed to accomplish challenging activities. For example, when speaking about his experiences in sports, he stated, “Our coach is great – he's like any other coach- he'll force you; he'll tell you; he'll push you; but he cares. Our coaches- I do believe care about you. You believe they care about your stress level- they'll push you to your limit and when they see that, they'll back off.”

Student F21002 clearly does not believe the school system, in general, cares about her emotional levels, and coursework is not preparing her to be successful in life. She contributes to the viewpoint that the school does not consider stressors in students' lives from outside sources and is not treated as an individual: “Not every student's the same – all through school we get compared to the higher ups and valedictorians, class cabinet, and that stuff, but I'm not them! Do not compare me to them ... I hate being compared to other people and I feel we just shouldn't have that - we're not the same people. We're different.”

She does not agree that stress helps to improve performance, and has recently cried from the stress of getting good grades, and over results from standardized tests. She held strong opinions that the school is a very stressful place- “It is ridiculously stressful.” She feels the school is more concerned about how students perform on tests rather than on what they are actually learning, stating, “I feel like I’m on a gameshow.” However, she participates in the color guard and notices a difference in the stress generated from learning her routines when compared to academic stress: “It’s stressful cause not all of us have the time to practice; we all have jobs – other priorities – a lot of homework. So when we’re outside practicing with our squad- that’s rehearsal- and whenever we’re at home- that’s practice- we need extra practice instead of rehearsal. So it’s really stressful but at the same time it’s really fun - like my stress reliever. Whenever I have a ton of homework and I’m stressed out I just go outside and practice... it’s a stress reliever.”

She indicated the importance of teachers expressing a caring attitude and making accommodations for students with emotional needs- “I have teachers this year who are amazing – they’re always there for you and if you feel stressed it’s ok to come to them – they want you to come to them and they make that very clear. I went to a teacher last year because of some stuff I was going through and she helped me through all of it but some of my other teachers were like, ‘It doesn’t matter.’” Without indicting herself, she confessed to being aware of students who self-harm due to the effects of stress. “I know a lot of girls who just stopped eating because of how stressed they are. I’ve seen a lot of students, like, self-harming from stress. I was in a psych hospital last year from how stressed I was from school – I didn’t even come back cause I knew I wouldn’t have been able to handle it. Yeah, it was that bad.”

She expressed real concerns over student depression and the teachers' inability to recognize or understand its impact on behavior. "They (students suffering from depression) just don't have any motivation and if you say that to a teacher they're just gonna say you're lazy. That's not helping at all so it feels like they don't really care about our happiness; they just care that we ace our test. We're just the next group passing along."

She feels the teachers need to be better educated regarding adolescent depression and anxiety. She also felt that students should be taught how to be more aware of their personal levels of anxiety and how to manage their emotions: "It'd be really cool if we learned about warning signs cause what my therapist does is whenever I'm gonna have an anxiety or panic attack, she helps me recognize my warnings. If I'm breathing heavy or my heart's racing- what I'm doing... if I'm shaking and that helps me, like, calm myself down. I've noticed with people with test anxiety they'll shake and tap their pencils while taking their test and they don't calm down and I'd think it would be better if they knew how to calm down, how to recognize they were being anxious."

She admitted that the stress has impacted her emotions, outlook, and school attendance. "I've had times where I've faked being sick just so I wouldn't have to come to school cause I was that stressed... it was so ridiculously stressful, it got to the point where I would go home and cry every day." She questions the logic of only focusing on a person in single dimensions, such as valuing a person's academic ability over their social and emotional needs: "I don't think our happiness is the school's main priority. I understand that education and all that comes first – but how can we be educated if we can't get up in the morning?"

### **Similarities Between Factors**

Quantum analysis has identified the unique principles of each student's viewpoint. Using factor arrays, these principles were extracted to form model viewpoints that clearly define a perspective. However, the researcher also wanted to identify beliefs that exist among all three model viewpoints. In other words, the researcher wanted to know which beliefs unify these differing perspectives. This information will help teachers and administrators to not only improve the school environment for targeted populations, but, also serve to improve the learning environment for all students.

Table 9 showed a moderately low correlation between factors 1 and 2, and a moderately high correlation between factors 1 and 3. The data also indicated a moderately low relationship exists between factors 2 and 3. The data presented below summarize the opinions that compose these correlations.

### **Q sort Statements with Corresponding Ranks**

Table 19 compares how a particular statement ranks in each of the factors. This shows which issues were found to be the most and least important in a particular factor. Z scores were used to facilitate comparisons between statements. For example, statement 1 ranks high (3) in Factor 1, but ranks low (32) in Factor 2, and (25) in Factor 3.

Table 19.  
*Rank Statement Totals with Each Factor*

No.	Statement	Factors					
		1		2		3	
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones puts too much emotional stress on students and teachers.	1.28	3	-0.68	32	-0.35	25
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring."	-1.08	34	0.97	9	-0.83	31
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is preparing me to have a successful life.	-0.08	22	-0.26	26	-1.13	35
<b>4</b>	<b>In general, I believe students feel respected when a school shows it values students' emotional wellbeing.</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>17</b>
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the standards and prepare students for exams.	-0.88	30	-0.00	21	-0.91	32
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	-0.94	32	-0.23	25	-1.43	37
<b>7</b>	<b>In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing.</b>	<b>-1.72</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>-0.87</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-1.10</b>	<b>34</b>
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students when coursework allows for personal talents to be identified and demonstrated.	1.18	5	-0.00	22	-0.25	23
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.	1.01	8	-0.65	30	-0.47	27
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policy and discipline enforcement.	-0.95	33	0.55	15	-0.83	31
<b>11</b>	<b>I believe our school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.</b>	<b>-1.46</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>-1.65</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>-1.46</b>	<b>38</b>
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for students' emotional wellbeing.	0.89	13	-0.36	27	-0.40	26
<b>13</b>	<b>In general, teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.</b>	<b>-1.56</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>-1.72</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>-1.32</b>	<b>36</b>
14	I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with course work and extracurricular activities.	0.91	12	-1.30	36	-0.30	24
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	-0.15	23	0.33	17	-0.83	31
<b>16</b>	<b>There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning here will not be used in "real life" and high school was just a waste, which is a cause for anxiety.</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>19</b>
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this	-1.20	36	1.23	6	-1.55	39

	school, rather than just a face in the crowd.						
18	<b>In general, I feel that a student’s “happiness” isn’t the school’s priority, but the school should be concerned about the overall mental and emotional state of its students.</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>11</b>
19	In general, teachers and show they care when they try to give students advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future.	0.93	11	1.36	3	0.55	16
20	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school.	0.98	9	-1.13	34	0.64	15
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tests and in activities if I am in a positive mood.	1.53	1	1.30	5	0.68	13
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned lessons and cover the curriculum.	-0.90	31	0.45	16	0.44	18
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowing me time with friends, creating opportunities to make new friends, and providing activities that I enjoy.	-0.39	25	0.74	12	-0.47	28
24	<b>In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond with students in the class.</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.59</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>10</b>
25	<b>Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.</b>	<b>-1.52</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>-1.23</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>-1.57</b>	<b>40</b>
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over grades.	0.09	20	0.00	19	1.30	4
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests.	0.36	24	-2.07	41	0.10	20
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I am valued here.	-1.40	37	-0.07	23	-0.97	33
29	<b>In general, teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school.</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>12</b>
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have cried over standardized test results (Keystones, PSSAs, SATs).	-0.49	26	-0.19	24	1.18	7
31	In general, I believe the school shows it cares about students by offering challenging and career-focused courses.	0.16	19	1.33	4	0.08	21
32	I believe this school cares about students’ test scores but not how much is actually learned.	1.17	7	-0.42	28	0.83	10
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning.	1.50	2	0.65	13	1.22	6
34	In general, teachers show they care when they	0.64	16	1.14	7	1.10	8

	talk to students when they notice their grades dropping or when they seem sad or distracted.						
<b>35</b>	<b>In general, teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students concerns and consider their opinions.</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.62</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>3</b>
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	-0.52	28	-0.52	29	1.87	1
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering additional help or remedial courses to help students graduate.	-0.51	27	1.03	8	1.40	3
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized exams create anxiety that negatively impacts my performance.	0.69	15	-0.68	32	1.27	5
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school.	-0.64	29	-1.43	38	0.68	14
<b>40</b>	<b>I believe our school is not responsible for student's emotional wellbeing or happiness; it is responsible for our education and starting us on the right path for our future.</b>	<b>-1.20</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>-1.36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>-1.60</b>	<b>41</b>

Table 19 exposes 11 opinions that hold moderate to strong correlations. Of those, five statements strongly endorsed a common viewpoint between all three factors; they are:

1. The school should be concerned and involved in developing students' emotional wellness (statements 7, 11, 18, and 40).
2. Students generally associated a caring environment with the ability to form personal, positive, and supportive relationships with adults, such as talking with teachers about personal issues (statements 24 and 29).
3. Students generally associated caring when asked their opinions about decisions that affect their education and the overall school environment (e.g., opinions about curriculum design and delivery) (statement 35).

4. Caring is not demonstrated when teachers show apathy towards their jobs or the students (statement 13).
5. Students do not believe that high levels of stress help them to learn or perform better (statement 25).

Students generally agreed that they feel respected as individuals when the school values their emotional wellbeing (statement 4). However, they are also generally concerned that the curriculum is not providing the knowledge and skills necessary to lead a happy and productive life (statement 16).

### **Using Students' Responses to Answer the Research Questions**

Quantitative and qualitative data presented above provided the information necessary to answer the original research questions. These questions were designed to understand and respond to the emotional needs of adolescents when prompted to demonstrate mastery of knowledge or skills. The first question considers whether students feel the school values their emotional wellbeing as much as their academic success. This question was developed to gain a sense of students' opinions as to whether they believed their emotional needs were not only addressed by the school system, but, also whether they believed school personnel cared about their emotional wellbeing at all. In a school survey that was used to create the concourse of statements used to structure Q statements, 52% of students disagreed with the statement, *It is clear that this school cares for my happiness as much as it does about my academic achievement*, while 21% of students agreed with the statement.

Of the 40 Q statements, nine were determined, by the researcher, to contribute in answering the first research question. The two statements that most directly address the



question are statement 20, *I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing*, and 27, *I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests*.

Students contributing to the Factor One perspective, the *Individualists*, differentiated their esteem needs with their evaluation of the school system by differing their responses to similar questioning. These students rejected the feeling that there was little value for them at school other than to pass their classes and do well on standardized exams; however, they endorsed the belief that the school valued academic achievement more than the students' emotional wellbeing. Respondents of the Factor Two perspective, *Flowers*, showed more consistency by strongly disagreeing with both statements. Students, whose opinions contributed to the Factor Three viewpoint, *Distressed in School*, also demonstrated consistency, however, by agreeing with both statements.

The *Individualists* feel the school undervalues emotional wellbeing. These students reject statements that the school attempts to value their emotional wellbeing by focusing on aspects of a positive learning environment (statements 2, 6, 15, and 28). This viewpoint significantly ranked the statement, *I believe this school cares about students' test scores but not how much is actually learned*, as one that held the strongest level of agreement, and, the statement, *I believe this school values my happiness level*, as one that held the strongest level of disagreement (see Table 9). Students strongly accentuated their demands to be viewed as individuals by designating the statement, *I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with course work*

*and extracurricular activities*, as one of its most significant distinguishing statements (see Table 14).

Conversely, respondents of the Factor Two viewpoint, the *Flowers*, support the belief that the school does value their emotional wellbeing as much as their academic success. This viewpoint significantly ranked the statement, *I would define our school environment as “kind and caring”*, as one that held the strongest level of agreement, and also ranked as one of its most distinguishing statements. Statement 27, *I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests*, posted highly on the disagreement scale, as did statement 32, *I believe this school cares about students’ test scores but not how much is actually learned*. Although the viewpoint’s conclusion generally affirmed statements 2 and 15, which define the school as kind, caring, and emotionally supportive, it also held generally neutral opinions with statements 6 and 28, which describes the school as valuing the emotional wellness of students.

Respondents of the Factor Three perspective, *Distressed in School*, do not believe the school values their emotional wellbeing as much as their academic success, which is consistent with their ranking of supporting statements. The viewpoint’s result confirms beliefs that the school cares about students’ results on test scores and grades more than their emotional wellbeing (statement 32). These students also significantly disagreed with a feeling of being valued by the school (statements 6 and 28). The viewpoint’s results endorse that school is as a very stressful place (statement 36) and suggest this stress negatively impacts school attendance (statement 39). The *Distressed in School* viewpoint result does not endorse statements that express an environment that is “kind

and caring” (statement 2), being emotionally supportive (statement 15), nor, that the school considers stressors from outside sources (statement 14).

## **Research Question 2**

The second question provided an avenue for students to express their opinions on how school personnel and classroom procedures can demonstrate a caring attitude toward their emotional wellbeing. Thirteen statements directly relate to this question and the researcher chose an additional 4 statements that support these opinions.

The *Individualists* felt that caring is demonstrated most strongly when coursework allows for personal talents to be showcased and when teachers bond with students in the class, actively listen to students’ concerns and consider their opinions, and attempt to make learning fun and interesting (statements 8, 9, 24, and 35). They also positively endorsed a perceived caring attitude when teachers recognize them as individuals instead of simply names in a gradebook. Examples included challenging students at their highest ability levels, talking to them about drops in grades, or when they notice changes to the student’s demeanor, giving advice about problems or attempts to alleviate concerns, and simply asking students about their lives outside of school (statements 19, 29, 34). The *Individualists* denied the belief that caring is demonstrated by teaching to standards or preparing students for standardized exams or offering remediation (statements 5 and 22). They also did not connect consistency of policy and discipline enforcement as a sign of caring (statement 10). This perspective indicates students do not feel personally or emotionally valued by the current policies of the school (statements 6, 15, and 28). Of all the statements, the one most strongly disagreed with was the notion that caring is

demonstrated when teachers hold low expectations of students, and do not expect too much from them (statement 13).

The *Flowers* hold strong beliefs that caring is demonstrated when teachers actively listen to students' opinions when considering school improvement strategies (statement 35). They also hold strong beliefs that teachers exhibit caring when they treat students as competent individuals who are capable at performing at high levels, but also provide additional instruction or remediation when needed (statements 31 and 37). Likewise, *Flowers* positively endorse statements that reflect a caring attitude from teachers when they give students advice about problems, alleviate concerns about the future, and attempt to provide a positive learning environment (statements 19 and 24). This perspective also relates caring with a well-planned and organized lesson in an environment where rules are consistent and fairly enforced (statements 5, 10, 22). It also endorses a perceived caring attitude when teachers intentionally bond with their students and interject to help when they notice negative changes to the student's grade or behavior (statements 24, 29, 34). The students rejected the need to make learning fun, or that caring is demonstrated when personal talents are considered in the designing of instructional activities (statements 8 and 9). They also identified teacher apathy (statement 13) as detrimental to their achievement.

Students extracted for the Factor Three perspective, *Distressed in School*, strongly endorse activities and behaviors from teachers that show caring toward a student's emotional needs. These students do not feel valued or emotionally supported in school, nor do they feel the environment contributes to their happiness by creating opportunities to generate supportive social groups. In general, this perspective believes that caring is

demonstrated when teachers and administrators actively listen to students' opinions, make an effort to form bonds that allow for a relationship to exist between the teacher and student, talk to them when they suspect personal problems, and extend themselves in a helpful way (statements 19, 24, 29, 34, 35, and 37). The perspective also endorses a structured system of delivering the curriculum (statement 22).

*Distressed in School* students are less inclined to support an environment that focuses standards over the emotional wellbeing of the student, or that caring is demonstrated with a consistent discipline policy (statements 5 and 10). Additionally, this perspective does not consider offering challenging or career-focused courses as a sign of caring (statement 31). These students feel strongly that caring is not equated with teachers who hold low expectations of students (statement 13).

### **Research Question 3**

The third research question asked students to consider how stressors to master content and/ or perform at high levels affect their emotional wellbeing. Seven Q statements were identified as directly addressing this question, with an additional 2 providing support.

Results from the initial survey of students indicated that expectations to perform on high stakes tests created emotional stress in students, which not only had a perceived negative impact on their performance, but, possibly, on their overall mental health as well. When asked to respond to the statement, *Stress to perform well on standardized assessments and in activities impacts my emotions in the following way*, only 15% believed the stress helped to improve their performance, while an additional 6% suggested that this stress actually resulted in enjoyment. However, 33% believed the

stress had a negative effect on their performance, with an additional 23% stating that the stress caused “high levels of anxiety and/or depression.”

On a positive note, however, the survey reported 21% of students expressed an ability to use stress as a performance enhancer, which closely marks the percentage of students extracted to construct Factor Two, the *Flowers*. *Flowers* believe they learn and perform better when in a positive mood and that certain stressors can actually improve performance levels (statement 21). These students accept the stress associated with performance and argue against the belief that these exams put too much emotional stress on students or teachers (statement 1). *Flowers* do not endorse that stress related to performance creates anxiety, nor do they believe that school is a stressful place (statements 38 and 36). On the contrary, these students feel emotionally supported in school (statement 15).

On the other end of the spectrum, the 23% of surveyed students who argue that stress to perform causes anxiety and depression closely matches the number of students identified as the *Distressed in School* of Factor 3. This viewpoint’s results strongly deny that stress to perform helps them to their best (statement 25). These students also find the school environment to be highly stressful (statement 36), and explain that this stress has negatively impacted their academic performance (statement 38) and school attendance (statement 39). This stress has resulted in negative emotions and caused them to cry over grades and test scores (statements 26 and 30). One student openly acknowledged the need for outside therapy to manage her anxiety and depression.

The *Individualists* who comprised the Factor One viewpoint strongly believe that, although they learn and perform better when they are in a positive mood, the pressure to

pass graduation exams puts too much negative stress on them and their teachers (statements 1 and 21). These students feel the stress to get good grades creates anxiety that negatively impacts their performance; however, they do not feel the school environment is overly stressful (statements 36 and 38). These students have strong opinions against the notion that the pressure to pass graduation exams helps students to focus and do their best (statement 25).

#### **Research Question 4**

The fourth, and final, research question attempted to determine students' opinions as to whether or not they feel it is the school's responsibility, or obligation, to offer courses, programs, and/or activities that enhance students' self-awareness or emotional wellbeing. Over half, 55%, of students participating in the initial survey agreed with the statement, *I feel the school has a responsibility to support students' emotional wellbeing*, while 22% disagreed.

Quantum analysis showed a general agreement across all factors that, while students do not believe it is necessarily the school's *responsibility* to care for students' emotional levels (statement 12), they do not believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to provide course or programs that address these issues (statement 7). All three factors' outcomes expressed consensus by strongly opposing the belief that the school is not responsible for developing students' social and/or emotional skills, but need only target cognitive abilities (statement 40). Additionally, all three factors generally demonstrate agreement by moderately endorsing the belief that although the school cannot respond to issues involving students' individual happiness, it should be concerned with the overall mental and emotional states of students (statement 18). All factors' outcomes endorse

this viewpoint even more strongly by expressing an implicit opinion of negligence if the school does not intervene when noticing that a student is demonstrating signs of a mental health issue (statement 11).

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the results of a quantum analysis that was completed following the sorting of 40 statements by 14 high school seniors. Three distinct factors were extracted, each consisting of a definite viewpoint. The three factors represented the *Individualist* viewpoint, the *Flowers'* viewpoint, and the *Distressed in School* viewpoint. Participants' feedback was analyzed and synthesized to construct the viewpoints that exist as to how students feel the educational system supports their emotional well-being. Chapter five will provide a complete discussion of these findings, and discuss the implications for practice and policy.



## Chapter 5

### Discussion

#### Summary of Findings

Three distinct factors were extracted, each consisting of a definite viewpoint. The Factor One viewpoint's results, labeled *Individualists*, established a feeling that the school undervalues students' emotional wellbeing when it fails to appreciate the individuality of each student. Students involved in the Factor Two viewpoint, labeled *Flowers*, believed that their school does value their emotional wellbeing as much as their academic success. This viewpoint's findings reveal students enjoy challenging activities and appreciate the support that exists when they experience difficulty mastering the objective. Students' opinions, used to construct the Factor Three perspective, labeled *Distressed in School*, affirmed that they are severely impacted by the stress to perform at high levels. This stress has compounded with other stressors to create levels of anxiety and depression, which has negatively impacted their academic performance, attendance, and overall emotional wellbeing.

Students' viewpoints were used to answer the following research questions:

1. Do students feel the school values their emotional wellbeing as much as their academic success?
2. What statements, actions, or behaviors do school personnel (teachers, counselors, administrators) engage in that students find supportive or destructive to their emotional wellbeing?
3. How does the stress to demonstrate mastery of knowledge or ability affect students' emotional levels?

4. Do students feel it is the school's responsibility to care for their emotional wellbeing?

Q method, a mixed method approach to examining subjectivity and perspectives, was used to address the aforementioned research questions. Initially, a school climate survey was administered to volunteers from each class of the student body. Juniors and seniors were asked to consider additional constructed response questions reflective of the study's research questions. Results were used to develop a concourse. Fourteen members of the senior class volunteered to participate in the Q sort study. These students were directed to subjectively rank-order 40 statements using a forced distribution format. The variation in the ordering of the statements was subjected to statistical analysis to reveal dominant belief patterns. The facilitator engaged students with additional questions to gain deeper insights. Quantum analysis extracted three viewpoints using 13 of the 14 participants. These results are considered comprehensive, and provide the researcher the information needed to recommend improvements to the teaching and learning environment.

### **Using Students' Responses to Answer the Research Questions**

The research questions were designed to understand and respond to the emotional needs of adolescents when prompted to demonstrate mastery of knowledge or skills. The first question considered whether students felt the school values their emotional wellbeing as much as their academic success. The *Individualists* and *Distressed in School* endorsed the belief that academic achievement was valued more than students' emotional wellbeing; however, *Distressed in School* also felt there is little value for them in school, whereas, the *Individualists* found connections through activities that support their emotional wellbeing. The *Flowers*, on the other hand, believed the school does

value their emotional wellbeing, and characterized the school environment as “kind and caring.”

The second question considered how students related a caring attitude toward their emotional wellbeing. The *Individualists* felt that caring is demonstrated most strongly when coursework allowed for personal talents to be showcased, and when teachers bonded with students in the class, actively listened to students’ concerns and considered their opinions, and attempted to make learning fun and interesting. The *Flowers* held strong beliefs that caring was demonstrated when teachers actively listened to students’ opinions, and when teachers treated students as competent individuals who are capable at performing at high levels. *Distressed in School* strongly endorsed activities and behaviors from teachers that showed caring toward a student’s emotional needs. In general, this perspective maintained that caring is demonstrated when teachers and administrators actively listened to students’ opinions, made an effort to form bonds that allow for a relationship to exist between the teacher and student, talked to them when they suspected personal problems, and extended themselves in a helpful way. Students from all factors felt strongly that caring was not equated with teachers who are apathetic towards their jobs or students.

The third research question asked students to consider how stressors to master content and/ or perform at high levels affected their emotional wellbeing. The *Individualists* strongly believed that, although they learn and perform better when they are in a positive mood, the pressure to pass graduation exams put too much negative stress on them. They asserted that this stress has a negative impact on their performance. *Flowers* believed they learned and performed better when in a positive mood, and that

certain stressors can actually improve performance levels. These students accepted the stress associated with performance. *Distressed in School* strongly denied that stress to perform helps them to do their best. These students found the school environment to be highly stressful, and explained that this stress has negatively impacted their academic performance and school attendance.

The fourth research question attempted to determine students' opinions as to whether or not they felt it is the school's responsibility, or obligation, to offer courses, programs, and/or activities that enhance students' self-awareness or emotional wellbeing. Quantum analysis showed a general agreement across all factors that, while students did not believe it was necessarily the school's *responsibility* or *legitimate purpose* to care for students' emotional levels, they did not believe it was unrealistic to expect the school to provide activities or programs that address these issues. All three factors' outcomes also expressed consensus by strongly opposing the belief that the school is not responsible for developing students' social and/or emotional skills, but need only target cognitive abilities. Additionally, all three factors generally demonstrated agreement by moderately endorsing the belief that, although the school cannot respond to issues involving students' individual happiness, it should be concerned with the overall mental and emotional states of students. All factors' outcomes endorsed this viewpoint even more strongly by expressing an implicit opinion of negligence if the school does not intervene when noticing that a student is demonstrating signs of a mental health issue.

### **Implications**

Because children are mandated to receive a free and appropriate education, schools have access to young people at a time in their lives when the concepts of

emotional and self-awareness issues are explored, and antisocial behaviors either manifested or are prevented. Schools provide the social environment that allows students to learn about themselves and how to manage their emotions during a time in human development when these issues arise. Although quantum analysis extracted three factors of distinct viewpoints, five opinions transcended the differences between these factors.

The overwhelming, common opinion asserts that the school should be concerned and involved in developing students' self-awareness and emotional wellbeing, which reinforces Herbert's (2005) conclusion that promoting emotional well-being in schools supports adolescent developmental theory. While students collectively agree that improving students' emotional levels may be outside of the school's primary purpose, the constantly, rapidly changing social culture may require a more immediate response to the mission of America's schools. Now more than ever, it appears schools must address these issues as part of a larger moral obligation to their students and communities.

### **Responding to the Viewpoints**

**Caring for students' emotions.** Seligman (2011b) recommended that schools move from a cognitive, skill-based structure to one that also values students' emotional wellbeing. Calling this a movement towards *Positive Education*, Seligman asserts that curricular activities should generate more positive emotion, offer a sense of purpose, and afford opportunities to build better relationships, and achieve meaningful accomplishments. He challenges school leaders to instill a sense of meaning into students' lives through cultivating relationships, and designing positive, engaging learning activities, such as generating gratitude letters, using active-constructive response methods, setting individualized goals, and transforming jobs into callings.

*Individualists* and *Distressed in School* clearly expressed concerns that they are not recognized as individuals, which has a negative impact on their emotional connectedness with school. Students in these factors did not believe their school valued their emotional wellbeing. These findings support results found in Durlak et al. (2011) that “only 29% felt their school provided a caring, encouraging environment” (p. 405). The reason it is important for schools to respond to this data is that positive emotions and school connectedness levels increase when students believe the school environment has been designed to care for their emotional levels (Resnick et al., 1997; Eccles, 1997; Steinberg, 1996; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002).

An interesting finding, however, was that *Flowers* found ways to connect their experiences with enjoyment through self-awareness. *Flowers* not only believed their school valued their emotional wellbeing, but provided specific conditions and behaviors that stimulated this outcome. These conditions revealed a remarkable resemblance to the conditions needed to achieve the optimal experiences reported in Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) concept of Flow. Detailed in Chapter 2, environmental conditions needed for Flow included an engaging activity that the participant found intensely interesting and challenging, but at levels where the participant had the ability to succeed. Characteristics of the activity included clear rules and objectives, perceived freedom and control, and the ability to concentrate. Results were immediate and produced feedback needed to adjust to changing conditions. Participants described the outcomes of such events as optimal experiences, reporting increases in positive emotions, and personal growth.

**Creating a habitat for flow.** Although this concept was examined most closely with the *Flowers*, the *Individualists* and *Distressed in School* also expressed opinions that

endorse similar characteristics in an ideal learning environment. *Distressed in School* clearly called for a structure that promoted positive emotions. Believing they learn and perform better when in a positive mood, these students expressed a need for a structure that supported their emotional wellbeing. According to Finn (1993), Newmann (1992), and Marks (2000), changes to a more positive environment would increase school connectedness and improve students' social and cognitive development.

*Distressed in School* admitted their inability to manage stress reduced performance levels. Research indicates that school systems' failure to respond to these deficiencies may result in higher rates of student depression, which could lead to high rates of risky behavior and lower graduation rates (Resnick et al., 1997; Bond et al., 2004; Barclay & Doll, 2001; Doll & Hess, 2001; Marcus & Sanders-Reio, 2001; Catalano et al., 1996). This is consistent with O'Connell's, Boat's, and Warner's (2009) findings that, when learning environments disregard emotional needs, "students report high levels of stress, negative perceptions of their school environments, and problems in the social, emotional, and behavioral areas" (p. 62).

In an effort to respond to the concerns and demands of the findings, the researcher recommends an educational design structure based on the concepts of Flow. Smith (2005) cited Boyer and Lamoreau (1997) to suggest that the conditions to facilitate Flow are not common in American classrooms. Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi (2005) found most instructional activities coincide with adolescent theory that supports engaging student in collaborative environments that are intrinsically motivating, and allow for choice, autonomy, and high achievement.

Improving school connectedness, students' motivation, and emotional levels will require a transformation in the educational structure. This is accomplished, first, by changing the culture. Since the Flow experience occurs when individual skills match the challenge levels of the activity, the culture must include components of personalized learning. Personalized learning refers to efforts on the part of the school system to suit its instructional and social programs to meet the individual talents, strengths, interests, and needs of its learners (Keefe, 2007). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) contended that when educational cultures design activities using these strategies, teachers and students "are able to experience Flow with unusual frequency and intensity" (p. 81). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) offered a simplistic framework for the model:

- (a) Set an overall goal, and as many subgoals as are realistically feasible;
- (b) Find ways of measuring progress in terms of the goals chosen;
- (c) Keep concentrating on what one is doing, and keep making finer and finer distinctions in the challenges involved in the activity;
- (d) Develop the skills necessary to interact with the opportunities available;
- (e) Keep raising the stakes if the activity becomes boring (p. 97).

Smith (2005), Csikszentmihalyi (1997), Hektner and Csikszentmihalyi (1996), and Whalen (1997, 1998) recognized that when programs are developmentally



appropriate, students are able to enjoy optimal experiences in many different types of settings, and, that effective learning will occur when students are in this highly positive emotional state. This outcome is important when considering the negative effects of stress reported by students. Although *Flowers* indicated certain stressors actually motivated them to perform better, they did not correlate this to testing. The *Individualists* and *Distressed in School* also endorsed the importance of a positive school climate to alleviate the negative effects of stress. *Distressed in School* reported that stress had resulted in increased levels of anxiety and depression.

These results correlated with research on stress. Jensen (2005) contended that occasional or moderate stress can enhance learning and improve resiliency. However, “very high levels of stress over time- typically called *distress*- are damaging and can impair cognition” (p. 74). Citing numerous studies, Jensen (2005) reported that distress is related to the loss of brain cells (Sapolsky, 1992), and reduces the production of new brain cells (Gould, McEwen, Tanapat, Galea, & Fuchs, 1997). Jayson (2014) reported that high school students expressed irritability and anger (40%), or anxiousness (36%) as consequences of stress. Relating to the opinions of *Distressed in School*, these findings estimate that about one-third of the students said stress produced feelings of depression, sadness, or being overwhelmed.

It seems unrealistic for schools to attempt to eliminate stress. Instead, perhaps, a more realistic goal would be for schools to repurpose the effects of stress. In the school climate survey, from which the Q set was developed, 33% of students believed stress has a negative impact on their performance, with an additional 23% stating that stress has caused *high levels of anxiety and/or depression*. It is recommended that schools establish

the conditions of Flow to intentionally manufacture stress in a controlled, supportive environment so that students learn to manage stress while learning to achieve. It is through this process that stress can generate enjoyment rather than anxiety. One way to accomplish this is by implementing authentic outcome activities, such as those found in Project- and Problem-Based-Learning (PBL).

PBL stimulates creativity, higher order cognitive skills, and “promotes meaningful learning from the projects that connect the students’ new learning to their past performances” (Moylan, 2008, p. 288). PBL applies complex, challenging problems, or projects, that involve students in the decision-making strategies used to develop solutions. In other words, as compared to traditional methodologies that compel students to memorize information and answer questions solely to the fulfillment of academic ends, PBL uses problems that occur in reality, or *real-world problems*, to generate questions and actions from students. Because the problems are genuine, students feel a sincere motivation to produce a result.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) contended that authentic projects increase levels of intrinsic motivation by connecting effort with goals. “There is a mutual relationship between goals and the effort they require. Goals justify the effort they demand at the outset, but later it is the effort that justifies the goal” (p. 224). A successful completion of a goal “creates order in consciousness, and strengthens the structure of the self” (p. 57). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) explained that, during this process, there is a temporary loss of self-consciousness, which is not to be confused with the loss of self or the loss of consciousness,

only a loss of consciousness of the self. What slips below the threshold of awareness is the concept of self, the information we use to represent to ourselves who we are. And being able to forget temporarily who we are seems to be very enjoyable. When not preoccupied with our selves, we actually have a chance to expand the concept of who we are. Loss of self-consciousness can lead to transcendence, to a feeling that the boundaries of our being have been pushed forward. (p. 64)

Combined with supplemental instruction and programs designed to improve students' emotional levels, it is predicted that students can be taught to replace the negative feelings of anxiety and depression with the liberating emotions of enjoyment and enthusiasm while experiencing this expansion of self.

### **Programming for Students' Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Learning**

The second major implication from the study was that the school implement a comprehensive, district-wide, Cognitive Social and Emotional Learning (CSEL) Program. Harris (2008) maintained that if "teachers are to support young people's development then they will need to work within a climate in which love of students it is not only tolerated but also embraced as essential for learning" (p. 373). Silins and Murrery-Harvey (1998) also recognized the growing responsibility of schools to provide and encourage a range of experiences that enable the psychological, emotional, social, and physical development of students. Research suggests that schools are beginning to accept the expansion of their role from the distribution of knowledge to include aspects of

social and emotional learning (Ainley, 1995; Jarvenoja & Jarvela, 2005; Patrikakou, 2004). Fullarton (2002) described this as being a shift from a focus on what is learned, to a focus on what it takes to develop the learner.

Devaney, O'Brien, Tavegia, and Resnik (2005) reported that well established social and emotional learning programs provide the avenues for acquiring the skills to identify and regulate emotions, develop compassion and empathy for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and respond to challenges. The belief is that these components provide students with the mechanisms and skills necessary to maintain healthy levels of positive emotions and academic performance, which results in fewer behavioral problems, less emotional stress, and improved academic achievement (Durlak et al, 2011; Greenberg et al., 2003). Reyes et al. (2012) suggested the new CSEL models have a significant and positive impact on students' overall well-being, behavior, and academic performance.

Although designs for SEL programs vary, the National Association of School Boards of Education (2013) suggested that the most successful SEL programs:

1. Continue across multiple grades;
2. Reinforce lessons across a number of school settings;
3. Reach out to parents and other caregivers;
4. Are integrated into the regular academic curriculum;
5. Help all school staff learn and practice the very same emotional and interpersonal skills they are supposed to help students develop; and

6. Adhere to a well-designed and realistic implementation plan, including everything from an initial needs' assessment to efforts in choosing appropriate SEL goals and programs (p. 5).

### **Training and Reinforcing Positive Teacher Behaviors**

Students from all factors identified relationships with teachers as important, and appreciate when teachers provide opportunities to form personal, positive, and supportive relationships. This endorses multiple findings that suggest students desire positive relationships with teachers, and find individual attention from teachers to be important (Education Evolution, 2005; Osborne & Ireland, 2000; Saul, 2005; Reyes et al., 2012). Supportive environments would not only decrease levels of anxiety and depression in students, but also increase positive behaviors, engagement in learning activities, and motivation to learn (Meyer & Turner, 2006). Related research suggests that students who have high quality relationships with teachers also have better social adjustment and higher academic competence (Mashburn et al., 2008, Raver, Garner, & Smith-Donald, 2007; Pianta, 2003). Conversely, multiple research studies suggest when teachers and students have negative relationships, students are less likely to be engaged in school, but more likely to exhibit low academic achievement (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta, & Howes, 2002; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD) Early Child Care Research Network, 2003b; Raver, et al., 2008).

Seligman (2011b) recognized the changes needed to transform schools include training educational staff on the principles and exercises of *Positive Education*. Seligman asserts that once teachers learn to use these techniques in their own lives, they will be

more inclined to include these techniques in their classrooms. He recommends these concepts be revisited often, through ongoing assessments and professional development, including workshops, speaker series, book reviews, peer observations, etc.

Bruya and Olwell (2008) acknowledged the dissonance between current practices and those that incorporate the concepts of Flow in schools. Most notably, the role of the teacher would change from the deliverer of content to one that focuses on providing instructional activities based on the skill levels of students, offering immediate and accurate feedback, and inspiring students to seek Flow experiences in daily pursuits. For these concepts to become standard educational practice, teachers and support staff must be trained in new strategies that reflect learning methods of contemporary students. Training should particularly include specific behaviors students find emotionally supportive.

Teachers, and those involved in teacher training programs, should be updated with innovations from brain research that explain how emotional levels impact motivation, learning, and performance. Jensen (2005) suggested that brain-based research methods should be used “in every part of the curriculum” and reminds educators that revisions to these methods will be necessary as information continues to be revised (p. 149). Based on his research, Jensen (2005) noted the most effective instructional activities include engaging the emotional mind using framing techniques, acquisition strategies, elaboration activities, and memory-strengthening exercises.

### **Implementing Engagement Strategies to Empower Students**

Another collective opinion held by students is that caring is demonstrated when they are provided the opportunity to express their opinions about decisions that affect the

overall school environment. Puolakka, Haapasalo-Pesu, and Astedt-Kurki (2013) found that, when given the goal to create a school conducive to mental health, students wanted the opportunities to influence changes, particularly when problems in the school environment have been recognized and possible solutions were being considered.

McLaughlin and Clark (2010) suggested engaging students in the decisions promotes aspects of positive adolescent development. Roberts and Kay (1997) found that levels of comfort, confidence, and student success improved by including students' viewpoints in decisions that affected their education. Groves and Welsh (2010) suggested that schools enrich learning environments by providing students "with a voice in an effort to bring to light what it is they want, need, like and dislike about the learning and school experiences they are involved in now, and will be in the future" (p. 87).

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) agreed that empowering students is important because learning activities that have been created by others and are motivated through external rewards (e.g., grades) will not produce optimal experiences. Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi (2005) cited findings of Anderman et al. (1999) that claimed school environments that empower students with relevant and meaningful tasks, engage them with self-directed learning methods, and reduce emphasis on external rewards, such as grades and competition, have been shown to enhance students' intrinsic motivation and improve task completion levels.

Jensen (2005) affirmed that establishing a positive learning environment, which is characterized with low stress and high challenge, is critical for improving intrinsic motivational levels. Advocating for Flow experiences, Jensen suggests:

- (a) Make sure students have either a process model to follow or a strong end goal;
- (b) Ensure they have the working tools they need;
- (c) Provide plenty of encouragement, but not a direct reward;
- (d) Allow students to exercise choice- for the little things as well as the big things;
- (e) Role-model the joy of learning;
- (f) Provide a variety of relevant experiences;
- (g) Ensure that the content has high relevance;
- (h) Allow students to be part of a successful team;
- (i) Increase feedback to learners;
- (j) Allow more time for the “flow” state, when learners are so engrossed in their learning that they lose track of time;
- (k) Set up apprentice programs;
- (l) Invite past graduates to share success stories (p. 107).

### **Limitations**

The Q sort methodology is a respected, but, generally, misunderstood research method. While providing a systemic way of measuring subjectivity, it is sometimes regarded as a strictly qualitative research method. The Q method provides researchers with powerful tools to examine individual perspectives on an issue. It provides participants the ability to describe, explain, and interpret their own opinions to



phenomena, provide meaning to those opinions, and isolate determinants of these opinions. It also provides the ability to study a limited number of responses in more depth, examine the effects of specific situational circumstances, and perform cross-sectional analysis of results. Students' responses provided answers to the research questions, which has inspired ideas for future research. Nevertheless, certain limitations have been recognized and are explained below.

Students' participation in the Q study was completed in their high school, during normal school hours, which created a comfortable and familiar research environment. Students participated in the study during a scheduled study hall, which is an uncredited period in the student's day to work on assignments or prepare for exams. However, even though the estimated time of the activity was approximately the same amount of time as the study hall, some students may have felt pressured to finish. Also, because the facilitator was not a faculty member, and otherwise, not known to students, some students may have worried that the results would be shared with administrators, which may have mitigated the likelihood of dishonest or socially-desirable trends in the responding. To help counter these stressors, the facilitator clearly identified herself as a researcher and assured the confidentiality of responses.

Related to this area of concern is the request for additional participants into the study. A purposive sampling design was used because the researcher was only interested in the opinions of seniors at a particular Western Pennsylvania high school. Probability sampling was initially applied by asking seniors to volunteer to participate in the study; however, it became obvious that this method required a high level of school connectedness. Concerned that diverse viewpoints would not be represented, two

additional students were asked to participate, because it was believed these students could bring alternative and necessary viewpoints to the study. Although the researcher made it clear that results would be anonymous, the fact that these students were asked to participate may have affected their statements in terms of their openness and honesty.

Another concern relates to the generalizability of the study. The study was limited to 14 student viewpoints. However, 595 responses from a climate survey about their school experiences were used to develop the concourse for the Q sort; therefore, the foundation for the Q sort was developed using a wider population. An additional concern relates to the socio-economic status and ethnic background of the student population of the district. This high school's student population is reported at 98% White, with other minority classifications (American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Multi-Race) combining to complete the total. Approximately 23% of students qualify for the National School Lunch Program. Concerns as to the generalizability of these results with other schools, serving different populations, are valid. Nevertheless, it is predicted that the five consensus statements identified between the factors will exist in populations with different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.

A limitation to the internal validity of this study is the testing effect. Because students were expressing their opinions to an adult about their high school, the accuracy and honesty of their statements, either to make the school environment sound better or worse, may have been compromised. Also, due to the subjective nature of data collection, interpretation of students' responses may have been influenced by personal bias and beliefs of the researcher. In an effort to mitigate the subjective interpretation,

peer-auditing has been used to check the researcher's conclusions based on the student interview transcripts.

The instrumentation may also have been a limitation. Although some may find the distribution of statements in a forced format to be interesting or enjoyable, it also may have caused stress in students who were looking to give *correct* answers, or to have an equal amount of *Agrees* and *Disagrees*. Perhaps not allowing for neutral answers may have caused additional stress or confusion, as it clearly did with B5111, who incorrectly placed agreement cards at the top of the distribution instead of in the appropriate (far right) location. It was, almost certainly, the first time students had ever participated in a Q sort survey, which also may have negatively affected the results.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of the three viewpoints confirmed the researcher's beliefs that students want to be treated as individuals, and that many of them are silently suffering from emotional and mental health issues. It also aroused a deeper suspicion that a significant population of students want more from their school than an education; they want to engage in optimal experiences.

The findings insisted that school systems recognize students as young individuals involved in the normal, but complex, stages of human development, and respond with a structure that personalizes learning and activities that stimulate enjoyment and enthusiasm. The recommendation that schools design their structure to emulate the conditions of Flow provide multiple avenues for future research. Likewise, the recommendation that schools implement districtwide social and emotional programs also stimulates ideas for continued research. This section will recommend four areas for

future research that challenge the findings with the goal of extending and/or enhancing the results of this study.

The first area involves the practice of replication studies. To examine the generalizability of the study, the researcher recommends that replication studies be performed in school districts with similar socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Results would provide additional evidence as to whether these viewpoints are common throughout high schools, or if students' viewpoints can only be attributed to specific schools at a given time. Likewise, the researcher also recommends that replication studies be performed in school districts with different populations, socio-economic conditions, and ethnic backgrounds. Also serving to examine the generalizability of these findings, this information would expand our understanding of viewpoints that exist throughout school systems serving different student populations.

The second area challenges the recommendation to use the Flow concept as the design model for school structures. Further research could explore Flow conditions as they relate to the school environment. Specifically, research could examine how instructional models that connect to these conditions affect students' emotional and performance levels. Results could be used to strengthen arguments demanding these changes, or provide a moment of pause for such initiatives. Particular research could examine students' emotional and performance levels when engaged in personalized learning models that incorporate project-based and authentic outcome learning. Additional research could measure the impact that including students in the decision-making process has on the perceived school climate. Further research could also examine how the recommendations to increase levels of self-awareness and provide opportunities

for personal growth affect the overall development (i.e., cognitive, social, emotional) of the whole child.

The third area for research includes the use of current data involving brain research and the implications this knowledge has on professional development activities and teacher training programs. This research should include how these concepts are best integrated into workshops and seminars for current teachers, as well as the coursework, training activities, and classroom experiences that are designed for new teacher training programs.

The fourth area explores the impact SEL programs have on school climate surveys, academic performance, and emotional levels. Using measures that evaluate emotional levels and academic performance, results could analyze differences between schools that implement such programs with those that do not. Additional research could identify which program models are most effective for specific student populations.

## **Conclusion**

Although research clearly connects emotions with learning, motivation, and behavior, education in the Age of Accountability fails to prioritize this significance. Schools no longer focus on students' development, but have become performance-based institutions. Consequently, the conditions needed for self-discovery and personal growth are not honored with the same respect as those required for proficient test-takers. In the current educational culture, an emphasis is mostly placed on a student's performance results, rather than on the development that occurred within the individual while learning to master the challenge. Self-awareness is not valued; therefore, students are not taught the power that self-understanding has in their overall life satisfaction.

The results suggest that schools that ignore students' intrinsic motivators, emotional responses, and social concerns, also reject their sense of individualism. This study cited numerous research findings indicating the debilitating effects anxiety has on learning and performance. Patton et al. (2000) cited multiple studies that report surveys documenting the frequency of mental health problems in adolescence, with around one in five describing some form of emotional disorder. Moreover, rates of more serious depressive disorders rank highest in the stages of early childhood and late adolescence (Bland, Orn, & Newman, 1988; Christie et al., 1988; Kessler, McGonagle, Zhao, et al., [as cited in article], 1994). Considering that Patton et al. (2000, p. 587) reported that "by the year 2020 depression is predicted to lie second only to heart disease as a cause of disease burden in the developed world", it has become imperative that schools quickly demonstrate a more serious commitment toward supporting students' emotional wellbeing.

Schools must cultivate environments that value students' emotional levels, particularly in the ability to understand the concept of *self*. The reason this is important is because Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggested that our ability to master control of our consciousness allows us to maintain concentrated levels of attention, which is "our most important tool in the task of improving the quality of experience" (p. 33). With the understanding that educational activities should have a lifelong impact, schools that value students' emotional levels, as much as their academic success, will prepare students to live happy and productive lives.

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## APPENDIX A

# Full Analysis Results for Three Factor Structure

PQMethod2.35                      DZupsic                      PAGE  
 1  
 Path and Project Name: C:\PQMethod\DZupsic                      Oct  
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Correlation Matrix Between Sorts

SORTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 JD112664	100	-4	12	25	66	53	50	42	59	44	4	59	48	42
2 MC11164	-4	100	12	23	-7	29	9	17	14	51	21	33	4	7
3 TH15664	12	12	100	30	29	42	52	47	55	30	38	4	35	40
4 F100215	25	23	30	100	26	27	30	43	32	41	13	41	21	15
5 F21002	66	-7	29	26	100	69	38	51	64	37	17	51	61	42
6 MS1226	53	29	42	27	69	100	54	64	70	30	15	43	71	61
7 KM95563	50	9	52	30	38	54	100	61	74	14	-2	17	50	45
8 DH15663	42	17	47	43	51	64	61	100	66	33	15	22	37	62
9 KC112663	59	14	55	32	64	70	74	66	100	28	11	43	52	46
10 JE95564	44	51	30	41	37	30	14	33	28	100	32	55	16	26
11 B5111	4	21	38	13	17	15	-2	15	11	32	100	13	4	20
12 SA11163	59	33	4	41	51	43	17	22	43	55	13	100	25	18
13 J1020	48	4	35	21	61	71	50	37	52	16	4	25	100	52
14 MM156	42	7	40	15	42	61	45	62	46	26	20	18	52	100

Unrotated Factor Matrix  
 Factors

SORTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 JD112664	0.7198	-0.0492	-0.5056	0.0959	-0.1376	0.1110	-0.2357	0.1700
2 MC11164	0.2560	0.6842	0.2117	-0.2541	0.5572	-0.1065	-0.0577	-0.0567
3 TH15664	0.5774	-0.0539	0.6349	0.0277	-0.2085	-0.2440	-0.0656	0.2159
4 F100215	0.4871	0.3674	0.0514	-0.4265	-0.4433	0.0359	0.4675	-0.0263
5 F21002	0.7721	-0.1153	-0.3212	0.3035	-0.1281	-0.0980	0.0776	-0.1545
6 MS1226	0.8524	-0.1130	-0.0181	0.0602	0.3248	-0.0912	0.1424	-0.1972
7 KM95563	0.7127	-0.3337	0.1653	-0.3721	-0.0407	-0.0984	-0.2628	0.1115
8 DH15663	0.7695	-0.1095	0.2423	-0.1878	-0.0479	0.3809	-0.0165	-0.2691
9 KC112663	0.8487	-0.1755	0.0219	-0.1411	-0.0602	-0.1882	-0.2654	-0.1678
10 JE95564	0.5385	0.6751	-0.0517	0.0665	-0.0282	0.1598	-0.1029	0.3437
11 B5111	0.2467	0.4070	0.4666	0.6250	-0.1932	-0.0812	-0.0465	-0.1686
12 SA11163	0.5669	0.4858	-0.5167	0.0027	-0.0405	-0.0921	-0.0514	-0.1056
13 J1020	0.6926	-0.3188	-0.1008	0.1383	0.2420	-0.2690	0.3849	0.2409
14 MM156	0.6749	-0.2219	0.1987	0.2136	0.2222	0.4941	0.1008	0.1293
Eigenvalues	5.9046	1.7969	1.4333	1.0057	0.8466	0.6496	0.6215	0.4876
% expl.Var.	42	13	10	7	6	5	4	3

PQMethod2.35                      DZupsic                      PAGE  
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Cumulative Communalities Matrix  
 Factors 1 Thru ....

SORTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 JD112664	0.5182	0.5206	0.7762	0.7854	0.8044	0.8167	0.8722	0.9011
2 MC11164	0.0656	0.5337	0.5785	0.6431	0.9536	0.9649	0.9682	0.9715
3 TH15664	0.3334	0.3363	0.7395	0.7402	0.7837	0.8433	0.8476	0.8942
4 F100215	0.2373	0.3723	0.3749	0.5568	0.7534	0.7547	0.9732	0.9739
5 F21002	0.5961	0.6094	0.7125	0.8046	0.8210	0.8306	0.8367	0.8605
6 MS1226	0.7266	0.7393	0.7397	0.7433	0.8488	0.8571	0.8774	0.9163
7 KM95563	0.5079	0.6193	0.6466	0.7851	0.7867	0.7964	0.8655	0.8779
8 DH15663	0.5921	0.6041	0.6628	0.6981	0.7004	0.8454	0.8457	0.9181
9 KC112663	0.7202	0.7510	0.7515	0.7714	0.7750	0.8105	0.8809	0.9090
10 JE95564	0.2899	0.7457	0.7484	0.7528	0.7536	0.7791	0.7897	0.9078
11 B5111	0.0609	0.2265	0.4442	0.8349	0.8722	0.8788	0.8810	0.9094
12 SA11163	0.3213	0.5573	0.8243	0.8243	0.8260	0.8345	0.8371	0.8483
13 J1020	0.4797	0.5813	0.5914	0.6106	0.6691	0.7415	0.8896	0.9477
14 MM156	0.4555	0.5047	0.5442	0.5899	0.6392	0.8833	0.8935	0.9102
cum% expl.Var.	42	55	65	72	78	83	88	91

Factor Matrix with an X Indicating a Defining Sort

QSORT	1	2	3
1 JD112664	0.2807	0.1202	0.8265X
2 MC11164	0.0557	0.7770X	-0.0893
3 TH15664	0.7363X	0.1545	-0.1050
4 F100215	0.3272	0.6518X	0.1016
5 F21002	0.3823	-0.0012	0.7982X
6 MS1226	0.6442X	0.1469	0.5408
7 KM95563	0.8330X	0.1153	0.1712
8 DH15663	0.7680X	0.2445	0.2155
9 KC112663	0.7379X	0.1832	0.4380
10 JE95564	0.0596	0.7057X	0.3825
11 B5111	0.0681	0.1678	0.0334
12 SA11163	-0.0425	0.5618	0.7117X
13 J1020	0.5578X	-0.1146	0.5328

14 MM156 0.6262X -0.0578 0.3333  
 % expl.Var. 27 15 21

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Free Distribution Data Results

QSORT	MEAN	ST.DEV.
1 JD112664	0.000	2.480
2 MC11164	0.000	2.480
3 TH15664	0.000	2.480
4 F100215	0.000	2.480
5 F21002	0.000	2.480
6 MS1226	0.000	2.480
7 KM95563	0.000	2.480
8 DH15663	0.000	2.480
9 KC112663	0.000	2.480
10 JE95564	0.000	2.480
11 B5111	0.000	2.480
12 SA11163	0.000	2.480
13 J1020	0.000	2.480
14 MM156	0.000	2.480

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Factor Scores with Corresponding Ranks

No.	Statement	No.	Factors					
			1	2	3			
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keyston	1	1.28	3	-0.68	32	-0.35	25
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and car	2	-1.08	34	0.97	9	-0.83	31
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is	3	-0.08	22	-0.26	26	-1.13	35
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a s	4	0.84	14	0.94	10	0.45	17
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to	5	-0.88	30	-0.00	21	-0.91	32
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-0.94	32	-0.23	25	-1.43	37
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the	7	-1.72	41	-0.87	33	-1.10	34
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about st	8	1.18	5	-0.00	22	-0.25	23
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make lea	9	1.01	8	-0.65	30	-0.47	27
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care	10	-0.95	33	0.55	15	-0.83	31
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concern	11	-1.46	38	-1.65	39	-1.46	38
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for	12	0.89	13	-0.36	27	-0.40	26
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let stud	13	-1.56	40	-1.72	40	-1.32	36
14	I believe this school does not take into account that	14	0.91	12	-1.30	36	-0.30	24
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	-0.15	23	0.33	17	-0.83	31
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am lea	16	0.22	18	0.87	11	0.21	19
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this sch	17	-1.20	36	1.23	6	-1.55	39
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't	18	0.55	17	0.17	18	0.80	11
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to g	19	0.93	11	1.36	3	0.55	16
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is v	20	0.98	9	-1.13	34	0.64	15
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better	21	1.53	1	1.30	5	0.68	13
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have pla	22	-0.90	31	0.45	16	0.44	18
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by	23	-0.39	25	0.74	12	-0.47	28
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach ou	24	1.18	6	1.59	2	0.83	10
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam	25	-1.52	39	-1.23	35	-1.57	40
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I	26	0.09	20	0.00	19	1.30	4
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other	27	-0.36	24	-2.07	41	0.10	20
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel th	28	-1.40	37	-0.07	23	-0.97	33
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask stud	29	0.95	10	0.55	15	0.74	12
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I	30	-0.49	26	-0.19	24	1.18	7
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about st	31	0.16	19	1.33	4	0.08	21
32	I believe this school cares about students' test score	32	1.17	7	-0.42	28	0.83	10
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a	33	1.50	2	0.65	13	1.22	6
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to	34	0.64	16	1.14	7	1.10	8
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care	35	1.22	4	1.62	1	1.40	3
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-0.52	28	-0.52	29	1.87	1
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about st	37	-0.51	27	1.03	8	1.40	3
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardi	38	0.69	15	-0.68	32	1.27	5
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want	39	-0.64	29	-1.43	38	0.68	14
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students'	40	-1.20	35	-1.36	37	-1.60	41
41	empty	41	0.00	21	-0.00	20	0.00	22

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Correlations Between Factor Scores

	1	2	3
1	1.0000	0.3425	0.5953

2 0.3425 1.0000 0.3399  
 3 0.5953 0.3399 1.0000

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Factor Scores -- For Factor 1

No.	Statement	No.	Z-SCORES
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tes	21	1.531
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school	33	1.503
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	1.279
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	35	1.224
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	1.185
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and	24	1.182
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but	32	1.167
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	1.013
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued	20	0.976
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students a	29	0.953
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give st	19	0.933
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	0.915
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	0.889
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a school	4	0.843
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized ex	38	0.693
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to studen	34	0.642
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the sc	18	0.550
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning	16	0.221
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	31	0.162
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	26	0.087
41	empty	41	0.000
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is prepa	3	-0.075
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	-0.148
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than t	27	-0.364
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowi	23	-0.389
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	30	-0.493
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	-0.505
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-0.518
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	-0.637
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the s	5	-0.880
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	-0.895
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-0.941
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	10	-0.955
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring".	2	-1.076
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotio	40	-1.200
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	-1.204
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I a	28	-1.400
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned abo	11	-1.463
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a gra	25	-1.521
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students d	13	-1.565
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school	7	-1.720

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Factor Scores -- For Factor 2

No.	Statement	No.	Z-SCORES
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	35	1.622
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and	24	1.587
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give st	19	1.358
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students s	31	1.327
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tes	21	1.298
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	1.232
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to studen	34	1.135
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	1.033
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring".	2	0.970
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a school	4	0.942
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning	16	0.872
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowi	23	0.745
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school	33	0.652
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students a	29	0.546
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	10	0.546
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	0.448
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	0.325
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the sc	18	0.168
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	26	0.004
41	empty	41	-0.000
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the s	5	-0.001
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	-0.003
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I a	28	-0.067
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	30	-0.188
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-0.229

3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is prepara	3	-0.257
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	-0.359
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but	32	-0.421
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-0.520
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	-0.649
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	-0.677
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized ex	38	-0.677
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school	7	-0.871
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued	20	-1.132
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a gra	25	-1.234
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	-1.298
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotio	40	-1.361
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	-1.425
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned abo	11	-1.651
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students d	13	-1.718
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than t	27	-2.074

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Factor Scores -- For Factor      3

No.	Statement	No.	Z-SCORES
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	1.872
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	35	1.404
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	1.404
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	26	1.296
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized ex	38	1.270
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school	33	1.218
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	30	1.182
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to studen	34	1.100
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and	24	0.828
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but	32	0.828
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the sc	18	0.797
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students a	29	0.741
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tes	21	0.684
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	0.679
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued	20	0.638
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give st	19	0.550
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a school	4	0.447
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	0.442
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning	16	0.206
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than t	27	0.097
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	31	0.082
41	empty	41	0.000
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	-0.252
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	-0.298
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	-0.355
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	-0.401
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	-0.468
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowi	23	-0.472
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	10	-0.828
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring".	2	-0.828
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	-0.828
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the s	5	-0.905
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I a	28	-0.972
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school	7	-1.100
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is prepa	3	-1.131
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students d	13	-1.316
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-1.434
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned abo	11	-1.460
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	-1.548
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a gra	25	-1.568
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotio	40	-1.599

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Descending Array of Differences Between Factors      1 and      2

No.	Statement	No.	Type 1	Type 2	Difference
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	0.915	-1.298	2.213
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued	20	0.976	-1.132	2.109
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	1.279	-0.677	1.955
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than t	27	-0.364	-2.074	1.710
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	1.013	-0.649	1.662
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but	32	1.167	-0.421	1.588
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized ex	38	0.693	-0.677	1.370
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	0.889	-0.359	1.249
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	1.185	-0.003	1.188
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school	33	1.503	0.652	0.851
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	-0.637	-1.425	0.788
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students a	29	0.953	0.546	0.407
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the sc	18	0.550	0.168	0.382



21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tes	21	1.531	1.298	0.232
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned abo	11	-1.463	-1.651	0.188
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is prepa	3	-0.075	-0.257	0.182
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotio	40	-1.200	-1.361	0.161
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students d	13	-1.565	-1.718	0.153
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	26	0.087	0.004	0.083
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-0.518	-0.520	0.002
41	empty	41	0.000	-0.000	0.000
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a school	4	0.843	0.942	-0.098
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a gra	25	-1.521	-1.234	-0.287
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	30	-0.493	-0.188	-0.305
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	35	1.224	1.622	-0.398
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and	24	1.182	1.587	-0.405
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give st	19	0.933	1.358	-0.425
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	-0.148	0.325	-0.473
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to studen	34	0.642	1.135	-0.493
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning	16	0.221	0.872	-0.651
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-0.941	-0.229	-0.712
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school	7	-1.720	-0.871	-0.849
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the s	5	-0.880	-0.001	-0.879
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowi	23	-0.389	0.745	-1.133
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	31	0.162	1.327	-1.165
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I a	28	-1.400	-0.067	-1.333
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	-0.895	0.448	-1.343
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	10	-0.955	0.546	-1.501
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	-0.505	1.033	-1.539
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring".	2	-1.076	0.970	-2.046
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	-1.204	1.232	-2.436

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Descending Array of Differences Between Factors    1 and    3

No.	Statement	No.	Type 1	Type 3	Difference
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	1.279	-0.355	1.633
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	1.013	-0.468	1.481
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	1.185	-0.252	1.437
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	0.889	-0.401	1.291
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	0.915	-0.298	1.213
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is prepa	3	-0.075	-1.131	1.056
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tes	21	1.531	0.684	0.847
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	-0.148	-0.828	0.680
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-0.941	-1.434	0.494
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotio	40	-1.200	-1.599	0.399
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a school	4	0.843	0.447	0.396
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give st	19	0.933	0.550	0.384
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and	24	1.182	0.828	0.354
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	-1.204	-1.548	0.343
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but	32	1.167	0.828	0.340
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued	20	0.976	0.638	0.338
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school	33	1.503	1.218	0.284
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students a	29	0.953	0.741	0.213
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowi	23	-0.389	-0.472	0.084
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	31	0.162	0.082	0.080
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a gra	25	-1.521	-1.568	0.047
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the s	5	-0.880	-0.905	0.025
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning	16	0.221	0.206	0.015
41	empty	41	0.000	0.000	-0.000
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned abo	11	-1.463	-1.460	-0.002
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	10	-0.955	-0.828	-0.127
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	35	1.224	1.404	-0.180
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the sc	18	0.550	0.797	-0.247
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring".	2	-1.076	-0.828	-0.248
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students d	13	-1.565	-1.316	-0.248
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I a	28	-1.400	-0.972	-0.428
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to studen	34	0.642	1.100	-0.459
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than t	27	-0.364	0.097	-0.461
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized ex	38	0.693	1.270	-0.576
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school	7	-1.720	-1.100	-0.620
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	26	0.087	1.296	-1.209
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	-0.637	0.679	-1.317
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	-0.895	0.442	-1.337
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	30	-0.493	1.182	-1.676
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	-0.505	1.404	-1.909
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-0.518	1.872	-2.390

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Descending Array of Differences Between Factors    2 and    3

No.	Statement	No.	Type 2	Type 3	Difference
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	1.232	-1.548	2.779
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring".	2	0.970	-0.828	1.798

10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	10	0.546	-0.828	1.374
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	31	1.327	0.082	1.245
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowi	23	0.745	-0.472	1.217
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-0.229	-1.434	1.206
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	0.325	-0.828	1.153
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I a	28	-0.067	-0.972	0.905
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the s	5	-0.001	-0.905	0.904
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is prepa	3	-0.257	-1.131	0.874
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give st	19	1.358	0.550	0.809
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and	24	1.587	0.828	0.759
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning	16	0.872	0.206	0.666
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tes	21	1.298	0.684	0.614
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a school	4	0.942	0.447	0.495
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a gra	25	-1.234	-1.568	0.334
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	-0.003	-0.252	0.249
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotio	40	-1.361	-1.599	0.238
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school	7	-0.871	-1.100	0.229
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	35	1.622	1.404	0.219
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	-0.359	-0.401	0.042
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to studen	34	1.135	1.100	0.035
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	0.448	0.442	0.006
41	empty	41	-0.000	0.000	-0.000
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	-0.649	-0.468	-0.181
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned abo	11	-1.651	-1.460	-0.191
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students a	29	0.546	0.741	-0.194
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	-0.677	-0.355	-0.322
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	1.033	1.404	-0.370
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students d	13	-1.718	-1.316	-0.401
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school	33	0.652	1.218	-0.567
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the sc	18	0.168	0.797	-0.629
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	-1.298	-0.298	-1.000
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but	32	-0.421	0.828	-1.248
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	26	0.004	1.296	-1.292
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	30	-0.188	1.182	-1.370
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued	20	-1.132	0.638	-1.770
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized ex	38	-0.677	1.270	-1.946
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	-1.425	0.679	-2.104
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than t	27	-2.074	0.097	-2.171
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-0.520	1.872	-2.391

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Exact Factor Scores (à la SPSS) in Z-Score and T-Score units

No.	Statement	No.	Factors					
			1	2	3			
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keyston	1	1.82	68	-1.13	39	-0.53	45
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and car	2	-1.00	40	1.30	63	-1.07	39
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is	3	0.36	54	0.02	50	-1.43	36
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a s	4	1.09	61	0.58	56	0.01	50
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to	5	-0.74	43	0.38	54	-0.98	40
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-0.46	45	0.22	52	-1.53	35
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the	7	-1.38	36	-0.50	45	-0.65	44
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about st	8	1.26	63	0.12	51	-0.62	44
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make lea	9	1.30	63	-0.47	45	-0.86	41
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care	10	-1.12	39	0.29	53	-0.18	48
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concern	11	-1.02	40	-1.43	36	-0.69	43
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for	12	1.18	62	-1.00	40	-0.44	46
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let stud	13	-1.21	38	-1.55	35	-0.76	42
14	I believe this school does not take into account that	14	1.34	63	-1.88	31	-0.30	47
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	0.17	52	0.83	58	-1.44	36
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am lea	16	0.11	51	0.98	60	0.26	53
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this sch	17	-0.95	41	1.45	64	-1.52	35
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't	18	0.57	56	-0.15	48	0.68	57
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to g	19	0.57	56	1.37	64	0.34	53
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is v	20	1.22	62	-1.70	33	0.81	58
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better	21	1.33	63	1.21	62	0.10	51
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have pla	22	-1.45	36	0.28	53	0.75	58
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by	23	-0.17	48	0.26	53	0.01	50
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach ou	24	1.08	61	1.66	67	-0.12	49
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam	25	-1.04	40	-0.92	41	-1.26	37
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I	26	-0.42	46	-0.05	49	1.31	63
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other	27	-0.24	48	-2.20	28	0.31	53
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel th	28	-1.52	35	0.31	53	-0.44	46
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask stud	29	0.65	56	0.43	54	0.53	55
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I	30	-1.14	39	0.48	55	1.20	62
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about st	31	-0.01	50	1.14	61	0.09	51
32	I believe this school cares about students' test score	32	1.04	60	-0.65	44	0.97	60
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a	33	1.36	64	0.54	55	0.58	56
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to	34	0.38	54	1.18	62	0.75	57
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care	35	0.83	58	1.42	64	0.80	58
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-1.47	35	-0.80	42	2.87	79
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about st	37	-1.22	38	0.78	58	1.61	66
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardi	38	0.24	52	-0.73	43	1.44	64
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want	39	-0.88	41	-1.02	40	0.95	59
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students'	40	-0.49	45	-1.03	40	-1.57	34
41	empty	41	0.00	50	0.00	50	0.00	50

Factor Q-Sort Values for Each Statement

		Factor Arrays			
No.	Statement	No.	1	2	3
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	4	-2	-1
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring".	2	-3	2	-2
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is prepa	3	-1	-1	-3
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a school	4	2	2	1
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the s	5	-2	0	-2
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-2	-1	-3
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school	7	-4	-2	-3
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	3	-1	-1
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	3	-2	-1
10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	10	-2	1	-2
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned abo	11	-3	-4	-3
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	2	-1	-1
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students d	13	-4	-4	-3
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	2	-3	-1
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	-1	1	-2
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning	16	1	2	1
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	-3	3	-4
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the sc	18	1	1	2
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give st	19	2	4	1
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued	20	2	-3	1
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tes	21	4	3	2
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	-2	1	1
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowi	23	-1	2	-2
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and	24	3	4	2
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a gra	25	-4	-3	-4
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	26	1	1	3
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than t	27	-1	-4	1
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I a	28	-3	-1	-2
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students a	29	2	1	2
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	30	-1	-1	3
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	31	1	3	0
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but	32	3	-2	2
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school	33	4	2	3
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to studen	34	1	3	3
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	35	3	4	4
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-2	-2	4
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	-1	3	4
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized ex	38	1	-2	3
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	-2	-3	2
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotio	40	-3	-3	-4
41	empty	41	0	1	-1

Variance = 6.000 St. Dev. = 2.449

Factor Q-Sort Values for Statements sorted by Consensus vs. Disagreement (Variance across Factor Z-Scores)

		Factor Arrays			
No.	Statement	No.	1	2	3
41	empty	41	0	1	-1
11	I believe our school should not be involved or concerned abo	11	-3	-4	-3
25	Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a gra	25	-4	-3	-4
35	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	35	3	4	4
40	I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotio	40	-3	-3	-4
13	In general, teachers show they care when they let students d	13	-4	-4	-3
29	In general, teachers show they care when they ask students a	29	2	1	2
4	In general, I believe students feel respected when a school	4	2	2	1
34	In general, teachers show they care when they talk to studen	34	1	3	3
18	In general, I feel that a student's "happiness" isn't the sc	18	1	1	2
24	In general, teachers show they care when they reach out and	24	3	4	2
16	There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning	16	1	2	1
19	In general, teachers show they care when they try to give st	19	2	4	1
33	In general, I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school	33	4	2	3
21	I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tes	21	4	3	2
7	In general, I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school	7	-4	-2	-3
5	In general, teachers show they care when they teach to the s	5	-2	0	-2
3	I feel confident the education I am receiving here is prepa	3	-1	-1	-3
15	I feel emotionally supported in this school.	15	-1	1	-2
6	I believe this school values my happiness level.	6	-2	-1	-3
23	Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowi	23	-1	2	-2
28	Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I a	28	-3	-1	-2
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	31	1	3	0
26	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	26	1	1	3
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	2	-1	-1
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	3	-1	-1
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	-2	1	1

10	In general, teachers and administrators show they care when	10	-2	1	-2
32	I believe this school cares about students' test scores but	32	3	-2	2
30	Because of stress and anxiety, there are times when I have c	30	-1	-1	3
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	3	-2	-1
38	The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized ex	38	1	-2	3
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	-1	3	4
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	4	-2	-1
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	-2	-3	2
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	2	-3	-1
2	I would define our school environment as "kind and caring".	2	-3	2	-2
20	I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued	20	2	-3	1
27	I believe there is no use for me at this school other than t	27	-1	-4	1
36	I feel that this school is a very stressful place.	36	-2	-2	4
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	-3	3	-4

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Factor Characteristics	Factors			p
	1	2	3	
No. of Defining Variables	7	3	3	
Average Rel. Coef.	0.800	0.800	0.800	
Composite Reliability	0.966	0.923	0.923	
S.E. of Factor Z-Scores	0.186	0.277	0.277	

Standard Errors for Differences in Factor Z-Scores

(Diagonal Entries Are S.E. Within Factors)

Factors	1	2	3
2	0.334	0.392	0.392
3	0.334	0.392	0.392

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Distinguishing Statements for Factor 1

(P < .05 ; Asterisk (\*) Indicates Significance at P < .01)

Both the Factor Q-Sort Value (Q-SV) and the Z-Score (Z-SCR) are Shown.

No. Statement	No.	Factors						
		1		2		3		
		Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR	
1	In general, I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones put	1	4	1.28*	-2	-0.68	-1	-0.35
8	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	8	3	1.18*	-1	-0.00	-1	-0.25
9	In general, teachers show they care when they make learning	9	3	1.01*	-2	-0.65	-1	-0.47
14	I believe this school does not take into account that studen	14	2	0.91*	-3	-1.30	-1	-0.30
12	I believe our school has a responsibility to care for studen	12	2	0.89*	-1	-0.36	-1	-0.40
37	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	37	-1	-0.51*	3	1.03	4	1.40
39	The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to com	39	-2	-0.64	-3	-1.43	2	0.68
22	In general, teachers show they care when they have planned l	22	-2	-0.90*	1	0.45	1	0.44

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Distinguishing Statements for Factor 2

(P < .05 ; Asterisk (\*) Indicates Significance at P < .01)

Both the Factor Q-Sort Value (Q-SV) and the Z-Score (Z-SCR) are Shown.

No. Statement	No.	Factors						
		1		2		3		
		Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR	Q-SV	Z-SCR	
31	In general, I believe a school shows it cares about students	31	1	0.16	3	1.33*	0	0.08
17	I feel as if I am treated as an individual at this school, r	17	-3	-1.20	3	1.23*	-4	-1.55



## APPENDIX B

## TH15664

The keystones most definitely cause how that works is I've seen this all the time teachers change their curriculum based on the keystone entirely to the point where they don't worry about how the rest of the class works it's the class before keystones –it was towards the whole knowledge of it now it's pressured on what they have seen the keystones asking for and they limit knowledge so emotional stress maybe but it's more the aspect that it's limiting knowledge but I can see it putting stress on people especially teachers – because of new contents and they're getting out of a comfort zone – because the students aren't used to the same teacher –so I definitely agree with that – on the consistent with policy and discipline I feel that it's just they're following the rules it's not showing they care by following the rules – they always say they're doing it cause oh we care it's more they're following –the teachers – because their boss might come in – policy and discipline enforcement – I mean it makes it better for most of the students – but it's not really a way to show they care or not –to an extent they should worry about your emotional wellbeing if a kid is depressed then definitely take action –in that aspect but don't gauge yourself but if the student is throwing it out there and making an emotional connection with that teacher then I can see it's a connection you can share stuff but I don't think the school or teacher should force it upon them –it's more like a friend thing in public where you make a friend and you can share your information – that's the exact opposite they don't show they care when they don't expect too much it's like there's a happy medium – oh most definitely like you'll get a 2 page essay in one class and then communications like chemistry you get to the final – it's the double negatives

Yeah it's a little confusing –

Because like I was saying with keystone I've heard this a lot I just came up with –it's a matter of once you're out of school no one cares about your grades – after that it's like you learn stuff most definitely but it's not really applied it's more for keystone or standardized tests which have been forced upon us –to the point where we aren't showing ourselves how well we can do on a test –it's really like we were talking about earlier it's numbers that's just how it works – ok I definitely agree with that one cause it's not about

the happiness it's more like the emotional state like I said if the kid is depressed then take action or if you see that he's overwhelmed with work that might take action- oh and also this would be great for the recording to hear that I moved here in January so I'm like 6 months new it gives a more perspective of anything like that –my high school was West Allegheny since 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Ok

Third grade – second grade –I moved away then came back and I did –so yeah I've been in another school for quite a while and I moved here just around this winter so

Really interesting that's a good perspective –

Yeah cause pretty much I'm comparing it and yet I'm taking what I've learned so far – yeah talk about the future yet – when it comes to problems when it's about the future in most aspects is when they're going to be caring – no because when you cover curriculum you do not care where it's going you just care that you are on task and not if everyone else is on task –for example in one of my classes we would- cause I was in the habit in my old school it was more of getting to this point and not like cause at my old school if it took people time to understand the concept you would draw it out here it's ok this week we're here – next week we're here and you might understand it or you might not –

Just like very goal oriented

Yeah it is very goal oriented to the point where ok we're here now turn to-everything's aligned to the point where you can't be flexible especially around –like they do it when there's a snow day or something –but when it comes to the actual knowledge of the students it does not change which I can give and take with study but it gets to an aspect like if no one understands the concept maybe you should re-teach it- that's not really the school's problem or responsibility but there's times but not that much you have to make it on your own –the keystones get to a point it gets more like it's a slight mound it's



something like everyone's like hey we'll get over this and we'll be closer to our goal more of just a mountain to get over just a hill to get over

Like you just have to do-

Yeah something you have to do so most people are going to get over it like something for people excelling ok so we're gonna get this done for people who are struggling it's more like a wall - I haven't cried over grades- that gets into my like school sickness and all that believing that I'm only here for the knowledge -I'm just planning this as I go  
I see you are

What are regular school policies and procedures

I think like -a policy that would affect your kids would be about absenteeism - school dress code -regular procedures would probably be about rules for the classroom -lunch room stuff -

Ok then I'll disagree with that one - cause if it's regular it's on a schedule it's not really directed towards you it's directed towards a group of people and to be valued you really have to be individualized -that is true you can't dig too deep -it's really how you make it like there's a lot of things about stress it's really how you make it for me in general I find things to make it better -I take a different aspect of it - I look at it the perspective of it I guess but then again if you look at it a different way -then it's where it becomes less stressful -if you're hurting in this class then if I do better that's better knowledge it takes scores up -I take it as a knowledge learning I take it as I'm learning something to the point where I can apply it even though it might not be relevant for real life but it's really - where was I going with this - the stressful part would be socially I guess but if you work on your social life which sometimes is hard but that's where it really improves -it's not showing they care because of remedial courses it's more about their numbers than anything it's helping them yes but it's more about their numbers - did -I'm just

wondering – did you guys revise these with the grammar – I’m just wondering did students actually put this in here –

You know I didn’t do this part

Ok. I was just wondering cause like

I don’t know many students that would do semi-colon

Not sure if they revised it or not – alright –

*I believe our school is not responsible for students’ emotional wellbeing or happiness – I really disagree with that because they have slight responsibility but then again it is responsible for our education so I agree and disagree with that –they care it could be two aspects it could be either they care about the student or they care about their actual job –*

I think in this instance it’s if the student feels cared for

Ok

Do they care for your emotional wellbeing and you

Ok that makes a difference cause I was

Cause they do care obviously we all care about our job or whatever

Ok do they care about the student – got ya –I feel pretty confident about that

Ok do you want to move any

I'm just making sure –that's really specific – I have not cried over grades but I'm just taking the stress and anxiety part of it that's what I'm trying to think about – I'm taking out the crying part –

The guys are – and I say ok so girls cry what do guys do

Yeah they

Do they get really angry and pound something

Yeah they do that – I mean I did cry once in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade it was a reading test –I think it was my 1<sup>st</sup> D –I'd never gotten a C so I was very upset and that was the only time I ever cried over a test –but yeah I could see girls crying over that –but it doesn't affect you to that extent – what I'm saying is they get to that point but I don't think it should go under strongly disagree –

*teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect much out of them* –alright –the policies and procedures –that's just something on the schedule and they have to follow so it doesn't make you feel valued it's just you do your job –  
*teachers show they care when they have lessons planned and cover the curriculum* –well this is a little different cause they're following it too strictly instead of going faster over easier parts and slowing down and extending it for the harder to understand –and concepts it really doesn't show they care it shows they're trying to get along and get through everything compared to taking stops

So you're saying if they were more attentive to where the class is

Yeah if they were –gauge the room more I know it's hard- if there were pop quizzes and you do one of those once or twice just to see where the room is –so you don't even grade it – you say you're grading it but you don't you can use that for gauging where the room is –and slow down in some parts and speed up in others –

*teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and do not expect too much from them* –that one I'm trying to figure out how to take it just because it seems like someone is yeah I feel like you care I feel it's just the lazy man's aspect – it might be taken another way –it could be taken to the point where they don't push it on the student –I disagree with it majorly

Ok so on the positives more positive atmosphere and teachers get to know the students

Yeah that's like the definition of caring when you're bonding with someone it's almost like a friendly –go to extents and you connect and make it easier for – it makes the environment better –to go into (?) and know you have somebody to talk to

How's your experience been with that

Oh it's been great – yeah I've made friends with all my teachers I have not had any bad experiences with any teachers –it's just like learning-wise is a little bit different I've noticed this majorly for my AP class I'm taking one right now chemistry –it's just a matter of the curriculum we cover we sped up in the beginning part we didn't do much of that and then we slowed down on these other parts and when I came in I was further ahead and just the way it was taught I saw that he always kept to a standard and that's with all classes English really doesn't count cause we have a sub Mrs. Hanner and she left the day I came I never even met her cause of her leave of absence because of pregnancy in the other one it's really curriculum-based oh we're gonna do this this this and it doesn't make sense compared to my other school which was we're gonna learn this this this but we're gonna spread it out and see how it goes for everybody

Ok

I don't know what the other questions were I usually get off topic –

Well earlier you mentioned the feeling of being overwhelmed and students can have other things to do

Yeah so something compared to this school and my other school um tests are very (?) indicated and the aspect of 2 teachers talking it was more you know how rumors go around it was like someone saying oh you know there's a test today in another class – teachers will gauge to when they put their tests depending on the other teachers –

To try to stagger them

Yeah it makes it so much easier the teachers would ask the class oh you guys are- what's going on this day like planning a couple weeks ahead yeah we have a test on this day so you knew when the test was so if another teacher asked we could tell them yeah we have another test that day they most likely would wave it around depending on the difficulty of the test and extracurricular activities I can understand a lot too –I'm not sure how it works here cause I haven't seen really on extracurriculars I don't take much I only have jazz band is extracurricular any more but marching band one of the aspects of my old school was if there was something like a big game –it would be you could do most of it you know it was still like do it but I'll understand if you don't do your best-

Were they comparable sizes your schools

Ah I believe so I'm not quite sure – we're both triple As

And both public

Yeah both public

What do you think of the general atmosphere in the school do you feel like an individual It's sort of individualized more than I'm use to – like I don't really know when it comes to individualism I mean it's there but not as much like the one answer when a teacher

asks you and is concerned about your grade yeah it is I haven't experienced it yet but – I have not seen it as much it's probably there I've seen it with individual students it seems individualized cause teachers kids around with other students

Does this feel like a stressful school

I don't want to put it like this but we learned the material a lot harder – much higher like a pace not really

More rigorous

Yeah it was still following along and caring and that but there's more work like my AP chemistry what they did in the summer time is nothing comparable to what I had to do in (?) in chemistry but when it comes to stress if was taking grades out it doesn't seem that bad – it's only when you have 2 courses colliding with projects –that's when it gets stressful I have not had that but I've seen that with tests – like when they ask- some teachers will some teachers will ask do you have any tests today but not just as much it's not that stressful for me at all with the students here they care about their grades but they don't care as much –to the point where if it's bad it's not as stressful – it's more of the expectation is what causes stress they really want to aim higher then they might stress more which would be more positive stress

So I'm curious how was your experience as a new student – did you find teachers caring about how you were transitioning

Ah there were some yeah I had ah a couple – some teachers I did not experience anything it was like they throw you in and oh you didn't do this and oh you didn't teach this well we'll figure it out when we get to that road or something but the courses are really (?) about and all that I was really aiming for that's where I made sure I connected we made sure – AP chemistry is a good example – he kept me always on line so like some classes yes some classes no

What do you think could be different as far as from the perspective of emotional wellbeing

Difference?

Yeah what do you think could be different – improved – do more of

That's a hard one the- it's almost like a try too hard kind of thing as long as teachers connect with their students it's fine –but if they start discouraging things you can like – I'm trying to think how to explain it you just make sure –you have to know someone's there it doesn't even matter that they'll go to them you know someone's there to be there for them –the availability that's- the real thing – that would improve a lot like a teacher stating hey if you ever need help with anything – I'm always here – there's tutoring and all that but that's not really – some people can't make tutoring it's not that it's more like – make them feel individualized and at the same time make them feel emotionally stable –

And approachable

Yes most definitely if teachers really don't scare off students then you can make it like the student doesn't have to feel fearful of that class they can always ask the teacher I kinda would go out there and ask questions and sometimes I would feel this strenuous feeling when you could feel the teacher does not want you to ask anything they're like oh yeah you can ask anything and then you ask and they're like why are you asking this? That's really where availability comes into play they're willing to answer any question – students should feel open to ask questions that was something that was weird about moving here was like my (?) has been the connection with the teacher they might have locked me out cause I was new I don't know but me feeling I can raise my hand at any time compared to if I raise my hand will I be judged by the teacher so it's more availability in general and unavailability to answer questions

So students shouldn't feel inhibited to ask questions

That's another thing some teachers want you to ask them questions and won't answer – the teachers won't tell you stuff unless you ask them and if they're too forced upon you really do not want to ask a question cause it's just strenuous that's when it gets to the point where no one learns anything

I'm just curious and I have not asked anyone else this – what is it like –do you switch classes

Yeah

So when you go to your class say like you're going from English to chemistry when you go into the classroom where is the teacher do they stand outside the door are they in the classroom

Um it really depends on the – really I've seen it multiple ways with the same teachers sometimes they go like they have a routine bathroom break sometimes like English 1<sup>st</sup> period I get to school before her so I just wait she's always in the classroom getting everything ready some are out the door most are at their desk though I'm not sure how that makes it for an availability aspect from that standpoint –I feel like – I get to classes early just cause I like being in class cause there's really nothing else to do so it's a matter if the teacher is there at the desk I can ask and that's usually when I do it - cause that's when I connect to them just by asking a question just about the subject and that's when I really connect and I feel like at the desk is better than outside –well outside you can't usually ask anything cause they're talking – mostly it's different for every teacher

You mention that some teachers are at the door and they greet students



Ah yeah if they're at the door they're gonna greet students like Mrs. S. for math she stands like that she's –sometimes- like this week she's been busy with grading and all that

Does that make you feel more welcome

I think it does yeah it actually gives you a different like hey they're actually going out of their way to say something

Is there anything else that really stood out either you struggled with or you feel

It was the ones in-between really cause they're agreeable but not at the same time it's really neutral with those like placing the added pressure of the keystone exam a graduation requirement makes students focus on doing their best – No –by placing it you're making more stress so they have that stress with the other classes they have to do but you're focusing on that more I guess cause the teachers are pushing it onto there but – so it's really in-between on that and then there was a big one – a school shows it cares by offering challenging and career-focused courses – yes and no – just because they're offering more – yeah –it's not showing that they care it's just showing they're expanding their plethora of options –it's not like they listened they've added things next year that most people don't even care about so they are just adding it to add it –it's more like experimental than listening –those were the 2 main ones

Anything surprising or you thought wow I can't believe this is on here

Um probably the teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and don't expect too much from them –that one really stuck out –really – that one caught me off guard but I kept reading it to see if there was a deeper meaning so yeah that one stood out to me and then I kinda expected the keystone and standardized questions but these were a little different – how they're adding pressure and thing like that – um the stress to get good grades create anxiety that may impact my performance – I can see being negatively stressed but most of the time you're

trying your hardest – but if you’re stressing like most people it might be negative and you go to somebody for something like that – that really stood out cause most people – I’m not sure who like – doctor doctor this hurts –then stop doing it to where if it’s really stressing you that much they usually should get help at that moment they usually go to somebody to get that fixed –

**SA11163**

Are you in any extracurricular activities

I’m in Boy Scouts, Lacrosse, venture scouting, a bunch of different things

Is that through the school

No lacrosse is not a school sport but is a club sport

How about anything in school

I used to be on stage crew and history club

Ok

I wouldn’t know about crying it says have you cried over this – I’ve been really stressed out over it but – that’s gonna be true no matter what –

School is stressful

Yes. I would agree with that sometimes

The stress you don’t wanna come to school sometimes

Yeah at times sometimes. I do but sometimes I don’t want to. Not just this school but school in general

So this is interesting and you're not the only one but you wonder if what you're learning is applicable

Um hmm

That stresses you out

It stresses me out it confuses me and it makes me angry

Cause you're like why do I have to learn this

Yeah why do I have to learn quadratic equations when I know I'm not going into a field that uses that –why am I going to be learning oh I don't know if I was in calculus why would I be learning that if I'm not going into that

And those are all requirements you have to take

Um hmm but I see where they're going with it I just don't like it

Yeah how would you change it

I'd put up with it because you might change your mind at one point and you gotta teach the knowledge that way it isn't lost that way others can learn from you or you teach others –that's my view

But you wonder if there's too much time spent on it

Yeah like some classes I wonder how would I take this when I know I'm not gonna use it

Do you get any electives

Yeah I get plenty of electives –plenty of electives. Alright.

You feel good with them

I think I do –yes

There were some that gave you some problems which ones –

My view on this is they should care and they should help you have a positive feeling about school like you would want to come – but I don't think they should make it that way because it's impossible to do that –there's gonna be something at school you're not gonna like whether it's one certain class or a subject that you're not gonna like

How about something like we were talking about like do you think it's the schools' responsibilities to educate students about what is mental health or mental wellbeing and maybe teach coping skills stress reduction skills

Um teaching wise like a set class on it –I wouldn't say like another class

Or do something to get that information out to students

Yeah get the information out but I don't think we should have a whole class dedicated to it but I think they should help

Is there anybody like teachers or counselors I just found out that you have a school social worker do they address anything like that with students about stress

Never met – never knew we had a social worker

Apparently yeah your school does have a social worker

I've never had anybody address me about it

About coping with stress

Not really – guidance had mentioned a couple times about managing stress- don't get too stressed out over SATs PSTs stuff like that I wouldn't say minimize it but negate it or lessen it

So they don't really teach coping skills

Not really nothing that you can do to lower it

Wow do you think that would be valuable

I think it would yes

How about any of your coaches or the extracurricular stuff you're in

Yeah our coach is great – he's like any other coach he'll force you he'll tell you he'll push you but he cares – our coaches I do believe care about you believe they care about your stress level they'll push you to your limit and when they see that they'll back off

Are there some teachers that you know and you can or cannot mention names overall how do you think the teachers are about the stress the students are experiencing and there's stress not just in school there's at home stress college or future oriented stress

Teachers are great here – there's a couple it just seems like they don't care all they care about is do good on the test pass this test blah blah blah –but I would say the majority of them they do care about you –a lot of them do care about what happens at home – they talk to you numerous ones they ask you how was your weekend or what are you guys doing this weekend –

Ok. Some of the students said if they feel they need extra academic help they don't always know when tutoring is or it's not always that available to them or the scheduling is difficult

The only thing I saw about tutoring is there's a flyer in the hall every once in awhile and that's it

Do you think that would help for some

Oh yeah tutoring that helps a lot but it's usually 1 teacher versus 20 kids so sometimes it can't be enough

So they don't have it on a rotating basis –

It depends on what you need help with you just go to whatever teacher in free time and they'll help you but sometimes they have set tutor dates like last year I had geometry but there about 10 other kids there in the classroom so it's hard to get help from that teacher

Ok you disagree that the school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed. So you do agree that the school takes that into account

Yeah teachers –I think they care

So you disagree that the school has a responsibility to care for the students' emotional wellbeing

To be honest I wish I could have put that over there but

You can change it –

I don't know what I would have swapped out all those are in a perfect spot for me –

So these you feel very strongly about

Yes id I could have I would have put it over there

You definitely feel school is stressful

Oh yeah

And there's a lot of anxiety over the Keystones  
It's not just Keystones though it's SATs and testing

Are you in AP classes

In US history

Are you gonna try to test out

Ah I already took the test

How'd you do

I think I screwed up – I focused on-

You might get another chance

Yeah we might but they had the main subject on the subject we didn't cover  
and that was about 50% of the grade on that so-

So you feel that you're listened to at school pretty much by teachers and administration

Um hmm

Ok and you feel like they know you

Yeah for sure

Oh that's cool –what would you like to see more of or improved or changed again we're talking within the framework of emotional wellbeing versus academic

My only idea that I would have and it really doesn't go along with that but I guess it could lower stress levels is that if they offered classes that would help you in your daily life today and not what's going to be happening in 20 years when you're out of school you got a job with the degree for example they don't teach you how to apply for college – you do that on your own they don't teach you how to write checks how to balance your checkbook that's all optional classes and I think they should include that in the main classes somewhere because not many kids know how to write a check balance a checkbook like I said

Like the daily living type stuff that you're gonna need to know and that is stressful and college applications are just miserable – so just like writing a college essay and stuff are they still requiring

Yeah most colleges do but they never taught us oh what do you include in your essay-

And that's stressful



Yeah

How about how to conduct a college search

Well yeah we've done that we've done career cruising which would show what careers we could go into and then we do a college search for what degrees to get into that field

Alright I think that's a really good suggestion though to have that more practical everyday life like right now –are you involved in any sort of art or music right now

I hate art –I'm not good at playing an instrument –I'm not good at art – my art ability consists of stick figures and

That's fine – you like outdoor stuff

Yeah

Is there a lot of stress in you doing your outdoor things

Yeah oh yeah

Do you think they do enough outdoor things here

No – you're cooped up in a classroom all day –we don't do anything else – the only time we get to outside is in gym and that's only in the spring –

That's too bad – cause see too that's another area since we're talking about emotional health it would seem more impact in green spaces and being outside has on everyone

Like in biology Mr. B along with Mr. G they would take you out back they would do outdoor activities that was great but that's the only class really you would do anything outside which I could see why but

Do you guys have any opportunity to go out if the weather is nice at all do they have lunch tables at all

Yeah they do but it's all in a prison cell area back there with brick walls on every side

Not really aesthetic right

Nope there's grass out there but it's not much but it's nice and all cause you got nothing else to go to

Do you ever use that

Only seniors do

Oh so that's only privilege for seniors

Um hmm

Ok cool next year you get to do that that'll be neat. Was there anything that surprised you that you had never thought about

Not really I actually thought about the majority of this stuff the stress level and how the school helps you or doesn't when it comes to that stress I've thought about that before

And how have you thought about it

I think the school itself doesn't care too much but the teachers individually do like I can see if you're falling behind or you're really stressed out they'll help you out they'll like delay an assignment by a couple of days to help you out

That's nice – is there – and I understand it's from your perspective and that's what we want – a difference between how the teachers are with students and the administration is with students

I really haven't had much experience with the administration but the teachers they're great I can't say enough good things about it – the administration I know they're messed up a lot – I don't know how to explain it – my parents have talked to me about it all the time like the school system is all messed up like absentee days they get it messed up for me all the time – I hand in excuses they still mark it unexcused

So when you say you don't feel supported or the school really cares are you speaking more about administration

Like I said I can't say much about administration – but from what I've seen yeah

What about other students how's the atmosphere

Freshman year sophomore year it sucked it really sucks but going on to this year and maybe half of sophomore year and senior year I can see it gets a lot better you make friends a lot easier you get the good friends you aren't hanging out with a bunch of random people

That's challenging – you kinda get your group

Yeah is there anything else you want to add –this is your time to express opinions suggestions anything you want to say because it's completely anonymous

Can't really think of anything

Alright. How did you find doing this

It was difficult –you were limited on some things like this – I wish I could have put this on the agree side but I couldn't and there was a couple more I'm in the middle about it

Alright

### **Notes on Q-Sort participant KC 112663**

KC expressed concern and expressed feeling stressed over the lack of time in her day to meet the multitude of pressures and responsibilities she shoulders. KC states that t one time she was an A-B student but now her grades have dropped. She worries about failing. KC states she suffers from depression, anxiety and ADHD. She states sees an outside therapist to deal with these issues.

KC states that after school she used to work at a farm but recently quit because of pressures from home. She states that helping her parents around the house, in addition to her chores, leaves her little time to do her schoolwork. Her bedtime is 9:30 on school nights, and this is strictly enforced.

KC states students do not do their best with the added pressure of exams.

KC mentions that she has some teachers who seem to care but she has little time to make friends and thus has few friends who care.

KC states that she does not find school to be kind and caring, although she does believe school values her happiness.

She feels it is a schools job to care about her emotionally. KC feels teachers target certain groups of students, such as gay and lesbian friends, and monitor their behavior more closely than that of other students. KC states that gay and lesbian friends, are not allowed to show signs of affection or hold hands at assemblies or in the halls, however, heterosexual couples are frequently seen “making out,” with no reprimand.

KC also expressed the following beliefs or opinions during the Q-Sort:

Card #	Expressed belief or opinion
7	It is the schools job to care for her.
4	“They should care about my emotional well being since they see me most.”
25	The added pressure of the Keystones makes her anxiety go up and she performs worse. It also makes her more depressed. She believes she is not alone in this feeling.
5	Teaching to the standard is not caring.
17	She is not known as an individual - which is why she wears a hat. “Teachers have given up telling me to take it off.” She is known for her hats and feels it is part of her identity. “ My hats give me comfort and allow me to exist in my own little bubble.”
23	She does not feel school contributes to her happiness by giving her time to spend with her friends. “The school does not do activities all students care about, only certain students. We have been asking for a new cello for years and we were given this crappy used one that broke in a day.”
37	Remedial course don’t show the school cares because no-one knows about them.
40	School is responsible for students emotional well being which goes hand-in-hand with learning and preparing for the future.
10	“Dress code and PDA are not equally enforced. Unattractive students are targeted.”
?	She does not think school values her happiness ( <i>This is contradictory to an earlier statement.</i> )
13	Students should not be able to do whatever they want. That is not showing that the school cares.
22	“Planned lessons are part of the job. This doesn’t show teachers care – it shows they are doing their job.”
28	“Rules and procedures are necessary for order. They don’t make me personally feel valued.”
3	She is unsure and does not feel confident that school has prepared her for life.
27	No use for me ( <i>Huh?</i> )
15	Some teachers are supportive.

39	She does not want to come to school at times because of stress.
29	"Teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives. Yes."
14	"Students can be overwhelmed and teachers don't care. When my brother was in the hospital after trying to commit suicide I still had to hand in all my work."
35	Listening to students shows teachers care.
34	"Caring equals noticing when a student's grades are dropping."
32	"Schools care more about scores than what is learned. We memorize things for tests and forget it the next day. The teachers don't care as long as we score well."
24	"The caring teachers try to bond with students."
19	"Caring teachers try to give advice."
33	A positive atmosphere makes kids want to come to school.
26	"I have cried over grades. I am crying now because I am failing."
21	Students learn and perform better when in a positive mood.

### MS1226

What we want you to do is to – you can either read these aloud or not – just put them in piles of I agree with this or I disagree with this and as much as we're looking for where you're going to put them on the grid we're also interested in comments – just two piles agree and disagree-

Yes I want to put these which are totally opposites in the same pile

Yes I know - and you'll get a chance – a lot of people change their mind and that's fine

Ok

Alright you've got a lot of agrees

Yeah

Ok so now we're gonna start with the agrees – now this is what they call a forced distribution so you're gonna take these and let's just pretend they're brand new and you might feel you know what I don't feel this positive about this one and you might put it over on the disagree side we just want you to put them like this is how much you agree

strongly agree disagree or strongly disagree and this is sort of the in-between and you'll see the numbers like 6 cards that means only six cards can go in this row and just think aloud if there's stuff you want to say about it if you have specific examples or

Well teachers and students get very stressed out about the Keystones and that is irritating

Does that affect you too?

It affects everybody which I'll put it next to the stress to get good grades. School's stressful but you shouldn't let it get to you most of what's stressful is the people you're around not necessarily courses

Students or teachers

Um just students are irritating

Yeah you're a senior right?

Yeah

Yeah yeah. Do you think teachers are aware or counselors when that stuff's going on

Not always cause usually when people don't wanna talk about it they hide it pretty well and I think sometimes people have a need for attention and that takes away from people.

Ok I think I did those right

How about some of those?

I said over here somewhere we're not learning things that are important in life and that kinda goes along with this one

And what does that one say?

That I feel confident that education is preparing me to have a successful life so that would be somewhere in the disagree

With the disagree right

Yeah if you feel strongly put that – that's not unusual that people re-read these

In general I feel that the student's happiness is not the school's priority but the school should be concerned with the overall emotional state of the students

Ok alright so how's that look? Any switching anything or is that good?

That's about right

You had a tough time with some of those huh?

Yeah

Which ones did you think were hard?

Ah teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting- at times you're goofing off and at other times you're trying to get the message across

You think there's a lot of nonproductive goofing off?

Not really it's just a negative one

Now the next thing we want you to do is take the negative cards and put them on the continuum



Ok do you want to read them and see if you're good? You're good with that – ok that one about the school environment is kind and caring

I don't agree with that one

So were there ones you struggled with putting down

Well I feel I agreed with more than I disagreed with – that's weird cause I thought it would be the other way. I moved these ones because it's their job to plan a curriculum I mean it's- it doesn't mean you're emotionally attached to someone. And our school in general is not kind and caring teachers are good and some of the students are good but the school overall is not

Help me understand how that comes out

I assumed that when it said school it meant the management

I think it means talking about the whole thing teachers administration- staff counselors – everybody

I get along with all my teachers so I wouldn't consider them a problem but higher –

Above the teachers?

Yeah the higher you get from students one on one the less you care about them

And so you feel that reflects in the test scores and academically what the school does

Yeah definitely Keystones is valued more than it should be

You're not alone in that I can tell you

Yeah

A lot of kids are being stressed by that now – that's tied into graduation right?

No.. next year's class

Ok what about- do feel supported then – you said you like your teachers do you feel they emotionally support you

Yeah teachers are fine if there's a problem it's like the staff higher up it's not –being involved or other students

What about guidance counselors and stuff – do you think you get support from them – I never really seeked [sic] it so

What do guidance counselors do here

I went to a job shadowing – for my guidance counselor so it just kinda provided when it's needed I haven't actually gone for this

Would you consider doing that?

Kinda

Let's say there was something going on and you needed some-

I think I'd rather talk to a teacher about it cause I see the teacher everyday and they know me better

Yeah makes sense –definitely

Yeah

Are you in any sort of extracurricular activities?

Um I do orchestra – that's sort of extracurricular

Yes I was wondering if you did band or orchestra and I'm very supported with the other students and my conductor so that's not a problem

Good. Is that like an outlet for you I mean sometimes through the day when you're really stressed –

It's first period. I do art mostly if I'm stressed.

Do you get to take art classes?

I'm in art this year

That's really good and emotionally healthy that you do that too. How about your art teachers

Yeah Mr. K is really great yeah he's a huge supporter of art programs in schools which I think there should be more

You're absolutely right. I did notice that your grades and things test scores are more valued – and again you think that's not necessarily teachers but above

Yeah. Like the teachers openly value their opinions about tests – they don't think that they're important enough to be valued for the size they are

Do they have to spend a lot of time getting you ready for that?

Yeah I remember I think last year we did all the Keystone stuff and that was just horrible because all the teachers could do all year was not focus on the curriculum but had to teach what was gonna be on the test – just irritating +

Feel like that year was wasted? What happened this year?

Um I'm more focused on what I want do with my life this year –I think the Keystones was just kinda unnecessary

I'm wondering – do you feel that the emotional climate in the school is pretty good?

Yeah it's pretty good

Overall what would you like to see improve or see different

I don't know – like I know it's not right but I don't know what to change

Yeah like more art?

Yeah yeah like more creative things

Infused in the classes?

Yeah and do you think that would help with emotional?

A little yeah or more like hands-on activities I love to do new projects. I'd rather do a project than read out of a book I'd rather work alone than in a group but you need to practice working in a group for your life

True it's a personality choice- neither here nor there and you know yourself. I mean you already know what you prefer. What do you think the school does well that you would like them to keep on doing? You said the art would be good

I feel like they need to respect the arts a little more I mean not give us more but respect that we need it – I understand that science and math is behind everything but you need to be creative to come up with your own ideas you know?

I do know

I don't know how to explain

No I do know so that sounds like you're talking about thinking skills that critical thinking actually more than what you do cause you have to come up with a plan first just cause I know how to do math doesn't mean I know how to execute it or come up with my own ideas. That make sense?

It does make sense then you can do that when you something more hands-on

Was there anything about this that surprised you?

Most of what is here is stuff around the school

From students

Yeah there's sometimes teachers – they complain about you know like everybody complains about the Keystones even if you did like them you would complain about them cause I think it's just when you tell someone they have to do something they get grumpy about it – it's like the 50s people telling their kids not to listen to rock and roll – that's the only reason they started listening to it

So everybody feels that teachers and all the way down. So this is all pretty familiar stuff you feel like? Was there anything that you found out about yourself through this

I never really thought about how much the staff cared

And you feel they do?

Yeah in general. You always got that teacher that annoys you so – but I like all my teachers this year I get along better with my teachers than my fellow students – I can't stand the immaturity – someone just got pushed through a window not even an hour ago – there's like a broken window in the cafeteria

Holy cow- Anything else? I mean your opinion is – if there is anything you feel strongly about

I feel like people complain for no reason –obviously I have more positive things than negative so I feel we just like to complain. I don't like the Keystones but of course I didn't do bad so I didn't get a lot of anxiety over it but I had to take remediation I failed my math the first time and I was glad I took it because I'm not good at math at all but I feel like these are all things we've all said but we complain about things that we don't mean so some things do need to change but not everything

And the other students you think feel the same way

Well my whole friend group pretty much has the same ideas I do –especially immature people will sit there and complain like the Chrome books when we got those people would not stop complaining even though it's just the school giving us a computer like I don't mind having it I can do more research on projects – I hate when I get blocked on a – but people give us something we have to block – it's like guys will look up gross things

That's something that happens junior year cause I have 4 kids and remember that sometime in that junior year this maturation happened and suddenly it's like – one more question as far as emotional wellbeing what is the school's role as far as skills – coping skills – teaching about stress and what it means to be emotionally healthy –do you think it's the school's role to teach that

I think they should cause they're supposed to get us ready for real life –all I'm getting is academics not how to cope with stress or grieving which is important because in every life there is going to be death that's one thing you need to know how to handle you've got people cutting themselves or killing themselves over things they never knew how to handle – I feel like they should do something about it

So like actual curriculum or

I think it should just be included

Ok

Like psychology

Do they teach psychology here?

Yeah but it's more like in the book – labeling different diseases –mental issues –

More diagnostic and not like life skills

Yeah

Not mental health

Yeah

### **MM156**

So what we're doing is we're trying to get students opinions about do they feel emotionally valued and supported by the school in your opinion does the school value

your emotional wellbeing as well as academic wellbeing and then this information is going to be used when planning courses and you know and activities for future planning so it's important where you place these it's also important for us to know your feelings and comments those are really valuable so please feel free to talk out loud cause we want opinions so the way we're gonna do this is first I'm gonna give you these cards and I want you to put them this way you can read them if you wanna read them out loud that's fine and separate them if you agree or disagree

So we're gonna use all of these?

Yep.

*Teachers show they care when they have planned lessons and cover the curriculum.*

Yeah I certainly agree with that-organization and teachers knowing what they're teaching about are important to learning I agree with that.

*Regular procedures and school policies make me feel I am valued here*

yeah ...um regular procedures as in like on a regular basis

Yeah I think it means like rules

Rules ok and the way things are dealt with? Can I put that somewhere in the middle?

Well eventually you're gonna have to put them somewhere on the continuum right now we wanna know I agree with this statement I disagree with this statement

Oh ok well um I tend to disagree I'll put it over there then

There's no right or wrong

I realize that.



*I believe I learn better and perform better on tests and activities when I am in a positive environment*

yeah I'm a positive guy I do well when I have a plan and I know what I wanna do yeah.

*In general teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students concerns and consider their opinions.*

Yes I do agree with that lots of teachers I love hearing their comments on just people and what they think to the extent that that goes though so I'm gonna put that on agree.

*In general students show they care when they try to give advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future.*

Yeah yeah teachers advice they're mentors they're good people for that I agree with that.

*Our school environment contributes to my happiness by giving me time with friends and creating opportunities to make new friends and providing activities that I enjoy.*

Yeah I would say now the school environment that would be just school itself or

Well I think they mean school environment the encompassing

Within the day yeah

Yeah

Yeah I would say it does especially activities I mean I love the musical I run cross country and back and I've made so many friends doing that so yeah I agree with that.

*I believe our school should not be concerned or be involved in my emotional wellbeing.*

I agree with that but to a point – I think the school should care about you and if you need help you should be able to get it and I think that teachers and administrators and all of that – they should provide you with opportunities to be emotionally well whether that's

like giving advice like we talked about before so yeah I agree with that but I'm gonna put that more in the middle.

*Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.*

Um it does help them focus on helping them do their best –whether I agree with the Keystone exam- I don't agree with it – one test to determine your graduation status that's not something I agree with I think it's something more like an accumulated thing where your GPA or some accumulated grade of what you actually learned in high school and what you've done but it does help them focus on doing their best because you do want to do well on it so – and you do learn study tactics actually that's one thing I actually liked about it –it gave me something good that was the only good thing that I found out of it cause the rest of it was just crappy.

*I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing.*

Yeah um yeah I would agree with that. Here at the school what's more important is grades than whether you're happy or not. That's what the push is to do.

*I feel as if I am treated as an individual in this school rather than just a face in the crowd.*

I do think that this school in general does tend to make their students just a number

A large school

And society as a whole does that as well within the world but yeah I think there should be more placed on the individual even though it is a large school I mean it's small compared to Butler and Butler School is like that

Oh is it?

Yeah I would say Butler's a pretty big school so this seems like a small school

Wow see I'm not from around this area

You're not really?

This is really big compared to where my kids went

Really? Interesting –that's something. So no I disagree with that I mean depending on what you do and stuff like that.

*In general teachers show they care when they teach the standards and prepare kids for exams.*

Yeah preparation is a big thing and I think that this school does more or less kinda throws you in there and expects you to study on your own and do this on your own and that on your own. I'm in AP classes which I think that can be a good thing sometimes where you have to be on your own cause that's the world you know – but preparation is a good thing and I think teachers should show their care for individuals and how they do in class whether it's who knows what.

*I feel emotionally supported in this school.*

It's so hard because it's to a point – like there's certain factors that do support you certain teachers like you do this you're good at this go for it and there's also factors that detract from that like personally I think the administration detracts from that because personally I am a big fan of the arts and all of that and I think here it's mostly focused on STEM and mathematics and sciences-like the Keystones – that's math and science strictly and I think there are certain factors that do both. I'll go back to that one.

*I believe the school values my happiness level.*

Like we said before generally you are a number just a face in the crowd um I think personally they would say that they do but I think they more or less act like they don't in a way

They say they do but act like they don't?

No like

Oh I see what you're saying – they might believe that they do but

Like you go to guidance

But you don't see it?

Yeah this is just an example – something I've seen like guidance gets all the kids in talk about next year and they say ok we want you to –colleges care more about math um and then they like gear students toward math whether like personally I don't like math – then there's the kids who like arts like singing and stuff like that unless that's what they strive for or that's what they want to do and they don't gear things more toward them so the students that are focused on math they enjoy math or science they're getting the full treatment while the other students are not – so you know what I mean?

Yeah absolutely so you don't feel like they're addressing different types of learners

Yeah exactly and I believe that there are a bunch of learning styles and the way teachers teach is just interesting to me because one student can learn this way and one student can learn that way. A teacher here told me that when he was in high school you switched teachers like he would go to this teacher then the next semester he would go to that teacher and I love that idea –

Yeah do you do that here?

No we don't do that here and I think that would be so much better you would get so much more experience because getting different opinions from different people showing you how to do it different way that's how you learn –how you progress and if a teacher gives you example problems throws them up on the board copy them down study the night before a test you're not learning that –you're not – they're not bestowing the knowledge on you to remember it and

*In general I feel happiness isn't the school's priority but the school should be concerned with the overall mental and emotional states of the students.*

Yeah I heartily agree with that. The school's not here to make everybody happy that's not what it's for – it's to teach you life lessons to teach you knowledge in certain subjects and progress you for the future that's what it's for it's not for just to coddle you but it should to a point.

*In general I believe this school shows it cares about students by offering challenging and career-focused courses.*

I agree with that. You do what you want like if I wanna be I don't but say I wanna be an engineer like they have an engineer's course you –great you can learn about it if you actually do wanna go with it then that might sway you either way that might be a decision-making –

*I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests.*

Now I'm pretty active in the school I do a lot of different stuff –I would say that there is a use – is this for individuals as a whole or for me? No I think there is use for me personally but that's just me – I wouldn't be here.

So is that an agree?

Yeah. I'm worried about that too whether I'm putting them on the right side.

*I believe our school is not responsible for our emotional wellbeing or happiness it's responsible for our education and starting us on the right path for our future.*

It's such a double-edged sword because it is responsible for your wellbeing but to a point where they're not coddling you but it is responsible for your education and your path for your future like I said before. Yeah it goes both ways – I wish it was two cards but if I had to place it under one I would say that because this school doesn't really place it under the wellbeing factor and they need more of that I'm gonna place it over here –

You disagree?

Oh wait the school should be responsible for it

So you believe the school's job is to educate you not take care of you emotionally?

Yeah

So that would be

It should be like I said it should be ok let's get back.

*I feel confident the education I am receiving here is preparing me to have a successful life.*

Yes the education but now- no I'm gonna say no – because I think that um I think that the way teachers I think that it is not (?) on

Here?

In my opinion because it's just me that's not the way to learn I don't learn from the exam problems on the board and if I don't and I'm not gonna remember it – so if I'm trying to remember it in life and I mean there are teachers who do a quality teaching here but ah like I'll remember it for years to come but in general I would say no.

*I believe the school does not take into account the students are overwhelmed with course work and extra-curricular activities.*

Yeah they do. They do take that into account cause I've had teachers that

Agree or disagree?

Oh no yeah that would be disagree because I've had teachers that tell me oh you're if you're gonna do this you should probably focus on this and not take a harder course – like I'm so busy with school and extra-curricular stuff so I understand where they're coming from they want me to do well in the class they're gonna tell me stay the same level that I am and not try to go a little bit higher.

*I believe our school has a responsibility to care for students' emotional wellbeing.*

They do have that responsibility I agree with that whether they're doing that now –I don't think they are.

*The stress to get good grades and perform well on standardized tests creates anxiety that negatively impacts my performance.*

Yeah I agree with that – test anxiety is a big thing –if you're stressed about it you're not gonna do well that's back to the positive attitude.

*In general I believe the school shows it cares about students when it allows for personal talents to be identified and demonstrated.*

I think it's more fun when you do that I think you learn better and it allows for your own creativity and mind to put into things – there are people who are not as creative though who don't enjoy that so but personally I believe it does so that's my personal opinion.

*In general I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing.*

It is realistic you can do it in a way – I don't know what the way is- you can do it in a way that does care I think through teachers and faculty and their responses to just the way things are and happen on a daily basis like I said that means a lot when they talk to you and become a mentor whether there's one teacher or multiple there are teachers here that do that.

*There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning here will not be used in real life and high school is just a waste which is cause for anxiety.*

I think everybody gets like that – everybody's like oh what am I gonna use this in real life for- but whether that's a real cause for anxiety or not- I don't know about that – but yeah for some people maybe. So I'm gonna put that under definitely agree.

*I would define our school environment as kind and caring.* Um they're kinda caring they're kind and caring no. I would not define it as that that's for sure I would not.

*In general I believe a school shows it cares about students by offering additional help or remedial courses to help students graduate.* Yeah for people who need it yeah it's going to help you that's definitely caring about you.

*I feel that this school is a very stressful place.*

At times it can be but you know –I'm gonna put that under agree cause sometimes you are stressed – everybody gets stressed that's life too – it depends like I said before I am so busy with different things and half that is just life and school's always gonna be stressful no matter how you deal with it or not but that's up to teachers to help you deal it.

*I believe this school cares about students test scores but not about how much is actually learned.*

Amen! Amen! Yes!

*In general teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.*

Strongly agree. Strongly agree. For instance history right now we're –it's just fun silly



stuff but you learn a lot – we're just making videos and stuff like take a movie and you had to present the historical accuracy on it but I mean presenting it filming it cause you had to film your own version of the movie you had to research all now that's I had one of the most fun times with my friends in my life doing that but you know it does teach you a lot of qualities and I know teachers who do that and I know there're are some who don't –I love their – I know there are some pupils who just love having problems on the board and figuring stuff out it's like a puzzle- that's math that isn't me but there are people like that. It can go both ways I understand that.

*In general teachers show they care when they talk to students when they notice their grades dropping or when they seem sad or depressed. Yeah that is showing they care.*

*In general I believe students feel respected when a school shows it values students' emotional wellbeing.*

Yeah. I mean if your school's gonna treat their students with respect then the students are gonna treat the school with respect – it goes both ways.

*The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school – I got to come to school anyway – but it makes me not want to it doesn't say it makes me not come to school*

I don't want to get up

Yeah we're all seniors here and it's so hard –junior was a very stressful year and getting good grades is very important –I've always been taught that but you start not to care after a while cause it's the same old thing and you're not being taught by some teachers you're not actually retaining the material when teachers learn to do that that's one you can truly honestly learn and do well.

*In general I believe the pressure to pass the Keystone puts too much emotional stress on students and teachers.*

I think it does put too much on them because people get so worried about them when really it shouldn't as much emphasis on it as there should be.

I believe that 1 test should not define your status. You might be having a bad day you might walk in school something happened at home something's going on with your friend who knows what it is –you might have failed a test who knows – but there are always those days and one day like that the stressful way and you have this under stress – the Keystones- that should not define your grade – if you don't pass that test – or I know a person who didn't pass by one and they had to take a remedial class –now what the heck is that? Should I put this over here then – yeah.

*Because of stress and anxiety there are times when I have cried over grades. No I've not cried over grades*

I'll be honest with you I do pretty well in school in my opinion that's just me I'm a hard worker at times at times I'm pretty lazy but I've never never wept over it.

*Because of stress and anxiety there are times when I have cried over standardized test results.*

No I passed Keystones I got a pretty average score on my SATs so I'm pretty good with that.

*In general I believe that the positive atmosphere in a school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning.*

Yeah I agree but there's also that thing where you can be too positive and it kinda gets a little out of hand where that's all they focus on positivity and all that stuff. Because there are teachers that are like get a positive attitude dude on these math problems. I'm like ick - .

*In general teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond with students in the class – yes I agree I think that's an important thing for teachers to mentor to their students and if teachers want to put their opinions out there students don't have to believe*

but hearing their opinions is always valued for me I enjoy making conversation like that on a regular basis.

*In general teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school.* I mean I have teachers that do ask about my life because some teachers are mentors and good friends and I like talking about that with them so I mean that depends who you are – I know some people want to keep their lives personal and I understand that but if you want to ask the teacher about some advice or something you should be able to do that cause like I said before they are mentors.

*In general teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with school policy and discipline enforcement.* Um yeah I think discipline is an important thing because without it you could have who knows what happen –and there are times here when I'm like shouldn't that kid be getting yelled at like what is he doing there but I'm that's probably everywhere but – I think there should be an emphasis placed on that.

*In general teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.* I think teachers should expect something from you I think that if they're like so whatever you want then people are gonna be more lazy and apt to not want to do work. I mean you have to as a teacher think – show they care. No that would be a disagree. Now we have to put it on

Yeah. First we have to count how many negatives you have.

Eleven. That might change who knows

Yeah. Ok we're gonna put those aside now what I want you to do is take these statements and put them on this continuum. Now eventually all the cards are gonna have to be placed on here

Alright. So like I have to place 3 cards here?

Yes

So this is like measuring the importance?

Yep like a forced choice

And this can go forever?

Oh it can?

I'm just asking I don't know

Um do you drive?

I drive but I have somewhere like I have to be there.

That's what I'm saying there's gonna have to be some switching around. So just because you put them in the agree pile doesn't mean they have to stay agree

True

You might change your mind

I'm gonna out the less important one so can I just move that over?

Absolutely

Yes you should have a positive atmosphere. Because I think they are caring with a positive atmosphere. Yeah that goes over here cause they should care about you not just treat like a number they should be individualistic. No use for me- I don't like that question. It does put a lot of stress on you but you gotta do it the state wants you to do it.

Yeah that's a big proponent you're not feeling respected how are you supposed to respect the school? Now I'm gonna out this one over here cause on the disagree side cause teachers need to do more than that they need to show you how to do stuff more than just examples.

(Personal phone call for Pamela 30 seconds)

Ok let's bring these over

Ok wait a minute I have to copy down – you can change these

Yeah these might change. I just want to gaze over this cause this is an important thing

Absolutely it's very important and appreciated that you're doing this

I'm ready to go- I mean it's unrealistic to the point that they need to care. I've become very stressed and worried about grades but. No teachers need to expect something for you or you're gonna be lazy and not do any good. Not really but that's the world and the world is not gonna value just what you do. They do it but not to a very fine point. One instance where they actually showed they cared was like if you really want to do this you really need to focus on this if you want to continue to get good grades don't take the level up keep where you are which is great but focus on what you enjoy doing. Alright let me look over these. If I had to say which one I'd pick as the top card out of these I'd have to pick um that the school cares about the test scores but not how much is actually learned because there are so many classes this year the school year's ending and I'm saying what did I learn in this class- not very much now or did I and that's what I think school's for – that's what we're here for to learn stuff for life and if you're not retaining that knowledge the way the teacher's teaching you then something needs to be changed. And if I had to pick one from the strongly disagree side it would be the face in the crowd –but that's the world everyone's treated like a number –

You're not treated like an individual

Um hmm everybody's treated like a number

Ok

I think I'm good with these

Ok. Did you struggle over any of them?

There were a couple that were like a double edged sword cause well which one was it – like giving you advice about your concerns stuff like that they can do that and they can overdo it too. You should be able to talk to them and be open with them and if they treat you in a way that makes you feel a little more confident in what you're doing – yeah

There was 1 card when you said –there it is- I would define our school environment as kind and caring and you were like noooo...can you tell me more about that?

Um well

As much as you're comfortable but I'm curious

It's funny but kind and caring is not something that really any school is anymore – teachers are just here to teach you and as much as they do show they care –you know parenting's the same way – but school should definitely not be a parent- where you discipline is in here – you do discipline your kid you have to figure out a way to show them what they have to do to change to be better and school here they help you learn and do – there's teachers that I enjoy having so much but you look at the negatives more than the positives and here I'm looking more at the negative – there are teachers who really help you who really do a great job and I'd say here is an equal balance there are teachers that do help you and teachers that don't but in looking at that I'm looking at the negative.

And like I said before styles and the way they teach you that goes along with that – that goes along with the teachers who you can look at like a mentor they are caring those ones are caring –

And what you get to see

There's no middle ground

Ok interesting. How about you said you have extra-curricular activities?

I have the musical the play track and cross country

Wow how about your support in those activities do you feel that your coaches or the theater director do you feel supported emotionally by them?

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I love doing all that stuff cause you're with your friends you're out of school you're not focusing on what your grades are you're doing something that you're having fun doing and the people who are in charge of that you're there with them – they enjoy what they're doing you enjoy what you're doing

Do you ever feel stressed to perform in those situations?

I mean getting up on stage in front of a ton of people of course you're gonna get stressed over that –

More than normal –yeah

I mean if somebody is pressuring you into it

Do you feel pressured?

No I don't. I pressure myself more than anything I feel like I have to do a good job but not to please them I mean yeah to please them but please everybody please myself I love performing for an audience. That's musical that's what I love doing. Cross country you want to beat your time – that's for you

Do you think – you mentioned something about the arts – like the school has done away with some of the arts –

That is –I love art –that's like in my opinion my thing and eventually it seems to be that the school is focusing more on STEM more than something like the arts you look in the world there's so much of the arts music, advertising you look at advertising the drawing of something that's art. In a world where it's just math science computers that's not very fun and there are a multitude of people in the school that actually feel the same way- the arts are being drawn out and you hear stuff all the time from what people value as administrators what they value – the guidance counselors they definitely –then they turn around and tell you oh you should focus on your individual stuff because that does set you apart you want a little of both and I think at this school they do focus more on math and science than the arts

So you feel like some students might be getting left behind?

To a point

Yeah I mean they still have plenty of art classes but there aren't that many kids in those types of classes there aren't a whole lot of kids able to enjoy those types of classes because they're focusing on math and what they want to do in the future

How do you think that reflects in emotional wellbeing and stress or do you think there's a relationship?

Between focusing on math rather than art?



Art and emotional help.

Ok. My opinion I love going home and not having anything to do taking out a piece of paper drawing painting it does help you de-stress but that's just me there are a ton of people who love to do this love to do that art's just for me

That is a coping skill so and what I'm thinking is what would you think if the school offered things in different mental health things coping skills or ways to help students or coping methods do think a-it's the school's place to do that and b- do you think it would be good?

Offering courses you say?

Courses or maybe groups

Ok I think that that is a big thing they can do but here's my opinion I don't think it's about the big things I think it's about the little things like teachers like the attitude of the overall school – it starts with a few teachers –it starts with that and you keep going and if the teachers would care more about their teaching style then and care more about their students' learning styles and actually teach them what they need to know so they can do well on any test for one making learning fun you do learn more when you're having fun that's just the way it goes – but if more teachers would focus on the learning aspect and actually bestowing knowledge on students so they can remember it in the future I think that's a big impact on how happy you are coming to school –you're gonna enjoy it more if you're doing well you're gonna do more if your teachers show they're caring about what grades you get that you're not just getting an A in the class. Ok?

Yes yes I do understand adjusting to different styles of learners but also teaching how to learn

Were you surprised at anything you

Not really I thought it would kinda go I didn't think it would be this intensive but

Yeah -

#### **MC11164**

The one thing about this is there are a lot of teachers in school who emotionally connect with the students in the survey that I took I actually explained that in a paragraph a lot of teachers care not just about your school life but about home life because home life can affect your school life. Teachers show that they care – yes generally yes -there's always some teachers that don't extend it to the fullest. I disagree with this – for a student to perform well in school happiness is a big part of it- like the home life I would feel more comfortable with a teacher wanting to know how you doing at home- is everything ok-if I come in depressed I want them to extend their hand and be not just a teacher but a mentor. Um I disagree with this –there's a lot of teachers in this school that care not just about a test score but about what you learn. Yes absolutely I agree with that one like I said about the home life. *School is not responsible for the students emotional well being and happiness* – I have to say I disagree with that cause we're here for 12 years of our life high school mainly is where you find out who you are –and I think the school should have an effect on that not telling you who you should be but guide you in the right path and I believe that most of our teachers do that

Kinda guide you to discovery

Yes and encourage the discovery of that. *Generally students feel respected when a school shows it values* –absolutely yes. *In general teachers show they care when they ask students about life out of school* –yes absolutely I believe that completely. *Teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students* – yes – I think this one here – consider their opinions – it's one thing to listen and there's one thing to listen and help – I think a teacher that sits there listening and they're yeah yeah yeah and

there's a teacher who sits there and says here's a solution –that's what really makes a good teacher. *I believe I perform better in school in tests and activities* – yes I absolutely agree with that one- *there are times when I am concerned what I am learning here* – yes I just had the example I had my pre-calculus teacher I asked her this the other day I always asked this of a teacher – because I like to know where am I going to use this in my life cause it helped me learn better when I know I can apply it to something and she straight up told me – no you're never gonna use this – and I can't stand that cause if I'm gonna sit here –this is my senior year and I have colleges to look at and if I'm going to find my career path I can't sit here number crunching –so it really bothered me.

*I believe the pressure to pass the Keystone puts too much stress* – I disagree with that – I think Keystone is fine – you take it and you have remediation for help I think if you take it seriously it's not that hard of a test I took it mostly seriously and I passed it in first try and I'm not some straight A student but I still think that a placement test is very important because you just kinda need it there just to show where you're at and if you do fail it you know you have to be this level or that level.

*This school does not take into account that students are overwhelmed with home work and extracurricular activities* –I believe they do –I believe a lot of teachers take that into account that's why there's tutoring –they take the time out of their day to show you what's going on about it and for them to take the time out of their day you should be able to take the time out of your day

*Teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond* – yes.

*I believe that a positive attitude in school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning* – yes –when I am excited for a class say my introduction to engineering design course – I wake up in the morning –hey I get to do my project today I don't sit there – ohh I gotta complete it – I'm pretty excited about it. Um when they teach to standards and prepare students for tests –yes -.

*In this school getting good grades is more valued than my emotional wellbeing – no-most teachers I've dealt with they really care about you not just A B C.*

*School shows it cares when course work allows for personal talents to be displayed – absolutely yes*

I can imagine with the field you want to go into –

Yeah and that's where electives come into play and I think electives should dominate more than a main course. There are a lot of kids who are so gifted with these electives they do like woodworking – well woodworking is not a lot of math – but then they go up here and they fail that and it drops their GPA – a lot of people push – hey you're gonna find a pathway so you gotta figure out what you're good at – I believe the school over the last few years have taken the electives a lot more seriously –I know they've done a lot more STEM programs, art is a big one we have around here –

*Teachers show they care when they give students advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future- yes –it always helps out when you have somebody who is older and wiser telling you what's good what's bad really – I'm not saying teachers should tell you what to do – but I think a teacher voicing their opinion is very important –*

*I define our school environment as kind and caring – yeah –I was telling somebody else the other day I never knew what a principal's office was until this year – I'd never been inside one – and the reason I went inside one was to talk to Mr. V about a mentoring program –I didn't walk in there nervous – I walked in there welcomed. The big thing you know is the principal's office is a scary place – but when it's not so scary that's when you achieve your kind and caring*

*A school shows it cares by offering challenging and career-focused courses – yes –*

*I feel as though I am treated as an individual in the school rather than just a face in the crowd – yes I agree with that – I agree with a lot of these*

*I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and do well on standardized tests – no that is false –I disagree with that completely –a good example is the boy who's in the shot putt right now he's leading the state – he's getting a good name for Knoch who achieve and he's being recognized. Me, I do a lot of robotics and to see my name or face up on a marquis out there is –and everybody gets to make a mark here – it's not just, look yay valedictorian! everybody has a chance to*

*Placing the pressure of passing the Keystone for graduation helps everybody do their best – I believe it helps that but I don't think a lot of students see that –for me the pressure helps me*

*I believe the school values my happiness level-absolutely.*

*It is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing –that's false I disagree with that I can walk up to any of my teachers and they'll ask me how I am and even that one statement there allows me to put in an answer –that shows that they care*

*I believe our school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional – no I disagree with that –I believe they should be*

*I believe our school has a responsibility to take care of students emotional wellbeing – yeah I believe that – um I believe when I walk in the school I should have a smile on my face the same as when I start my career in my first job- I should have a smile on my face because I'm starting my life on how I want it to be –stress from getting good grades makes me to not want to come to school-I disagree I think when I look at a report card and I see a percentage go from 85 to 89 that make me want to go back the next day.*

*A school shows it cares by offering remedial classes to help students graduate – yeah we had a lot of remediation for Keystones which helped me I had to take one for geometry.*

*Because of stress or anxiety I have cried over standardized test results – no I've gotten upset over tests but not standardized tests I'm always happy with those except the SATs I'm taking those again –just because I want to do better and I think allowing you to redo them people look at it as if you do it you fail then that's upsetting – but when I do something and I know I have a backup it helps me relax and reduces anxiety.*

*Teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policy and discipline enforcement – yeah I do – one of the policies is not to wear hats in school and I fully agree with that I think it's disrespectful when I see someone walk in the hallway I don't want to have to be the one to take their hat off their head I like to see a teacher do that I think.*

*Because of stress and anxiety I have cried over grades – no- I've been upset but I've not cried*

How about so angry you wanted to punch a wall

Yeah that's happened that's just because I get upset when I fail.

*A school environment contributes to my happiness by allowing me time with my friends creating time to make new friends and providing activities I enjoy – yes absolutely I don't think – I think that this school has a lot of limitations but I don't think it stops me from finding who I am and who my friends are whatever school is a place for work but it's also a place for enjoyment of being around others I think high school really shows you how you interact and react with people.*

*Stress about getting good grades and performing well on standardized tests negatively impacts my performance – no like I said it doesn't – I don't know. I have to disagree*

because to get good grades it is stressful a little but when I see myself improve I wanna keep coming back and like with the standardized exams I know when I can take them again and again or take them and fail I've learned from that.

*Feel that the school is a very stressful place* – no I disagree yeah I don't like to wake up in the morning at six o'clock but I love being here.

*Teachers show they care when they allow students to do what they want and not expect too much from them* –no I disagree I think a teacher should expect something out of you – a lot out of you as an adult and a growing adult.

*Teachers show they care when they have planned lessons and cover the curriculum*-yeah I agree teachers should be well prepared not just go willy nilly I guess

*Regular school policies and procedures make me feel like I am valued* – yeah like I said with the last thing policy- I shouldn't be allowed to take my phone out and walk down the hall and text somebody I should be focused –

You said this one is for punching the wall

Yeah cause most of the guys have said no they don't cry but that would be the equivalent

Like I said I've been upset

That feeling of intense emotion

I'm satisfied

Ok alright

So it looks like caring in a school is preparing you for a future but yeah I see there is a concern about you not wanting to waste your time here – you want them to care about your future by mentoring and offering

Advice and guidance

And you feel that happens here

I feel it does. My biggest mentor is probably my computer visual base teacher he has been there since I've been in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and I'm not saying he's the only teacher but always if I have a problem after class I can talk to him and he'll go through well when I was younger this is what I did –but that's just me and you do what you want –it's that kind of guidance that really strikes me as important

Ok that's a good example –how about stress – one of the things we're curious about is the type of stress students are experiencing and if they feel that they're not only supported but do you feel the school should do anything to kinda educate about stress

I think there's a lot of students here that deal with a lot of stress and a lot of it is because they don't know how to cope –I deal with many stress problems I get sick over stress a lot of times but that's normally outside of school um everybody's gonna have that stress for school or day or week – last week was very stressful for me

Senior year is very hard – but even outside stress that may be affecting your school performance cause that happens too in real life

You sit there and you daydream or get sidetracked and you're thinking about outside – that's a major effect a lot of these students do have a problem with stress I for one do not think that the school is a cause of that though I look back on this year and my past years and I see it's not been hurtful it's been helpful



Ok

I found who I am I found my path –the only stress I have is trying to keep up on succeeding

So thinking about outside stress –do you think the school has a role in teaching or helping students learn coping skills

Yeah I think they do in some way like I said the school should not focus on just here but the outside and focus on the students' wellbeing – I believe they should teach students how to cope – there should be something there to show them that hey it doesn't have to be this hard –you lost a sport event well listen there's –try to improve yourself –here's how to cope with this – students are going through this all the time so don't feel alone – I have not had to deal with too much of that thankfully

Do they have support groups for students who are going through – I mean it would be realistic to expect high school students to go through death

I have not seen a support group here – not to my knowledge I should say

So it's not just general knowledge. So you do feel the school is interested in just more than your mastery of subjects

Yes absolutely

How about as far as the environment goes the physical environment do you think it's conducive to learning

A good example of that is the tree court is ready to fall apart I think we ought to be able to look up at the wall and see no cracks in it – I think it's important for me to feel I'm in a school that not only cares about me but the actual place of learning –when I see a janitor

walk up and down the hallway moping a floor that's not the best job in the world but I look at that as there's somebody out there in this school district that really cares about us kids us students

And having a nice school

Um hmm a clean school

How about going out doors

Going out doors?

Do you get a chance to go out doors

Gym and biology class

Is that something you would like to see more of

I think that everybody deserves an opportunity to eat lunch outside –right now it's just the seniors it's in the senior cafeteria but we have how many courtyards here at least 3 and I think if we were to really take care of those and have some monitors out there to stand there and keep an eye out I think it would actually improve production

You'd get some fresh air and that would help mood too

Exactly

Is there anything you'd like to see the school provide that it doesn't in the realm of emotional wellbeing and support that they're not doing or something you'd like to see them do more of –

I'd like to see them when I do scheduling –say – and I was in history class and I have to take this that and – now you only have to take a math class your senior year but before that say when I scheduled earlier do I think math class is important – absolutely but I think they should have different math classes besides pre-calculus like I said where that I'm not learning –I'm obtaining information not needed I think they should really pay attention to the curriculum read about what that class is really about – monitor that teacher how they go about a course because with that visual basic teacher he went through every day and just blew the class away with information –it was awesome – and at the end of the year he notices how we grew – he showed us he recognized that we all made an improvement and I think it's important for a teacher to tell a student where they're at –

To help the students see they're improving

Exactly that the class is actually –like I said when you take an elective that is when you choose seriously and you try to find where you want to be you are gonna have better results and when a teacher tells you you're improving you kinda get this mindset that well this is probably the direction I'm gonna go – if I have my teacher standing up here telling me I'm doing good then when I get out there in the world I know I'll be doing even better –

So it sounds like what you're talking about is positive reinforcement

Yes I'm not saying get rid of criticism but yeah – positive reinforcement- make sure a student knows they've done good don't just say happy summer –

Ok anything else you wanted to say while you're here anonymously -I did want to get out about the learning thing cause that did upset me –I struggled in pre-calc this year and to know that I'm going to go about and the information is just whew it blows your mind – don't even worry about it – I can't stand that and I'm the only one in the class to ever raise his hand and say hey where can I use this –last year I did it to my algebra 2 teacher

and I wasn't trying to get a reaction out of that – and when I asked it he said well yes absolutely you can – cause I wanted to know and he told me –we were learning to graph a certain parabola and he told me in the gaming industry with the Xbox and all that and I'm a part of that with all these computers they have to use equations to show movements on a screen and that really showed me that yes this is important

So he made it relevant

Exactly

### **KM 95563**

What time do you absolutely have to be out of here?

I have English class but we're not doing anything in there so I'm sure if I was written a pass that would be ok.

Sometimes it's hard to make a decision about school cause school to me would be the whole thing and it's kinda hard cause sometimes we separate the teachers from the actual school at least for me cause for me the school would be the principal and the different activities there and teachers are almost a different classification so it's a little bit shaky when I put an agree or disagree for different things

Expecting the school to care for your emotional wellbeing

Yeah I think that that teachers and staff should be well adjusted to like us as students – we're humans – we feel all these different emotions – we go through hard times we go through really good times – that's just a part of living life and I feel like some teachers really do not care – if you're on the verge of breaking down in class there are some teachers that will take the initiative and pull you out and – is everything ok – do you need to go down to the office and everything and those are the teachers for me as a student – I highly respect – they're able to look past just oh me getting my job done – and whatever these kids do isn't my problem

Do you find that in certain classes

Well I try not to give negative examples with peoples' names but positive things I think should be looked at and appreciated like Mr. B biology teacher – he's great with understanding emotional values of the kids he's almost like a father – he's also a teacher though – he has his serious like you need to get this done – but if your grades start to drop and he sees you change at all he takes the initiative and he'll pull you aside and like is everything alright –

Kind

Oh yes definitely

Human touch

Oh yeah and for me – I have huge respect for Mr. B – he's probably one of my favorite teachers of all time – just because he showed he had that extra push to put that extra effort into us as students and for us to grow not only academically but also as people and I think that is just a top notch example of what a teacher should be

Do you find yourself doing better in classes where that

Oh yeah

Work harder

Oh definitely because oh we're not just getting busy work this person wants to look at this paper – see if we did it right or wrong – take a test on it – and that's all

They care and you feel like

Yeah

He really cares

Oh definitely I think he is a great example of what a teacher should put their standards – and that’s like one of the cards like this – *in general teachers should show they care when they make learning fun and interesting* – yeah I think if they would make something fun and interesting I think that would find them making different ways to get us motivated to work with it –some things are hard so they can’t –math – good luck – but if they even try to push towards that I think that’s a good thing

Well and people learn better when they’re happy

Oh definitely – policy and discipline enforcement – discipline enforcement for this school is horrible – especially when it comes to dress code

When you say horrible do you mean unevenly applied

Like it’s hardly ever applied – if you’re a kid who ends up getting detention for being late and no excuses that’s paid attention to but the people who make out in the hallways every day nobody does anything to stop them that’s completely inappropriate and for me as a person I don’t wanna watch you do that every day and then girls especially in the school are never ever pulled aside for dress code and I feel there’s a lot of stereotyping going on –if you are the girl who’s almost always pretty and whatever you can get away with wearing whatever you want if you’re anyone else below that standard like stereotypical White girl if you have not even like ½ an inch on your shorts like your fingertips don’t go down ½ inch they’ll throw you into the office and other girls out there they wear miniskirts like their butt cheeks are showing out the bottom of them and it’s like half way through the day and why haven’t you been pulled over and sent to the office – there was one girl I don’t know who she was but she was walking down the hall she had a shirt that

was very see through and you could see her bra through it and it was like no you need to not like not only do students need to not – uh – I guess we're teenagers at that rebellious stage but people like that are going to keep disobeying if they are not disciplined

There has to be some consistency

Yeah exactly and they're well they'll never get me so I'll just dress like this anyhow well what's the point of having a dress code? If you're not even going to enforce it except for a few people

So it sounds like there might be some favoritism or

Oh definitely and I feel like there's kind of an avoidance with parents cause I feel like teachers and the school are terrified of parents which I don't know how you work around that but it's just like today back like back then you would look at your child if they did something wrong like explain this to me but now your child does something wrong and you go right to the school and you're like will you explain why my child's acting this way you have some responsibility to be parents I can definitely understand why there is hesitancy because then parents are going to get sick and tired of calling in once and then not having to worry about it – you know what – whatever your name is – just don't wear it –

So it sounds like you're saying it has to be more consistently applied

Oh yes definitely – *in general teachers show they care when they let students do whatever they want* – no that's not how life works you go and do a job and you do whatever you want and your boss is gonna fire you so I think that was somebody who was like I should be allowed to do what I want and when I want – that's ridiculous-that's unrealistic – these ones are so rough – I feel like I get support in this school – you get – in general I think I would agree with that cause I feel like if I needed emotional support I

could get it I have lots of friends in the school so I don't feel I need to go to an adult necessarily for emotional support so I can't speak from experience

Ok but you have a support network with peers

Yeah and if I didn't feel comfortable talking to my peers about it depending on the subject of course – I think I would try going to talk to a counselor

Who would you go to first would you go to a trusted teacher a guidance counselor I'm not sure how your school is set up

Um for me it would depend on the situation also depending on the year and what teachers I had – if I had a teacher that I was comfortable talking with about things I might but like I said it's all situational if it's something about real personal stuff I'm probably not gonna go up to Mrs. M and be like hey tell me how to fix my problem –

So you'd like see the guidance counselor

Yes

How about school nurses do they provide do you have school nurses

See I know what – you're in the middle of freshman year and while I was kinda told is that we have a school nurse but she's not actually a nurse – so if we wanted to have Tylenol during the day she cannot give that to us parents would have to have a doctor's note with our name on it and we'd have to put it in there – and

Ok every school's different

Yeah if were a hygiene or personal issue I would definitely go to the nurse - I feel like there's no – she wouldn't judge – is had a little bit of problem with anxiety last year



toward the end of school and she was very very very understanding – very helpful and she also gave a lot of insight like are you taking any medication like this could be the cause of it and it was really helpful

That's good so she really helped you with whatever was working

Oh definitely

And that's not unusual for that anxiety and stuff

Speaking of anxiety there are times when what I am learning here will not be used in real life and high school was just a waste which was a cause for anxiety – I don't think high school is ever a waste there might be things in general that you're probably not gonna use in the real world mostly with math – like I am never going to need to use this ever – and I think everybody kinda has an understanding for that but that still doesn't give you the excuse for cutting it from the educational purposes like – so I think I'm gonna put that as a sort of disagree – cause even if you're not gonna use it in the real world there's still a purpose for learning it – just see that everything kinda connects – in some way there's a purpose

That's funny too how 30 years from now I don't know – oh that's what that was

Oh yeah this one's kinds like the separation between school and teachers I have – *I feel like I am treated as an individual at the school rather than just a face in the crowd* – I think I would put this as disagree just because school-wise there is a lot of people here – it's hard for you to feel like I'm an individual and I matter especially if you don't go out and take that initiative either- I think this is more like maybe it should be just a question for

Teachers maybe cause they're the ones that are hands on every day

Do you feel your teachers recognize you as an individual

Some teachers do some don't – the ones who do like Mr. B. are few and far between most of them you'll feel like you'll go through the class and that's it which isn't necessarily saying they're a bad teacher – I think it's just part of the human interactions here – you have everybody rotating throughout the day at least for me looking at it - it's not my job

What's your class size here

Oh I don't know

Like in your classrooms are they-

Oh classrooms probably I would say at least 20 kids or more per class

Ok and there's 6 periods

There's 8 periods and that's including lunch

So a teacher might be seeing 140 students a day

Yeah –see this one I would agree with – *in general I feel the students' happiness isn't the schools priority but the school should be concerned about the overall mental and emotional wellbeing* which kinda conflicts with itself I think –um happiness and emotional state I would put in the same category – I don't feel like it should be like why aren't you smiling cause not everybody's gonna be happy all the time – and that's how it goes but I definitely think it should be a concern of our emotional and mental state because when you were saying earlier when someone has a positive outlook at something they're gonna do better so I'm gonna put that one under agree just because in general I would say that is something I would agree with – *in general teachers show they care when they try to give students advice about problems or alleviate fears of the future* – I would agree with that especially whenever they're talking about college I think there's a

wonderful wonderful educational outlook for us at this time for us to be looking at colleges and figuring out just the basics of what we might want to end up doing for the rest of our lives – cause none of us are gonna graduate and be like – I’m gonna be a marine biologist and that’s definitely what you’re gonna do –such a small percentage of people who know and then don’t change it I think they give very good advice in that aspect especially if you have questions cause they’re going to college so I would agree with that – the Keystones exams in general infuriate me – and there are teachers that the Keystone exams infuriate - I really think the Keystones have to go or be fixed and back to the drawing board

Yeah and you’re not alone in that at all

I think it was a good concept but with so many kids not passing it – we’re all used to PSSAs and then throwing these Keystones in our faces ok – I feel like it’s almost junior year at college work being pushed onto Freshmen and sophomores and juniors and seniors in high school – I feel – I hate the word Keystones –

Is it causing a lot of anxiety and stuff

Oh yeah oh yeah I mean for me I don’t have to worry about it –it’s not a requirement for me – oh my gosh good luck cause it’s rough – it’s extremely rough and I would say and not personally I’ve cried over it but I’m sure there are people out there who have – whenever I took my 1<sup>st</sup> Keystone exam I –it was in the morning – and the rest of the day I was exhausted I could not do anything else for that day – I was like what you’re saying right now is going in this ear and out the other because all of your energy and focus had to be on the Keystone – you have to do your best or you’re not gonna get it and you’re not gonna graduate –

Is it a several period or a 1 day test

For me it was a 2 day test but you would either have it in the morning or afternoon and whatever you're doing in the morning you still have to completely focus on that and even your best sometimes isn't good enough

How many hours does it take to take it each day

I - For the algebra for the biology and literature took just about a half a day

The algebra Keystone – those were split into 2 or 3 days –the algebra would take middle or ending of 3<sup>rd</sup> period from the beginning of the morning on – it's exhausting cause it's non-stop –

Emotionally then the rest of the day was a waste

Oh definitely then after that you're thinking of your answers and what if I got this one wrong what if I got all these wrong I wonder if my answer had enough to put into it –

Do you do a de-briefing after taking it

Oh yeah –something- you can't go just from having that huge amount of pressure and stress and do it well on this thing and the rest of the day you're like whew – you need to take a step back – but you're one of those unfortunate kids that as soon as you're done with that you have tests or you're loaded with homework and then for your morning classes if your teachers are taking into consideration you as an individual student in putting together any work you might have you have to find a time for the rest of the day to the rest of those classes you missed in the morning to get the work –

That adds to the stress too doesn't it

Oh yeah and if you don't have a study hall good luck – you're probably gonna have to miss some of your lunch time – yeah Keystones not on the good side – oh this one I definitely agree with *I believe the school cares about student test scores but not about*

*how much is actually learned* – you can study one night and get the arithmetic down for a test and then forget about it as long as you have a good test score even for us it's pretty much what else am I gonna need – I got my test done – I got a good score – I don't have to worry about this ever again – which unfortunately is not the case some times and you're like oh crap and then your teachers are like you should've learned this in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and I'm like well 4<sup>th</sup> grade was quite a few years ago – yeah I think they need to have more of a simple review and with some teachers there has to be a change in your attitude towards students who may not be as quick paced as you would like to host the class – not everybody is the same – I think it's really good that the school offers the afterschool tutoring I think that's great I think it would also be great if you knew what days your teacher would be tutoring – cause they'll know exactly what you're doing

That's a good point –

That is a positive thing that we have here – teachers have to start recognizing and the school in general – yeah – has to realize that we are not all programmed the same way – we'll compare it to computer programming – there's like say Kim over here who is running the most to date Windows program and she is quick at everything  
And then we have Jim way back here who's still on Windows 98 and he's running on DSL – you gotta recognize that and you can't get frustrated with those kids either – it's your job you have to deal with us every day you chose to work here you have to realize there are going to be kids here that are all different – and you have to learn how to respond appropriately instead of being like good job didn't you learn that in 4<sup>th</sup> grade –no cause you might think that's funny and Jim goes ha-ha and later on in the evening he's thinking about wow I'm such an idiot – this is sort of common sense – in general I believe a positive atmosphere the school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning – any place you go has a positive atmosphere you're gonna want to be –

Now this is the bell

That is the channel 1 bell it'll ring in another 5 – 10 minutes and that'll be the bell to go to English class so I'm gonna try to rush through these last few ones – I talk a lot – this is something if I had names of different teachers I would put this under Mr. B's –um *teachers show they care when they talk to students when they see their grades dropping or when they seem sad or distracted* – great example of a teacher actually putting this forward – sadly though I would put that in disagree because the majority of teachers do not – alright now this is a good example of this *in general teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students concerns and value their opinions* – this is a great example of them doing this right now- this is fantastic – I love that they're doing this- this school isn't a very stressful place – it's a good school – everything's got their flaws – oh yeah *stress to get good grades and perform well on standardized tests creates anxiety that negatively impacts my performance* – yes I agree with that –it is responsible for our education starting us on the right path since we spend most of our day and year within these days here they do have a little bit of responsibility for our well being and happiness –

You're about even it looks like

So this is the agree pile I have then

Yes

So I have these 4 cards left over and all the ones I've disagreed with so far I don't really want to change so

Well let's start with these with all the given cards would you say are these your 3 strongest feelings

Oh definitely

And then look at these maybe the next strongest

This is rough – *in general I feel that student's happiness is the school priority and the school should be responsible for our emotional and mental wellbeing* – this is something agree with – I still feel that the happiness is something of the school's priority cause I think that –

I remember that you said something about this –

Yeah I know which one you're talking about so I disagree that I have cried over tests

But we can recognize on the audio that you know some students have

Yeah – oh this is so hard – *I would define our school environment as kind and caring* – I mean whenever I walk in the school I'm not like this is a kind and caring place – this place it's not like it's unwelcoming but it doesn't give you that whole welcome – it's kinda like hey welcome to another school day –

Not warm and fuzzy –

Yeah but I don't really think school's should be like a daycare like we're gonna have teddy bear picnic –it's we're gonna get you on track and do whatever we can to get you through that –*in general I think the school shows it cares by offering additional help or remedial classes to help students graduate* – basically it came down to 2 different cards – that one I would put in disagree because although to be fair it could be a little more time that students could get extra help – cause you come before school or you come after school – I could have sworn they had one in the middle of the day like a –but you just never hear about it is it's almost like you're not informed – you have to dig to find out

Ok

I'm probably one of the longest people you've had in here

Well you put a lot of thought into it and you have things to say and that's what we want to hear- I just want to make sure you don't get into trouble

Do you have pass things?

I don't- you might have to go to the office –

Yeah I'm not a bad kid that always skips out on class

Is there any you had trouble with

No

Anything that surprised you when you were doing this

All over just this whole entire thing this whole activity is great this is showing that at least somebody cares – they give a crap ya know

So this in itself is a positive thing

Oh definitely

Well I think we have enough comments when you were doing your initial sort so that we can wrap it up here so you can make your other class

Ok

**F1100215**

Do I read these out loud?

If you want to – whatever you feel comfortable with



So can I go through them first and put them in piles and then if there's ones I wanna discuss then we can?

Sure

Ok

And I might just take some notes in case my recorder fails me

What if there's something I'm on the fence about like I kinda agree –where do I put that?

Wherever you feel more strongly -

I don't like this last one – it's like, hard

So these are your agree/disagree? Comments about anything?

Ok I'll start with this one – it says *I believe our school is not responsible for students' wellbeing or happiness- it is responsible for our education and starting us on the right path for our future* – I agree with the second part but the thing is if you don't feel emotionally well about school you're not gonna be able to focus on your career path so I think it has to be an even balance which I think the school is pretty good at cause there're some really good teachers here like – I feel the teachers care when they talk to me – I feel a lot of that is very true

When you say – and I agree with what you're saying first of all –when you say some of the teachers really care tell me what they do or how you know that missed about a month of school last year – and when I came back he checked up on me every day – well not every day Um I don't know if we're supposed to talk about this but I had a really hard time last year and it got really bad and there was a teacher that I had – I – he would be like are you doing well today and I would be like yeah and I have him

again this year and he'll not as much but still ask me if I'm ok and that shows me that he cares about me more than just a name in his grade book

Right – so you're – I mean he sees you as a person

A person – yes

That's awesome – had you had him before

Um I had him for half of a year for my junior year for an elective and this year my senior year I have him for AP all year

Nice – do you get to do anything where you request teachers or do you get to pick certain teachers?

I don't know – I've never felt the need to make a request cause I've never had any problems with any teachers

Good -ok so you like when they take a personal interest in you and know you individually

Yeah cause I know it's like their job to teach everyone but we're only here for 4 years and next year there's gonna be a completely new set of faces for them so I can kinda understand if they don't know me after next year but it's a nice feeling when a teacher will go out of their way to ask you how you are cause you know they're busy but you also know they care

Sure and you're here for what 8 hours a day

Yeah

Ok so that one I understand

But I still don't know what I wanna say

If you agree or disagree

Yeah

I guess I probably have to stick with disagree on it because it is – if you're not emotionally stable –if you're not happy you're not gonna be able to move on

You really can't learn

Yeah so I'm gonna stick that one with disagree

How about any others you had a tough time with

Probably this one – the stress to get good grades and perform on standardized exams create anxiety that negatively impacts my performance –and going along with this one – I don't know where I saw this one – because of stress and anxiety there are times when I have cried over standardized test results ex: Keystones, PSSA, SATs – I think these 2 really go hand in hand and I really agree with both of them cause I know – I took the SATs in May and I went home I was so nervous I was shaking the entire time cause I was thinking this is my entire future – my entire future rides on one test – so after I got my results back I was like better – I was like ok I didn't do as bad as I thought I did – but it's like that nervousness you get and there are teachers that will practice it with you but I feel like no matter how much you practice you're still gonna get that no matter what cause it's like performance anxiety – that's how I describe it

Exactly there's a lot riding on it

This is another one I went back and forth with – *I feel that school is a very stressful place* cause I don't feel the school itself is a stressful place – but if you pile on the AP classes like I have this year it can start to feel like a stressful place – cause you feel like I have to this for this class – this for this class – and it starts to make you think it's a stressful place but I feel if you really needed help you could go to your teachers – I feel like that is one

of the great things about this school – at least this year there are a lot of single teachers I wouldn't feel comfortable going – I feel like the teachers that teach the higher classes – they just seem more involved – and I think it's maybe cause they've seen the students passing through the hallways over the years and there's this more of a connections whereas when you're just starting out like when you're a freshman no one knows you but when you're a senior you – not every teacher, but you've had almost every teacher here and they all know you so that's why I think that you start to feel more comfortable with them so – I have to move this one over to disagree cause I don't feel the place is stressful but inside is stressful

Yeah and maybe some of the stress is self-imposed?

Yeah cause school isn't the only place you feel stressed – at least I know it's not for me- like there's stuff at home that happens stuff with friends that happens – so I feel it's unfair to completely blame the school for everything that's going on in my life – so would I say it can be a stressful place – yeah but I wouldn't use the word is for definite How about any stress that might be created between students cause school is also your social life to a certain extent

For me personally sometimes because I am not friends with the same people I was when I started as a freshman like I've changed they've changed and there is still a little friction between me and some of my friends but that's not the school's fault – and it's a pretty good job – not that I see them that much anymore cause we're in different classes so that's ok I feel like a lot of my stress doesn't come from friendships – my friends are a lot easy going people they're a lot like me – so we don't fight and everything is just good Do you feel you have enough opportunities to create friendship?

I think definitely like – I used to play softball – I don't anymore cause I got hurt really bad – and a lot of the girls I played with when I was really young – got separated into different teams when we got older – but we all played for the school – so when we all played during freshman year we all got close again and the entire season like that's like your family cause you see them every day 2-3 hours a day and game days really bring you close together –so I feel like sports are a good way to make friends and team becomes family

Good. Alright let's move on to the next part and I want you to continue – this is great feedback – and go ahead and make comments about anything you want to talk about –

It's getting harder now cause there's still stuff I agree with but there's not enough room- so I do agree with this one in general *that teachers do show that they care when they make learning fun and interesting* – but I also feel that's it's not a fair thing to say due to the fact that sometimes they have restrictions on them with the whole curriculum and so just because it's not fun or interesting doesn't mean they don't care so I'm gonna move that one to a disagree area – cause I know a lot of teachers that I have they feel bad- pressured but they're limited to what they do so I would say they still care even if what you'd say was boring is what you're learning but also there are different people who think different things are interesting so you can't put them in that category of fun and interesting

Good point

I'm gonna go over these things first I'm a little stuck on these ones – or do I need to do all of them

If you could place them

And go back?

Yeah then you can change them out – what are the 3 that are giving you –

Well these ones cause there are a lot of things that I agree with and I don't know where to put them cause I have all of this stuff here and like I don't know where to put them cause I don't wanna put them down here in the disagree when I don't disagree with them

Right. So let's talk about – how about reading these out loud so we can just

So the 1<sup>st</sup> one is I would define our school environment as kind and caring which I would describe it as that maybe not everyone cause this place has about 800 students obviously not everyone is gonna care about everyone else cause there's no chance to meet everyone but I feel like this is a place that there are people who don't know you that would go out of their way to help you like – I've dropped my books in the hallway and there are some people I don't even know who come and help me pick up my stuff so I would say that this place is if not caring then kind- I would definitely say there are good people here so what's giving me trouble is the only thing I have left is disagree but I don't disagree with it

And there's nothing here you would want to move

Maybe this one cause again with the whole – *I believe a school shows it cares about students when coursework allows talents to be demonstrated* -again—it's the whole curriculum thing – everybody has different passions and talents and that's great but there can't be a class for everyone – there's just not enough room – in the school and in the

curriculum so I think I might have to move this one to disagree because I feel not so much talent but if you work hard you can do anything –so if you pick a class and you work hard enough in it I feel you can do very good

Ok so you're separating success in the class doesn't necessarily mean – what am I trying to say”?

Like

Putting your effort in is what is important not necessarily

Right cause there are some people that are born with talents and there are people that have to work for what they're good at so that's why they always say what is it 90% practice 10% the actual thing and I think that works for this cause even if you're bad at something if you practice you're going to especially get good at it I think it's impossible not to get good at it if you keep trying day after day if you give up – you're not gonna get good at it but if you keep going then maybe that could be something that you're personally talented at and you're like oh wow I did this and now I'm good at it and now I can say differently now

Do you think teachers recognize and reward effort as much as they do like grades and how well a person does in the class?

I think so because I had I can't remember who it was but I can remember I had in tenth grade I was really bad at a class – I think it was math but I sat home and did problems every night and the teacher came up to me and said I can really tell you've been practicing cause you're doing much better so I think they might not do it in front of an entire class but I think they do it individually cause I have had teachers that have told me I can tell you're doing better I can tell you're doing something. Ok *I believe the school*

*values my happiness level.* I'm actually yes and no with this one because I believe they do to a certain extent like I am 1 of 800 and it's impossible for them to be like ok here's what we need to do to keep Jessica happy today –that's impossible and I think it's a little unfair to be like I need to be happy everyday cause that's just kinda life in general – you're not gonna be happy everyday- so I'm gonna put this one with disagree not because I don't think the school values – I think the school does value my happiness – but I know there's not a single person here that would look and me and not wish me to be happy but there are days when I am not happy – maybe something happened at home or with a friend and it's not their job necessarily to be like oh ok let's give you an A in this class to make you happy- that's not what they're here for they're here for me to get an education and to teach me and maybe get me through my problem without even knowing it – I believe if someone asks you what's wrong if you want to tell them you can but I am not a person who likes to talk about my problems – so I would rather be here learning getting my mind off my problems than having a teacher like what's wrong?

And you feel that's respected?

Yes.

That's good. How about the overall environment of the school – now I'm talking physical environment how the school is set up and class schedules do you think that leads to making you feel happy or does it cause anxiety

Well I'm pretty happy with my schedule this year the only bad part is the last 4 periods of my day are all AP classes but I'm pretty happy with that cause I have friends in every class and I can always go to them and I like it cause me and my friends are going in the



same direction so since I can't talk to them in class I can talk to them between classes and it gives me time to be with my friends even like while we're here

So having relationships in class is adding to how you feel

Yeah it's always fun when the teacher's like pick a partner and you're like hey

You know

Yeah

Have you seen people that maybe don't have that? You're lucky cause you're part of a team and I agree with that are there people that you know that maybe don't have that luxury

Well if they do I'm kinda the person who tries to talk with everyone I don't want people to feel left out cause I've felt that way before I've always had friends but I've never always believed I had friends but I try to talk to everyone cause I don't want them- anyone else to feel that way – I know how much that stinks so I feel the school is pretty good about talking to everyone like not making people feel left out – we do have groups in a class and there's someone who's alone cause they don't talk to anyone in that class – I have actually have witnessed people who are part of a big group will be like hey – do wanna come join us?

Good. That's really great

So I do wanna say I agree with this one –

*You feel emotionally supported in the school?*

Yes. I think I'm gonna change this one too cause *I believe our school has a responsibility to prepare our students emotional wellbeing* – I believe that goes along with this one about my happiness cause I do believe they care about my emotional wellbeing and to an

extent it is part of their job – cause 8 hours a day 5 days a week I’m under like their supervision so I’m their responsibility but again there’s so many people in the school you can’t expect them to care only for you – I keep bringing up last year but last year I think some kids forget that teachers are people too – they have a life outside of school – they have children, they’re married – I think people sometimes forget that – they see teachers that the only place they are is here – teachers have stress – I know a lot of my teachers have 8 classes a day – however many papers to grade – they have stuff they need to worry about and just because they’re not asking you how you are everyday doesn’t mean they don’t care –so I think I’ll move this one to disagree too. This is actually another one that I have a problem with – *the stress from getting good grades makes me not want to come to school* –I can see where some people would feel that way but for me it’s more like – I am always worried about getting good grades, it’s the way I am but it doesn’t make me not want to come to school, it makes me want to come to school so I can continue to get those good grades cause I – if you start missing school you start missing what you’re learning and then things just get worse so I’m gonna out that one the entire way down there. This is another one – *they show they care when they ask about your life* but that’s not fair cause I feel there’s also a taboo about teachers asking you about your life and some places would be like why are you doing that –that’s weird – so I don’t know – I think they can still care about you even if they don’t ask about your life even if they ask you about your inner school life cause you’re here you’re all here – and that’s completely normal but some people would look at that and say don’t do that. This is another one that I agree with I just don’t agree with the wording this makes it seem so definite that the school’s such a stressful place but I would agree *if it said that this school*

*can be a stressful place* –cause there are a lot of days I come in here and I'm stressed out –I have so much homework and that stuff but that's just the way it is when you take AP classes – but if I come in with the mindset that I'm gonna be ok I'm gonna make this a good day – I mean – I did all my homework I'm ready for all my tests – it's not going to be stressful

Let me ask your opinion about stress that may not be academic. Stress that's like bullying – kids that are isolated or targeted – relationship stress, cliques, that sort of stress

I feel – I don't know if all this is purposeful but there's a lot of outside stress like I'm a very stressful person – I mean I used to be – not any more I'm working on it – but every little thing used to stress me out – I could be at home and I'd be playing with my dog and I'd drop a ball and I'd drop his tennis ball before I could throw it – I'd get stressed out over that – so I think that – I'm very like picky I don't want to call myself a perfectionist but I like things in a certain order and if something went wrong even the tiniest thing – I would start to stress out and I feel that's how other people are too –say there are 2 people in a relationship and they break up that's gonna cause stress for you, cause, for me at least, when it happened to me it meant I didn't have that person to go to anymore- you don't just lose your boyfriend, your girlfriend, you lose your best friend –you lose the person you talk to all the time- that's really hard and then to add on the stress from school I feel that's a hard thing to do –so I definitely think there's stress from outside forces too- because everybody has a personal life –yeah so I'd say this place can be stressful. I'm gonna put this one with disagree because the school is definitely 100% responsible for our education but I do still wanna say that they are responsible for our emotional wellbeing because if I do have a problem I do want to feel comfortable going to someone

like I don't wanna feel left out I don't wanna feel like there's no one here I can talk to like my friends are great and not that I'd go talk to a teacher about my personal life but if I really needed like life advice I don't wanna go to someone my age, I'd want to go to someone that has that experience- cause if I go to someone who's just gone through what I've been through or hasn't even gone through the things I've gone through they're not gonna be able to give me very good advice and I think that's even a right path for our future because I need what college should I go to what college would you recommend – I can't ask my friends that cause they're going through it at the same time and we're all confused about college so maybe care is the wrong word but they should be there if we need the advice which I feel a lot of them are. Um *I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotional wellbeing or happiness it is responsible for our education and starting us on a right path for our future*

So do you think the school maybe has the responsibility to teach you the skills to combat stress or anxiety or maybe some methods or skills

I don't know if it should be responsible per se cause school is for learning like the basics math reading all that stuff but I feel like maybe it should be an elective like I'm taking consumer math this year which is pretty much learning about debt – all that stuff that I will have to use in the future so I think it would be good to offer like a life basics' class like how to handle stress, how to fix a tire, basic life stuff, cause you're not gonna learn that anywhere- like a lot of people will be like- 'oh I can just go look it up on the Internet' but that's not the same thing as learning it from an actual person. I used to have really bad anxiety and I didn't know what to do with it – til I talked to someone about it like I actually went and got professionally

That's great

Yeah, and they're just like well what makes you happy and I was like- oh, I like music, I like writing, I like reading. Well when you're anxious- not in the middle of a test but at home and you're doing homework and you start getting shaky just stop what you're doing and go read a book and you can read that on the Internet but when you read it on the Internet you're like oh this is stupid what do they know – then you go talk to a real person and you're like that's really smart that's a great idea so I feel maybe there should be a class that maybe here we'll teach you how to manage stress we'll teach you how to manage your anxiety because it is hard like I was actually diagnosed with anxiety disorder and I was on medication for it – I'm better now but it didn't make a difference about it until I got that help and I feel as though not everyone's on the same level –maybe if I would have had the chance to do it in school maybe it wouldn't have gotten as bad as it did cause I wasn't in as many AP classes last year and there was a lot of summer homework and over the summer I'd be just so bad cause like – I like having summer break – but the good thing about school is you can see your friends for sure every day and if you need them you can talk to them but it's a lot harder to text your friend can you help me with the homework – cause basically they're gonna say oh do you want me just to send mine to you and you're like no cause that's not going to help me I wanna actually sit here and talk it out with you so that's a little bit harder to do. Ok this one – *I believe there's no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests.* This is just an awful way to look at it to think that the only thing you're good – even if the school makes you feel that way that's not the way you should think about yourself – if that's the way you're starting to think about yourself you need to

talk to someone because that's the way I was starting to feel ,like, all I'm good for is passing tests but that's not true- I'm good for coming and talking to my friends, taking care of my friends when they need me – I'm good for petting puppies in the pet store, that's what I'm good for so I completely 100% disagree with this one

So do you mind if I ask and if you don't want to talk about this that's fine but when you were going through that situation last year – was there someone in school that helped you or directed you that maybe you needed to see someone or you felt comfortable talking to At that point no because I completely shut myself down. It wasn't the school it was me. It got so bad I stopped talking to all my friends, I stopped talking to my parents – I was afraid to talk to my parents cause I would think that they would know what I was doing so if I might have been even the slightest bit more open about what was happening to me and what I was doing I probably would have been able to go to someone. But I was so closed off. I was so locked up in here in my head that I couldn't even –I would stop talking for days I'd go to class and teachers would call on me and I would just sit there – Horrible feeling

Yes

Painful

Yeah it was

I'm so glad you got through that too that you had the wherewithal to realize

Yeah I actually went to my mom- my mom went through a lot too cause my mom is bi-polar and I told her about it and she didn't want me to do anything cause she had known what it was like and she didn't want me to go through that and I was like mom – I'm not

gonna get any better so finally it was a couple weeks in my junior year she finally did something about it

Did any of the teachers notice anything –you weren't talking or did anybody approach you

Um the teacher that asks me how I am he approached me a few times

That's good to know

Yeah but I think cause it was so early in the year some of the teachers just assumed that's the way I was- that I was the quiet person the shy person but that's not who I am – I don't blame them for that cause I was a Freshman and they didn't know – but I am a very vocal person if someone says something I don't agree with or I know is wrong I won't chomp them but I will say, hey that's not right...

So that was a major personality change for you

Yeah like my friends definitely noticed and they knew that's not me but I just didn't know how to talk – maybe that would be a good class – like how to talk about it when you're having issues because they tried so hard but my communication issues wouldn't let me talk – so that's a pretty good idea

That's what they talk about – emotional intelligence

Yeah

That's not unusual for your age and especially the teens that are juniors and seniors who are going through stuff like that and are not knowing what to do about it

Yeah like junior year – there's a few like honors' classes but junior year is the 1<sup>st</sup> year you can take AP classes and I've always been considered one of the smart kids but I was never in any of those honor classes cause I didn't know what they were I just thought

they were more classes so when I started in AP classes I was like, ok I can do this and then I got to the summer homework and I was like ‘I can’t do this’ so I was stressed out about that but you can’t stress about everything – I got advice from my mom that she got from my dad about stress – I guess she used to stress out a lot and he just looked at her one day and said, ‘why do you stress about things that haven’t even happened- you don’t know how they’re going to turn out’ and I’m like, ‘that’s really smart and it’s just not worth it to worry about the future’- like what’s gonna happen is gonna happen maybe I – if I know it’s gonna happen, if I make a bad decision – maybe I can change that a little but if it’s something in the future I can’t plan for, like, the only dramatic thing is, like, if something happened to my car I can’t sit here every day and stress about something’s going to happen to my car because my car’s fine- my car’s perfect – if you do that you make problems that aren’t there and I think that was a lot of my problem too – I was making problems-like I came to school and I’d be like, ‘oh man they’re gonna have a surprise test on me toda’y and that never happened. Ok this is another one – *placing the added pressure of adding the Keystone exam to graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.* I do agree with that but I also don’t because Keystones for me are not a graduation requirement because they changed it but even though I didn’t need them to graduate I still wanted to do good on them – I didn’t wanna go in to them like wow this is stupid I’m just gonna purposely fail no I’m not gonna do that – I wanna do well -I understand this isn’t a requirement for me but like I couldn’t – this sounds really weird but I like the English one cause I like English so I scored the best on that one I got over a 1600 – so how can you just say you don’t care –how can you not want to do well – everyone was like this is so stupid we don’t need it – I never understood that



Well some people like taking tests – I was one of those weird people I actually think they're kinda fun

Yeah I think I like challenging myself and also weird – I like taking notes- like people are like 'oh my gosh, I hate how this one teacher just lectures' and I'm like- I'll write down everything

That's great for college

Yeah, I like the way my handwriting looks. Ok- *in general teachers show they care when they plan lessons and cover the curriculum-* yes and no because I don't want to say that teachers should go entirely away from the curriculum but I have had a few teachers that have said this really isn't the curriculum but we're gonna do this for one day just to see how it is – and we do it and they're like that didn't work but still planned lessons aren't always that great cause a teacher has the same class 7 -8 periods a day like if you really expect them to say the same thing every day every class period over and over and over again that's not fair – they're only human so I definitely disagree with that one

Imagine being the last class of the day

Yeah they probably lost all their steam- they're human you can't expect that. *I believe this school is not taking into account that students can be overwhelmed with homework and extracurricular activities.* Ok I definitely don't agree with that cause the teacher I've been talking about – he doesn't give homework because he knows students are busy and he knows that we don't have just his class and we do other stuff but he's like, 'I'm never gonna give you homework' like if there's an essay maybe but I'm never gonna be like do this worksheet, like, there are teachers that know that you have other stuff so I'm gonna change that a little bit cause I strongly disagree with that. Ok- *in general teachers show*

*they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.*

Again that's not fair – that's not how you show you care about someone like if went home to my parents and I was like show me you care by letting me do whatever I want – they'd be like, wait no cause like doing whatever you want is not always a good thing. I can think of extreme scenarios for this like, I'm gonna go out and drag race my car and my parents are like ok do whatever you want – I have to laugh at some of the- it just doesn't make sense to me. That's a little, like, crazy. Alright *I believe our school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing* again, maybe they shouldn't be 100% concerned but I do feel in this school they have good many – at least you're not just a face in the crowd cause I've had teachers my freshman and sophomore years that still say 'hi' when they pass me- so to me that's caring cause- and you know, call me by name and, like ,you've had 2 or 3 classes after me and you still remember my name – I think that's incredible. Alright. *In general teachers show they care when they teach to the standards and prepare students for the exams.* Ok I have a question about this one – when it says exams –does that mean the tests they're giving or SATs PSSAs

Eh good question – how are you interpreting that

Well when I think of what they give I think tests not exams and I've normally heard them called Keystone exams

Ok we'll go with that

Yeah um – I think that's not really fair either cause even teachers don't know what's gonna be on the Keystone –they have access to old ones but they change them every year so they're not gonna be able to teach you exactly what's gonna be on that exam so I have to say I disagree with that one yeah they can do their best to teach you to the standards

but it's hard cause not everyone learns the same so I don't think it's fair to say they didn't teach me well enough- and there are also people who don't do the work so to say they didn't care about me when you didn't do any work is not fair to the teacher or the school. And the last one – *in general teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policies and discipline enforcement* – this one is weird for me cause I do believe there are things that need punishment but there are also things that don't need punishment this is a huge topic – like dress code – I don't understand there have been people who can wear the same shorts up to wherever and one of them will get in trouble and one won't and I mean they've been really cracking down on it this year I don't want to say dress code is stupid but I don't understand what's wrong with my arm like if I wear something to here I'm violating dress codes – I just have freckles there's nothing wrong with that

You're not allowed to expose your arms at all

Um hm no and they made a rule this year that guys are not allowed to wear those wife beaters and they're you have to stop doing that

Keep the standards all the way across – what else could you get disciplined for around here

Like missing school too many days, getting into fights in the hallways, um senior pranks, stuff like that I think there are times say you're always missing 1<sup>st</sup> period if you have a class that's understandable – but the one year I had a study hall 1<sup>st</sup> period and my mom would make all my doctor appointments for 1<sup>st</sup> period and I don't know if I ever got in trouble and this was last year and they left me alone last year – but I feel you would get in trouble for that – but you're not missing anything – I would come in and she might make

my doctor's appointment for 7 o'clock and first period would go to like 8 something so I'd get here at 8:15 so I'd be here for 5 minutes of study hall and I wouldn't miss anything – as for fights yeah I think depending on the fight like if no one gets hurt and no one is like emotionally or mentally or physically hurt and it wasn't shouting just 2 people arguing I don't think there should be any repercussion for that if you're not being too loud you're not hurting anyone but physical fights

Yeah

As for dress code I mean there are some things I agree with but there are other things that are why and there are some people that break the dress code and get away with it like there's a rule that you're not allowed to wear crop tops but 2 days ago I saw a girl wearing a crop top showing her stomach she wore a jacket but you could still see her stomach and whenever you ask her about she's like it's because I'm tall and I'm like ,no that would fall in the same place on everyone it's a crop top- I think they're consistent on the big things fighting drugs but when it comes to little stuff unless it's a very nit-picky teacher they're not gonna be able to cause like administration can't run around all day looking at people going oh that's breaking the dress code that's not fair so I guess I'll put that one in the last – yeah –ok

Ok so you want to look over it and see if there's anything you want to change

No I think it looks good

**JE95564**

What are regular procedures?

Probably like rules, policies and routines they might have as far as –pretty much concerning lunch time dress codes that kind of stuff

When it says performance here is that just on the test or is that overall – my daily life or something?

I'd say your school performance

Once I put it down I can change it though?

Actually you can move it anytime you want

I'm just trying to see if there's anything I want to move around here a lot of these were similar except for 1 or 2 words- ok I'm good

I'm looking at extremes because it sounds like here you like the interpersonal connection

Yeah that's really important cause they're the 1<sup>st</sup> people that would notice something so if they don't seem to care the problem may not even be discovered – so I feel like teacher-student connections are

That's a really good observation too that the teacher is the first line –it sounds like that's what you're saying and absolutely they spend a lot of time with their students-do you find that here?

Ah yes I have –I find that here with many teachers that they have a very personal connection like they definitely care about the students not just me but other students as well they seem to care about everyone

Let's see with the disagree you feel the school is responsible for the students' emotional wellbeing-yeah

Yeah education's 1<sup>st</sup> but that's probably a close second or third

You were talking about one of the ones you questioned was about stress and yeah performance –now how did you interpret that

Ah I took performance not just as on the test itself but like everyday school life –getting good grades is important but being at going through school every day is important cause yeah you got tests and good grades are important but going to school every day is like a trial but like you go through the everyday and you do well not even like on tests and of course every teacher wants you to get an A but you can't always do that so you gotta like your day- you have to handle that you can't always put in the extra study time you're supposed to -so yeah it may negatively impact just a little bit but stress from school - stress could be something that I don't feel cause I feel stressed to do well but good grades on every little thing is not everything so that's why I'm concerned about the overall

You have the school values my happiness in the disagree

Yeah when I come to school I feel pretty happy -just the normal- I don't need the special treatment- I'm just happy to be the normal in the school but the one thing that really bugs me at this school is that the school is like there's no really enforcement of a lot of things – like kids can like – I don't know if you know what vaping is the electronic cigarettes- that runs rampant here – kids'll go to the bathroom and they'll come back and you can just smell cause they're flavored smokes – like guys smell like strawberries and stuff – and unless they're putting on perfume I don't-

Who would do that right?

Yeah is I find that to be a real rampant problem –that's the only thing that bugs me there doesn't seem to be any like attempt to stop that and I don't know if there's any way to stop kids from doing that like teachers will divide up students like one will get a Saturday

detention and like there's no real punishment for it like I don't go to the bathroom – I'll wait all day to go to the bathroom

Because of

Yeah because it's that bad I don't want to go to the bathroom and smell like cherries and come back to class and people will smell me and think that I do it –is don't like to do that so that's why I'll wait all day or use the gym bathroom

So obviously smoking's not allowed but they just kinda let that one slide by?

I don't know if they don't wanna – cause there's no –you can't stop kids from (?) the nicotine but you can at least try to get them a 7 hour gap in their day so where they're not smoking but kids do that

Wow wow you're the 1<sup>st</sup> one that said anything and I can absolutely see where that would be –

Yeah it's pretty bad with some kids –they'll smoke in class and they'll go like this real quick to dissipate the smoke real quick and you still smell it – like the strawberry and I don't know if the teacher just chooses not to or ignore it on purpose or they don't notice it like some I could see that they really don't notice it but others I'm like – you can't do anything – you can write them up –but they're not going to stop so it's like a useless action to try to do anything about it

Yeah and those smells can be so nauseating

Yeah – some kids have allergic reactions like perfume and stuff- I don't know if it's the same

Hm. Let me see what else – I'm looking at I feel our school had a responsibility to care for our emotional wellbeing and happiness?

I feel like education is definitely the first thing that the school should do that's why we're here to become successful or at least learning to get an education to be a better member of society –emotional wellbeing is a really deep word for it like happiness is more stable – people react differently to different levels of stress like I could have a quiz any day of the week I see that as very little stress –it's maybe 15 minutes extra study time but another student could take that as the worst thing ever –it's too hard to gauge it or monitor every kids' emotional wellbeing but kids that need it could have it but they don't need to do like every single student cause most students here are well stable like at least in my grade anyways we all seem to be very functioning adults that we all do what we need to do – set time aside and have our fun time

So you're saying that the school shouldn't go out of its way to worry about each and every student – how about overall do you think the school should provide any sort of ... wow I don't know if they should have any type of course that would be one option or do you think it should be a routine thing

Like once a week or something

Teachers go over things like how to manage stress –it's one thing to say we know you're stressed but

In psychology I took a class this year and Mr. Z(?) who has the psychology we do a whole unit on stress and how it can affect you negatively and positively and that was really educational and informing for us we students, like we have this test and it can be bad stress if we let it and as long as we study and do well and prepare for it we can turn it into a positive stress and not take the negative –oh I don't want to fail this test instead I'll just accept the failing grade and you might take the study course you might take this test and study and that's positive stress

So you learned in that class about not only the negative effects of stress



Yeah and about the physical and emotional signs of stress

Wow that's cool do you think that would be valuable for all students?

I think it would be –yeah especially like starting out in high school middle is a little stressful but high school's the bigger leap so feel that maybe like an assembly at the beginning of the year to learn about stress

Yeah that's a cool idea and that's a life skill

Yeah cause he taught it like it was we need to address stress in our lives – you see stress everywhere

What other things do you think might be helpful- well even things you mentioned in your psych class that you think might be valuable

You mean like stress or-overall

Overall that you think might be valuable

Besides just knowing your stress how to cope with stress is another thing he covered – sometimes you can be unstable with the stress that you'll get but other times you'll become more stable just depends on the person so people the way they talk, like you got to go see a psychotherapist to be classified cause that's what they're qualified and get paid to do but just kike simple strategies for the student might be like –we had this activity we were supposed to go through –a list of things and some of the things we would not deal with at this time in our life like getting married –having kids and we're supposed to give a stress number to it and in the end if you had a stress number like over 345 or something you're considered maximally stressed out and we had kids go way over like a 1000 and I was like one of them but it was –he said some kids didn't fill out the

stuff and we like a few of us turned it into something different like having a girlfriend or having a dog or something and it's still stressful and you're like somewhere you have to realize there's a lot of stress in life – when we first started the stress unit I was like I have a little stress, like tests and everything like that and actually I have to sit down and plan this and plan for that in your daily life like plan for your birthday, your Mother's Day, and your mother's birthday like all that stuff I have added up to a lot of stress

Did that change you?

A little bit yeah it made me realize that stress is everywhere and he's saying if you don't handle it well in an organized manner you will have like the droopy head and that is a physical sign

Wow that's cool – did they talk about depression

Yeah we did talk about depression and how that was a pretty big thing with stress like how stress can go into depression

And anxiety

And anxiety yeah we covered that pretty well and like the signs and symptoms of depression and how you could –like there's medication and then there's talk therapy too which we went into both sides of the positives and negatives of both but once you get into depression it's a life long struggle you can get out of depression but you can also have the chance of seeping back into it if your life is too stressful again so you have to balance it out for the rest of your life

What other things now I'm not talking about just classes or assemblies but things in the school or about the school that could be changed or you'd like to see more of I'm talking even environment-type stuff

Ok um just one thing I feel would help there's a lot of things in the school that you can get punished for but some students won't get punished –sometimes I'm sure there're reasons they don't get punished but there are other times –like one thing that really bugs me is coming in late –like students will show up late because they slept in or that's what they say or the car broke down or something but what the real reason is they just wanted to skip a test they had – and there's no punishment for that and it makes me a little bit angry that I show up on time for everything and even if I wasn't fully prepared for it I still took it –like you can't be fully prepared for anything and some students will just go around that by skipping that period intentionally and you just can't skip a period cause if you had that later in the day you wouldn't show up that day early but say it's seventh period you just can't skip seventh period and then go back to 8<sup>th</sup> – that they'll catch but the other stuff they won't

Like the beginning and not the end so the inconsistency

Yeah cause I've never heard of anybody getting punished cause they can't actually prove that you didn't accidentally sleep in and then will be like yeah I just skipped today or I skipped the first half of the day –I didn't want to take that calc test – yeah that's a bummer I still took it

Do they get to make it up?

Yeah they'll make it up –I don't know if it's the same test or the teacher'll take responsibility and make it harder but I don't know –the teachers won't say that

Yeah how about anything with the environment

Um I know we used to have like a trail back by the primary school it was an old nature trail but I don't know how well it was kept

What a neat thing –you could go out

Not in the middle of the day but after school hours you could – we used it like once when I was in primary we used it one time primary we had more stuff like that we had a science competition where we went outside and you had to come up with a way to keep your eggs safe while you walked through it and I came up with a container and you put Styrofoam –special industrial Styrofoam my dad got for me and we threw it and it survived awhile and some kids had 6 helium balloons tied onto the box

Um do you have much chance of going outside

It was more like primary –this school we really don't go outside except for gym class and about all the GE in 9<sup>th</sup> grade we did we'd walkout just around the parking lot to identify flowers and types of plants and there was a greenhouse and we just placed them in there to see if they grew over time –but that was the only time I remember going outside except for gym class –just walk the track –

Do you go out for lunch-are you allowed to do that?

Um there is a courtyard where you can go out for lunch but mostly seniors are the only ones that use it I'm sure juniors could go out there just like any other class can go and the one is connected to the senior café which is juniors and seniors so if you wanted to you could go

You think that's something kids would do?

Yeah a lot of students do it so lots of students like to go outside and sit on the benches –to get some sun which is nice

How have the Keystones affected you

Me personally – not really cause we –my grade is the last grade that doesn't have to pass them –to graduate but I did anyways when we took them in 9<sup>th</sup> grade –I didn't feel it was really that bad Mr. H(?) the biology teacher did I felt a good job preparing us for it there was algebra biology reading –yeah I didn't have to take any remedial courses –I passed them all the 1<sup>st</sup> time – he showed us like the spectrum of where each student lied [sic] in the thing barely there was red mostly green and a few blues and when we took the practice ones we took those like twice or something –that was nice it was like preparing you knew what was going to be on it like what they wanted you to see so taking the practice Keystones was a big thing so like when I took the SATs for the 1st time she like skipped through directions real fast and I was like saving a few seconds for re-reading the directions we got done pretty quick yeah I felt she blazed the direction reading so I'm a pretty fast reader so yeah just taking the practice stuff was a key thing –well the practice ones I scored in the blue every time- so when I took the real one it was like taking the practice except it was graded for real so I wasn't really too stressed about the – we studied in class we went over everything again and we took them when we were done

And there was enough support

Yeah there was enough support

Some students said they were pretty grueling –they felt kinda wiped out afterwards

After the Keystones it took like 4 periods of the day I think but afterwards any big test like that –after the SAT I was drained too –any big test like that you're gonna feel tired afterwards but I was just a little tired like going through the rest of the day was hard but the teachers were aware you took a test for 4 periods so they were pretty understanding Are they allowed to provide water or snacks

Ah while you're taking it I think we take a break but I don't know if they did a snack or a drink if you really wanted to you could bring something I'm sure –we did for the SATs

but like for the Keystones you take nothing to your desk I don't know if they don't want to take the risk of a student spilling a drink all over the

But they take water off you

I think it's like student-dependent cause it's like a time so once you finish it you have to wait and I think you take 2 modules and they split it up amongst the days I think it really depends on the student taking it how long it'll take cause at least this year we weren't allowed to go to the library from period 1-4 and I'm not sure they're testing all those periods or doing administrative stuff-yeah they take a little bit of time –like half the day I would say –you do your module then you take a break then you do another module and you take a break

Are there any cards that you had a struggle with like you just thought I don't know about this one

I'll look over them this one was

I believe there is no use for me at this school but to pass classes and do well on standardized tests

For me as a student that's my role to do well in school and get an education and it's not my only role at this school like I mainly come here –it's easier to come to school when your friends are here and you try to make new friends it's really easy to come here and socialize this is one big social aspect of any person's life – going to school and the next one's college and the next one will be the workplace –but the first true place you get to socialize and develop as the person you are is school and you discover who you are what you like and don't like about certain things –that's what I thought of when I saw that one –I came here not really to pass tests but to get to do things that interest me but also to do –to develop the person I am the social aspects how I want to act and be in life –that's kinda weird phrasing but that's how I took it

Do you think the school does a good job at helping assisting in that sort of thing?

I think so. they do plenty like in clubs and everything they provide time like channel one like group projects like most of the time I stay with who I'm really friends with we hang out they're the other people I go to first at the school and if there's nobody in any of the classes I'm in –it's hard to jump from like a different social group sometimes cause I'll be with my really tight friends who we're all close with but then you'll have to make new ones in the school like in the class otherwise the school year it'll be a really boring class to be in –so I always listen to what people say and give them what I think they should hear from my perspective. I mean, I don't tell people how to live their life but I'll give them my experiences cause I'm a little older than most of the kids in my grade so I have more experiences in life –and just trying to jump social groups sometimes –cause you wanna have someone to talk to or to do a group project with incase they come around so you try to find that person the 1<sup>st</sup> day and you're sitting around in class and you take a look at –and you're, alright who's gonna be my social person- and you talk to when you get the breaks –so when you don't have anybody like that you gotta find –and I feel it's kinda hard cause the teachers don't provide that sometimes cause sometimes you'll do introduction activities at the beginning, like- hi my name's Jacob...I like this, I don't like this –those are all ways to be funny at the beginning of the year I just try to be funny cause that's how I am in life –so most teachers do one of those but some don't –instead half way through the year we'll have a paper we work on and yeah work with somebody in class or by yourself or –and most people work on it by themselves cause there wasn't a provided time to get to know anybody so if you got a problem you sort of ask for his name this year who you think is one of the smartest people in the class ask like hey how'd you do this one and that's like me – other times you get a paper you work alone or your tight friends we'll all work together –sometimes it's harder than others

So it'd be helpful to have opportunities to interact even within the classroom and you kinda get to know different

Yeah yeah and the other thing is we –most of these kids I’ve been with since kindergarten –we’ve been through different classes throughout the years – some kids just came over 9<sup>th</sup> grade from St. Luke’s so there’s less years but it’s still like at least 2-2 ½ almost 3 of getting to know the same people in your grade and sometimes there are people that aren’t in your grade that are in their classes that’s a really hard thing – yeah but kids are kids o usually you have the same aspects but it’s just sometimes it’s easier cause I’ll think to myself, wow, we had that class back 3 years ago, do they even still remember my name? –sometimes you forget over time – or I’ll go- hi Jude –so I’m not the most popular person but I’m in- me and my friend are in the same boat – we’re popular, but we’re not invited to the popular things

No? I get that – you’re kinda not like the main –

Yeah

So how did you answer the question about you feel like an individual –

It was this one I remember it was a face in the crowd or something

Oh that’s the one –so what do you think about doing this? What’s your opinion of this whole thing that we’re doing right here and just...

When I was doing this there were always certain situations that came into my mind and I was oh with this idea in mind – It will definitely go here but if you don’t have a situation or experience in one of these you’re kinda at a loss for –but generally with my high school career I pretty much knew where I wanted to place everything when I read them but there were a few cards –what’s the wording on this mean –take a closer look at it but it was a nice idea to have everything laid out like with the negative and positive truly on a spectrum where I could place everything – like anybody that comes in – oh wow I see that the student values this like you do right at the beginning and I see value at the student-teacher relationship right away – I like this activity



That's cool that's great that's really good feedback –is there anything else that you'd like to say since you're completely anonymous

Um just like there are a few kids at this school this grade that really bug me – they're like I don't know if they're not willing to or just don't want to or they're not able but like but when they come they focus 100% on the social aspect and I've been invited to go drinking and do drugs but I always turned it down cause I've learned through health class and my own personal experience is that's a bad place to be –drinking is ok at some points in your life like, you're middle-aged and you can go out and have a couple beers- in high school it's mainly too important for your brain development to do that – detrimental kids will do it anyways and they'll smoke their (?) and their marijuana and invite other kids to do it -it's just not my thing that's not my social life and I won't say it meanly but- thanks but no thanks –there was one time – I feel school's supposed to be a place for learning but we were sitting in study hall one day it was this year – a girl left the class for like 20 minutes and she told us she was gonna go have sex- I was totally didn't believe it – like where you gonna do that at in this school without getting caught –nothing's gonna happen she's probably gonna smoke a joint in the bathroom – she comes back drenched in sweat and her zipper was unzipped and I said the barn door's open and she oh yeah thanks – I didn't know if it was like a prostitution thing or what and I didn't ask I didn't want to know

And no one noticed? Wow she must know the school better than a lot of people –

I'm pretty sure she got busted for other stuff in the pas-t I know she's been in trouble before –people can do that and nothing can happen

You know there's been a few other comments about people making out in the halls and stuff

The PDA is like if you find someone in high school that you want to make out with in the hallways I'm ok with that just don't do it right in the middle of the hallway –go off to the side or something and don't make out completely, like if you find someone in high school you hold hands walking down the hall that's fine – you wanna show people that you're dating or show off that's fine –and a kiss on the cheek or on the lips is fine just don't have a make out session in the middle of the hallway –get a room or something then they swipe each other's butts –there's one couple in my grade that's pretty bad at that – I'm in the same classes with them and they'll like have this complete make out session and see ya next period for 41 minutes I think you can survive it

Well you gave us a lot of good opinions

That's good I said what I needed to say

I'm glad you enjoyed this

Yeah it was a good time

#### **JD 112664**

So I think the keystones don't put a lot of pressure on people but it's a hassle for everyone to do it(18) –it's more emotional for the teachers cause they have to fit it into the curriculum –I really don't think the school does well with the education to be successful in life cause so far I've learned all this crazy stuff about triangles and Pythagorean identities but I don't really know how to pay mortgages and how to run a house and taxes and I feel like we could do a little more better at that –just introducing a little

Like life skills

Yeah

Like things you're gonna need either now or in the future –

Yeah they have a class for that but the dumb kids go to that –they have the higher up stuff where they want the smart kids to go so the smart kids don't have that background so I think that should be presented

Yeah that's a good suggestion

(7) I think our teachers do a good job of that most of them – that's 1 thing with Knoch

(10) I think the school really focuses on statistics cause right now they're cutting French and everyone loves French but they say not as many people are signing up – so they're getting rid of it – but there's still a lot of people so I don't know if the school really supports or focuses more on statistics than on individuals – I agree with this one too (25) cause if you're not happy you're gonna be distracted I think our school does a decent job with the teachers – teachers plan a lot

So you don't feel they just repeat things from year to year

No they make a plan and then they have to change their plan on a snow day they do a pretty good job fitting in everything by the end of the year – I don't think our school allows enough time to be with our friends (8) and really have like team projects I feel like team building would be a good thing –

You know that you're not the only one that said that- I believe that too cause part of the same statistic they force you to do certain classes they only have 3 math classes and if you don't pass one then you have to do it again and again so they do want you to do well and focus on that which isn't totally a bad thing but –I feel you should have a balance and the teachers do a pretty good job connecting with the students like the 1<sup>st</sup> week is awesome cause they tell their story then they ask about your story yeah they become your friends

So you have personal – I don't mean personal but-

Yeah

A relationship where you can –

Oh yeah – comfortable they're like a coach and when you graduate from a class or pass a class I still go back and visit – I don't know if the school can fix that cause that's more of a state/country thing- I believe that too like they should help you find a career better – they have a guidance counselor and you can go speak to her – but I think they should have someone come to the class and speak and say oh yeah you can do this and this and this cause we did that in middle school –

So like a career day

Career day or even a field trip like if it's a biology class maybe you could go to some science center or –yeah I think that's true because of the test scores more money comes in –and positive atmosphere is good – and I think this is big too – cause teachers know when something's wrong – when you're an A+ student and you drop to a D they ask you –and they do a good job – all the ones I've had –

Do you think they notice maybe students who don't have such good grades- maybe a C student –

Yeah cause usually sometimes they answer and they're outspoken even if they're wrong –some days they are just withdrawn – they seem distracted and most teachers notice that

They see that

And if it's really bad they try and talk to them I had a French teacher and one day I kept getting all these easy questions wrong and he's like oh what's wrong with you –like

straight-forward but he knew something was wrong – and most teachers do that too consider their opinions – I agree it's a stressful place overall – I think the school does a decent job – they have tutoring – once a week for math – so I think they're doing the best they can with helping you –that's true stress of getting good grades always impacted performance – I don't think that's true – I know there's stress – but you still have to go to school – I think it should be both there should be a balance between emotional wellbeing and happiness and education because both of them go hand in hand if you're emotional in negatively way you won't be able to focus as much cause –or perform the way you could –

Do you feel there is a place for that in school

Yeah

It shouldn't just be something you take care of outside

Yeah our school is kinda like t(?) people so they're gonna get rid of one of the guidance counselors and I thought we should keep them - that's the main part of keeping us balanced emotionally so I think we should keep them

I forgot to ask you if you're involved in any type of sports

Yeah I play Lacrosse we're not exactly a school sport but we're a club –and I'm part of French club –we don't have a lot of clubs either that's another thing I think we could add on –

How about – well I guess that could be the same as any extracurricular thing – like theater or band

I did band and I liked it but it didn't fit into my schedule –we have a good band and our theater is awesome so

That's really neat ok

Yeah school is really stressful

Ok are you comfortable with these

Yeah I think I am – I agree with some of these it's just not as strongly – yeah I feel like the guidance counselors do as much as they can to help us emotionally but it's pretty hard cause we don't really have the solid program – like I feel that team-building even if it's something fun like sports we could spend a day outside- out in the air and capture a flag

That's so much fun

Yeah it makes you bond so much more or even if it's someone you never spoke to that person –and you start speaking to them

And wouldn't that be a great way to start next year

Yeah. Oh boy this is tough.

Ok are you good

Think so

You feel pretty strongly about the testing anxiety

Oh yeah

What do you think about that stress cause you're not alone – what could the school do as far as that's concerned

Well when I'm really stressed at the end of a day I go to the weight room and I exercise a relieve most of the stress so we already have a gym class but not the whole year –I know kids complain about gym class but it does help you leave the stress from

So maybe something like that something physical being available to alleviate stress Or even using the weight room because everyone's afraid like all the big scary guys are in there

Is that open to everyone

Yeah it is

Do the students know that

They don't promote the weight room –it's like right in the hallway too

I'm just remembering my daughters' school they had a weight room –they thought it was only for athletes – but you're right that's for physical activity

Yeah it helps me a lot –keeps my head focused –

Now how did you learn that

About the weight room –

Yeah

Um my friend told me about it – he's like the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 weeks are hard –you get sore and tired all the time – after that you kinda become addicted to it –in a good way – oh this feels good and then I noticed the stress going away

Yeah releasing endorphins

Yeah

Does the school do anything where they tell anybody or students about stress

We have a health class but she rushes through cause she has everything in half a year and it's gotta go –yeah I feel like they could do a little better job

Do the teachers address that at all

No it's just the health teacher –and the gym teachers talk about it –they're like if you jog or exercise

So it's really not emphasized – in emotional wellbeing what else do you think the school could do

They have a breakfast thing like before a big test like PSSA or SAT and show you it's not all bad – just so you can talk to your friends before -

That's a nice idea

That would be a good way to make sure everybody had

Breakfast and food – yeah that gets stressed a little bit – just being around your friends

And after these tests do you have to continue with your curriculum or do you get some time to unwind or debrief



At the end of the year at the big tests we kinda get some time to unwind but in the beginning you don't have time – it's just bang bang bang

What about school environment –actual physical environment – do you think it's supportive of students

It's a lot better the past few years you see all the posters of our baseball team but I feel our school could do a little better like showing everybody on the wall instead of just one team –it doesn't even have to be oh good job it could just be a picture of a team – just recognize them – the students support each other pretty well

Do you feel known by your teachers –

Yeah all the ones I had are definitely personal cause we're so small – we only have about 20 people in a classroom –

How about administration or support staff

The janitors and everyone – I don't know much –are really nice – I talk to them all the time and I don't really know the administration that well

Principal –you don't know them that well

Mr. T I've talked to him a few times – he's nice –

Are they around and approachable

I say hi to them in the mornings but I don't really go to them if I have problems –

Who would you go to – that's interesting-

I'm pretty good friends with the guidance counselor so I'd probably go to her or my French teacher cause I'm pretty good friends with

Well that's good though

So they are supportive but I don't know if there was a kid who really didn't have a friend who was a teacher – you would need to know the guidance counselor

So you like the idea of having actual posters and pictures of students –do they do anything like student of the month or

No they should do that I think –they have the honor roll but that's it

Can you tell of some ways that you've noticed how teachers and administration has shown they value students' emotional health –or if they haven't talk about what they could do

Well the –I think the teachers do a good job but the administration I feel like they're cutting so much from the school and we're putting a coffee bar in the library –yeah it's really odd but we're getting rid of our books – yeah I know that's odd –I love the library so I'm a little upset but I don't think they really listen to the kids as much cause we used to have surveys or petitions to do something and that never happened –

Recently or in the past

The one we had was a French class cause they're dropping it year by year – luckily I'm out –most of the time thing like that stop rolling – and they don't really listen to what the students say

So you don't necessarily feel represented on that

Right you would have to get your parents involved to set something in motion

Is there a student government or council

There is but they don't really do much petition-wise

So you don't feel that the school values your happiness –

I feel like they focus more on how we're doing –grade-wise and academically classes we're taking and what you want to take like guidance counselors know what you want to take and teachers but the overall – the bosses want the best the school to be represented –they want to be known for good test scores which every school does but I feel NOCK puts too much emphasis on it

Ok so you disagree – the school is responsible for the students' emotional wellbeing

Yeah –I feel it should be worried about our happiness cause we need happiness in life in our future – so –I like business and accounting and if I was upset all the time I probably wouldn't like accounting –

Do you have those courses here

We do but some of the other kids struggle to find what they want to be and the school doesn't help them emotionally to help them decide so they might throw their future away

So you don't feel like you're treated like an individual

No just a statistic

How big is this school

Ah my class has around 250 so the high school probably has like 1000 so it's not big – the teachers know you but the administration I don't think they would personally know you- and I shouldn't say the administration – the principals know me –

Ok so it's pretty clear that you feel your school being involved in your emotional wellbeing is part of their job

This is like a student's second home – they spend almost all the time here – where else are they supposed to go

Good point so you feel they could do a better job teaching that sort of thing

When I had problems and they weren't bad I thought it was embarrassing to bring it up to someone at school and I think the school should emphasize it's not bad to ask for help

Yeah I mean every

Yeah

Yeah it's normal and you will have problems- it's part of life –I read a quote once if you don't have problems you're not really living –so do you feel the some of the students are inhibited –embarrassment

Oh yeah

It's not they don't feel- well I guess what would need to happen is they felt safe enough to go talk with someone

Yeah so they could promote it in a good way show an example or tell examples like an assembly have students speak about all the problems they have and how the guidance counselor fixed them

Oh that's a good idea – and have students be a little more open –

Yeah

Do they have any sort of – I know one school that actually has a mental health fair

I don't think we have that –we don't really talk about mental health that much in health class we do

Did you take the psych course

No I took it in school

Was it helpful- you didn't take psych

Oh psych oh no I didn't take it but we do have it –my friends loved the class

We talked about the need to use exercise equipment

And just to promote it in a positive way

Promoting exercise

Well even the weight room afraid of going in the weight room cause someone's gonna make fun of them

Are they free weights

There's machines and free weights and there's always like a teacher in there – one that actually works out and they teach you everything we have a deaf kid and he's so nice and he went in there wanting to work out and the teacher even told him how to work out so

Do you guys get much opportunity to go outside

No that's one thing that would be nice –

Maybe that could change that helps doesn't it

Oh yeah going outside for lunch – really

Is there anything that you can think of that you'd like to see changed – more of or bugging you

Well I'd like French class to still be part of something and Mr. T our principal even said he wanted to compete against the big schools like NA for clubs and programs and I feel like if he takes French away that's a big block that moved out –

It's interesting cause if anyone's interested in law

Oh yeah

That's the base of most of the legal terms

French and Italian

And we try to save energy a lot so this winter we don't have the heat on –in the morning so it's cold –maybe they could do a little better job with the heating – we're getting rid of a teacher I really liked she worked hard she taught 2 languages and I feel even if they

are cutting French –she taught French too if they get rid of her they’re getting rid of Spanish -who would want to teach the level one Spanish and the next 4 levels

How about art or music do you have any access to that

Oh yeah we have a good art program and music – band – jazz –concert different levels

Is that accessible to students even if it’s not their career focus if they enjoy it

Yeah that’s at concert level –you don’t have to be extremely good to be in so

Alright I think we’ve hit all the questions –boy it’s a good thing you don’t have the keystones to graduate

They’re not as hard as you think they are – I passed all mine I did not study it’s just something you have to learn and the teachers really help you

Do they teach you how to take them and prepare you

Oh yeah it’s a shame they have to force that test I think the teachers suffer more cause they have to leave the stuff they usually teach and they have to teach you about the keystone and then go back and try to catch up

**J1020**

*In general I believe the pressure to pass the Keystones puts too much emotional stress on students and teachers. Yeah I agree with that.*

*I would define our school environment as kind and caring. No.*

*I feel confident the education I am receiving here is preparing me to have a successful life* ok what do I do if I'm in the middle about that am I allowed to have that 3<sup>rd</sup> pile for in the middle

Umm I don't know

I feel that's sort of a yes at the same time I feel sort of no cause I don't think it's instantly going to give me a successful life but ok I'll probably put that in agree.

*In general I believe students feel respected when the school values students emotional wellbeing* yeah. In general teachers show they care when they teach the standards and prepare students for exams. No.

*I believe this school values my happiness level.* No.

*In general I believe it is unrealistic to expect the school to care for my emotional wellbeing.* Yeah.

*In general I believe a school shows it cares for students when coursework allows for personal talents to be identified and demonstrated.* Ok.

*In general teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.* Yeah.

*In general teachers and administrators show they care when there is consistent policy and discipline enforcement.* That's one of those in the middle things. Yeah they're making sure we're safe and stuff.

*I believe our school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.*

*I believe our school has a responsibility to care for a student's emotional wellbeing.* Ok that kind of contradicts –oh yeah.



*In general teachers show that they care when they let students do what they want and not expect much from them. Nope.*

*I do not believe that this school takes into account that students can be overwhelmed with course work and extracurricular activities. Yeah.*

*I feel emotionally supported in school. Not by teachers but by friends so I guess I would technically be in that one.*

*There are times I am concerned that what I am learning here will not be used in real life. That high school was just a waste and just a cause of anxiety. That's a (?).*

*I feel that I am treated as an individual at this school rather than just a face in the crowd. No.*

*In general I feel that a student's happiness isn't the school's priority but the school should be concerned with the overall mental and emotional state of the students. Yeah that's a good ...*

*In general teachers show they care when they try to give students advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future. Yeah.*

*I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing. Yeah.*

*Because of stress and anxiety there are times when I have cried over standardized test results. Well I haven't cause I've passed them so I'm just gonna say no to that.*

*In general I believe a school shows it cares about the students by offering challenging and career-focused courses. Yeah.*

*This school cares about students' test scores but not much is actually learned.*

*In general I believe that a positive atmosphere in a school makes a student want to come to school and it's better for learning. I'm putting too many in these agree things.*

*In general teachers show they care when they talk to students when they notice their grades dropping and they seem sad or distracted. I've never noticed that in anything so I'm going to say disagree to this one.*

*In general teachers and administrators show they care when they listen to students' cares and concerns and consider their opinions.*

*I feel this school is a very stressful place. Yeah.*

*In general I feel a school cares about students when offering additional care or help by offering remedial courses to help students graduate. Yeah.*

*Stress to get good grades and perform well on standardized tests creates anxiety that negatively impacts my performance.*

*Stress from getting good grade makes me not want to come to school. Naw.*

*I believe our school is not responsible for the students' emotional wellbeing or happiness they are responsible for educating and starting us on the right path for our future.*

*I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tests and activities when I am in a good mood.*

*In general teachers show they care when they have planned lessons and cover the curriculum.*

*A school environment contributes to my happiness by allowing me time with friends creating opportunities to make new friends and providing activities that I enjoy. Yeah.*

*In general teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond with students in the class. Mmm my teachers usually don't do that.*

*Placing the added pressure of passing the Keystone exam on the graduation requirement helps students to focus on doing their best. No. That makes people freak out.*

*Because of stress and anxiety there are times when I have cried over grades.*

*I believe there is no use for me at this school other than to pass classes and to do well on standardized tests. Yeah. That sounds about right.*

*Regular procedures and school policies make me feel that I am valued. No.*

*In general teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside school. Ok yeah. I have a couple teachers that do that.*

Ok great. So now what we're gonna do is we're gonna take each one of these piles

This is going to be very difficult

Yeah this is where it gets fun huh. I believe he wants to start with the agrees.

I'm gonna read it all again and

Do whatever you want. If you're having some trouble with it or you want to say something about it yeah go ahead and make a statement

I'm most likely going to rearrange these a lot. I have OCD so...that looks alright.

So you feel strongly about the Keystone

Yeah. I have 1 friend she started crying I don't want to be in remediation and she was so upset and I was like I don't know how to help you because I passed it first time

Yeah that's hard that's really difficult. Is this the 1<sup>st</sup> year it's been like that for students?

Yeah. Well they took it in 8<sup>th</sup> grade like the 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are now freshmen right now there is the cut off they have to pass it so I guess technically it is the 1<sup>st</sup> year

Now we're gonna do the same thing with the negative or the disagree right and again just because you put something here doesn't mean it has to stay here.

Think that's good.

So those 3 were hard for you. Let's see what were they?

I don't know which one to put quite where.

Ok you disagree that the school values your happiness -teachers show they care when they teach to the standards – tell me about that -

Just because a lot of the times- my definition of standards there's like that chart thing on the side and it they have to teach these things exactly and then there was like algebra after the keystones and like half the stuff wasn't even there and it was like three things we didn't even talk about and all those times it was like what's the point about going with the standard if the test doesn't meet the standard itself? Just teach whatever you want and like hopefully it's gonna be on there but try to figure out which ones would be more likely to pop up

Sure ok I get it and you don't feel like your happiness is valued?

Yeah. And then I notice up here you're saying that you think school is very stressful- those are some of your extremes

Yeah. Has that changed do you think? Increased

Oh it kinda varies like the time of year like right now for example all the finals and all the final projects and my stress level is up here –well it's going down cause I finished 3 of the things in my classes – but last week I'm like I'm freaking out – but at the beginning of the year it's no we just started it doesn't matter much but then at the middle time of the year the midterms start coming and people start freaking out again and I'm like ok I have to do good on the midterms otherwise my grade would suffer cause my midterm is 25% of my final grade

And how do teachers respond? Do you think they're aware of the stress that kids are at?

I'm pretty sure they know it exists but they just don't know how to fix it cause you just cannot not give homework, but you could, but it'd be like I'm aware that they kinda have to make it –how do I word this – they have to give us the work so we know what we're doing and stress is something that's just gonna end up popping up because of that – it's not like they're trying to cause stress but it happens

So you don't feel like they're intentionally

No. no it just happens because of all the work

Kinda like they're sort of stuck here and they

Yeah

And they don't know how to not do that. Ok I'm curious about have you felt like – are you in any extracurricular?

Oh I'm involved in the school play and musical

You know I was gonna say you have a beautiful voice

Thank you

Makes full and total sense to me- um do you feel stressed as far as your extracurricular

Only whenever they pop around like not to do it in general but whenever I was like in it and I had musical and play and at the same time they started popping up I was kinda like how do I learn lines while at the same time practicing my pre-calc or the same time we're learning about the Indians or about the same time to worry about solving a triangle and I don't know how to handle all this at once

How'd you do that?

Um I'm trying to think about how I did it um I winged it basically

You must have had some strength to call on

I mean I winged it sort of worked

Good for you- did you get support from either your –

Well I have a few friends who are in the same classes and any time I didn't quite understand I just asked them what was going on and they helped so

There's a peer support network?

Yeah any time you have friends like they're always willing to help you like I help and my friends help me with stuff

So do you feel the students have a supportive environment?

I think that kinda depends on certain things like to define supportive I say hope you study when –that's just my thing I help my friends and my friends help me study but other things I hear around the school is everyone's just throwing papers at you saying here copy mine so I don't think that's really supportive so I think that's more like have your work done so it looks like you try

How about any emotional struggles I mean cause life happens you know stuff happens to students

Well with high school there's always like those high school dramas and stuff so I can't really judge with that cause I don't have a relationship so I get where you're coming from but you really shouldn't like oh no my boyfriend broke up with me last week and I can't do this test –I think that's kinda stupid

Yeah – you have friendships?

Yeah it can be tough but ah in my opinion it's not too difficult –just do the work and not worry about your emotions and you can worry about your emotions when you get home

And that's a strategy so when you're here you do what you need to do here and that's definitely a strategy

I have one day where I was like super emotional for a reason – I'm not gonna get into – but I was so upset I was like almost crying and I had a test next period and I was like no ok worry about it later so I kinda just turned my emotion off did the test and actually

ended up getting a B plus I think on that and then once at lunch I was like ok well I'm really sad now but at least I did good on the test

That's a definite skill you know and not everybody has that skill and that kind of leads to one of the questions do you think the school should spend more time teaching like coping skills

I think they should do something along that like I don't want to say club but I don't know what I would name that and I'm not also going to say anger management cause a lot of angry people are just sad so I don't know exactly what I would call that cause I wouldn't make it a class –that would be a waste in my opinion I wouldn't make it like a club either

Sometimes they have things at some schools –um clubs or groups that meet after school when kids are

I guess support would be the better thing

Like issues that might be happening like grief

Yeah

Divorce or you know something like that

Yeah

Does your school have anything like that or –

Not from my knowledge I haven't heard of anything with it unless you consider like guidance counselors but I think those are more for out of life things like future based things colleges and stuff yeah I don't think they're for any kind of emotional support



Ok let me see what else did we touch on – and so do you feel it's the school's responsibility to care for students –

I don't think it's their responsibility I want to put that in quotations because I feel like that's a weird word but they should definitely try cause if you have that one kid (unintelligible) on average this country has this thing like – well that's a weird way if a kid is crying while taking a test I really don't think it's gonna look correct so I'm not saying it should be their responsibility to make sure we're ok but they should try in some way – this is like a really weird thing that I had but I feel that at some point even if it's light that you can barely hear it some music or soothing kind of music playing on the intercom all day so people can get some sort of relaxment [sic] a lot of people especially in my friend group really get relaxed and calm when they hear music so that could maybe help

Kind of change the overall environment –the ambiance

Yeah then there's the whole thing with like this is a personal thing – the air conditioning in this school is really really bad – I was in my concert choir class I think 2 weeks ago and it was like ok it's the middle of spring and I don't really need to wear a jacket to school I'm fine and I get to that room and I'm sitting there and I am very very cold right now and I get to my next room and I'm dying of heat so like this doesn't make sense fix this

And that can stress some people out that certainly taxes your system

Yeah yeah

That's all that environmental stuff that has an impact

I just don't feel like the school – there's a rule unless you bring it to a nurse specifically you can't have Tylenol or something and I know there's a lot of students that get

headaches like on a day when they had a really hard test and they're stressing out so they get a headache and then they go down to the nurse's office saying they have a headache and she –just lay down and she puts an ice pack on your head I get that it's the simple sense of medicine is like weird but if they know they're not allergic to it and they've taken it before and have a bottle and they want to take it let them take it it's one thing that they're not going to steal the bottle

And you have to have parent

You have to have your own personal bottle that you bring and have a note and that is dumb if I have a headache and I want to take an Advil would (?) if I want an Advil?

I get that. My kids aren't in high school now but I remember – it's stressful

Is there anything else – what'd you over all what'd you think of this?

I think this is a really good system. The only thing I don't like about this is that you can only have a maximum number – I kinda wanted to move 4 of these things over her and it's like 10 to 2 and I can't so that. If I could just move all of these exactly where I wanted them and not worry about this thing there might be also some of these over here

That's just the design of the

Yeah. They make you think really hard like this one's sort of

Was there anything that surprised you how you answered or think maybe you didn't think about and you're wow..

I think there was one and I can't find it –ah this – emotional support in the school – I really didn't know how to take that because the way this whole thing is going is that the teacher-based and that the teachers care about me emotionally support me- no they

definitely don't -but then I also started looking and I was like you have a lot of friends and they definitely emotionally support me if this is what that criteria is going for so I didn't know if I wanted to put it in the negative cause teachers don't care then I wanted to put it in the plus cause my friends care

And that's really a swing comment and that's one of the reasons we want people to verbalize what they're saying because that's an important thing to know

Other than that every time I looked at it I really didn't know where I wanted that to go

Yeah really

**F21002**

He just wants to input on things – how to make the school better – he's really concerned with school climate not just academic success but also how students are doing emotionally and socially – it's random

So do I just read it out loud?

Whatever you feel comfortable with

*In general pressure to pass the Keystones is too much emotional stress on students and teachers.* I agree. I would define our school as kind and caring. Um can I have a maybe column?

I wish you could but no it's agree/disagree

Ok. I'm gonna agree to that.

*I feel confident the education I'm receiving here is preparing me to have a successful life.*

Disagree.

*I feel students feel respected when a school values a student's emotional wellbeing.*

Disagree.

*In general teachers show they care when they teach to the standards and prepare students for exams.* Disagree.

*I believe the school values my happiness level.* Disagree.

*I feel it is unrealistic for a school to care for my emotional wellbeing.* Disagree.

*I feel a school shows it cares for students when it allows for course work to show it allows for personal talent be demonstrated.* Agree. I cannot read today.

*Teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.* Agree.

*Teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policies and discipline enforcement.* Disagree.

*I believe my school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.* Disagree.

*I believe a school has a responsibility to care for students' emotional wellbeing.* Agree.

*In general teachers show they care when they let students do whatever they want and don't expect much from them.* Disagree.

*I do not believe that this school takes into account that students can be overwhelmed with course work and extracurricular activities.* Agree.

*I feel emotionally supported in this school.* Disagree.

*There are times when I'm concerned about what I'm learning here will not be use in the real life and high school was just a waste and is a cause for anxiety.* Disagree.

*I feel I am treated as an individual in the school and not just a face in the crowd.* Disagree.

*I feel that a student's happiness isn't the school's priority but the school should be concerned with the overall mental and emotional state of its students.*

*Teachers show they care when they try to give students advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future. Agree.*

*I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing. Agree.*

*I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tests if I am in a positive mood. Agree.*

*In general teachers show they care when they have planned lessons and cover the curriculum. Agree.*

*Our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowing me time with my friends and creating opportunities to make new friends and providing activities I enjoy. Agree.*

*Teachers show they care when they reach out and bond with students in the classroom. Agree.*

*Placing the added pressure of making the Keystones a graduation requirement helps students to focus on doing their best. Disagree.*

*Because of stress and anxiety I have cried over grades. Agree.*

*I believe there is no use for me in this school other than to pass classes and do well on standardized tests. Agree.*

*Regular procedures and school policies make me feel I am valued here. Disagree.*

*Teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school. Agree.*

*Because of stress and anxiety there are times I have cried over standardized tests' results. Yes.*

*A school shows it cares for students by offering challenging and career focused courses.*

Agree.

*I believe the school is concerned about student test scores but not about how much is actually learned. Agree. Feel like I'm on a game show.*

*A positive school atmosphere makes a student want to come to school and is better for learning – Agree.*

*Teachers show they care when they talk to students when they see their grades dropping or they seem sad or distracted. Agree.*

*Teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students' concerns and consider their opinions. Agree.*

*I feel that this school is a very stressful place. Very much agree.*

*I feel a school shows it cares by offering remedial help to help students graduate. Yes.*

*The stress to get good grades and perform well on standardized tests create anxiety that negatively impact my performance. Agree.*

*The stress from getting good grades makes me not want to go to school. Agree.*

*I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotional wellbeing or happiness but is responsible for our education and starting us off on the right path for our future.*

Disagree.

Any comments? I notice you feel very firmly about it being stressful here

Yeah it is ridiculously stressful

How so?

Like I feel (?) a lot of teachers are just you need to pass this test that's it.

Really?

Yeah I've had quite a few teachers ,like that and it doesn't help when they're like 'you have to pass this or you're not gonna graduate' that is like awful. And I've had teachers in the past and I have a teacher this year and they're like amazing – they're always there for you and if you feel stressed it's ok to come to them – they want you to come to them and they make that very clear. I went to a teacher last year because of some stuff I was going through and she helped me through all of it and some of my other teachers were like it doesn't matter you have to like to focus

So do you think the ones that are caring like the teacher you described are they a minority?

Yeah.

So that's like an unusual –

Yeah.

What do you think makes them what is it about them – why do you think they're different as far as that's concerned?

I've had most luck with English teachers – I don't know if because they had to take a type of psychology course but they actually try to understand what we're going through they're not 'oh yeah you have to do this'- they're like 'we'd like you to do this like if you have the time can you do this? If you don't we're gonna have class time if you need help come talk to me'. I feel like they're more outgoing like they actually want to help.

That's nice. That's really good. So there's a lot of academic stress –

Yeah

How about stress as far as social stuff and stuff going on in school not just with classes but like relationships like student teacher relationships and with other students is there stress where that's concerned?

I think so cause it feels like if some teachers don't like you you're gonna get a bad grade. You can tell like some of the students are teachers' pets. I feel like the students are pretty nice every now and again there's that one bad person really mean but most of them are pretty good

So you don't have a lot of bullying or are there cliques

Yeah there are cliques – this is high school- you always have the popular kids, the band kids, I've noticed I have a lot of friends in different cliques but when we all come together we all match – we don't really know that much about each other but – there's a girl in my English class I would never talk to her before this year –she's really popular and she's captain of the cheerleading team and, like, she is the nicest person I've probably ever met. She is so sweet; she is adorable there are a lot of people that are really nice.

And you wouldn't have predicted that

Yeah some people look mean and then you talk to them and they're super nice it's better than I expected

Good. Ok. Are you involved in any?

Extracurricular?

Yeah –

Uh I'm in color guard-

Cool. Ok. How's that?



They're great. I love it.

Any stress with that?

Ohm yeah cause we have to practice a lot cause we switch routines- it's stressful cause not all of us have the time to practice we all have jobs – other priorities – a lot of homework so when we're outside practicing with our squad that's rehearsal and whenever at home that's practice so we need extra practice instead of rehearsal so it's really stressful but at the same time it's really fun - like my stress reliever. Whenever I have a ton of homework and I'm stressed out I just go outside and do that cause it is practice time and it's stress reliever

That's cool. It's cool in here isn't it?

Yeah. But I have a jacket. It's always cool in the school.

Ok satisfied with that?

I believe so.

So do you think the school has gotten more stressful? Have you been here?

Yeah I've been here my whole life.

Ok do you believe it's changed?

I feel like it has – yeah

Recently or when do you think?

I feel like – this gonna sound weird – like in primary school that was easy and I know it was supposed to be but the teachers were a lot nicer and like for being about 8 I felt they cared about me – I felt comfortable with them. And as I got into middle school I got feeling more and more uncomfortable with my teachers because I felt they were there to

get a paycheck. During high school it got to its peak –where it's just like they don't care anymore like they need paid and that's why they're here

That's too bad

Yeah

Ok so the elementary school what sort of things did they do that let you know that they cared? So this information is gonna be used cause Mr. Z is concerned about school climate and he's also gonna use this for like programs based on what you guys say – may things students would like to have different courses changes in the curriculum and how things are done information for in-services so I mean he's really listening to every – and the students are picked randomly

That makes me like really happy

He's really committed to this.

Yeah I'm really glad cause it's come to the point where a lot of students have I've seen a lot of students like self-harming – from stress – I was in a psych hospital last year from how stressed I was from school – I didn't even come back cause I knew I wouldn't have been able to handle it yeah it was that bad –

Academic stress?

It was like academic cause each teacher is like well you have to do all of this homework tonight and it's only an hour long but we have 8 periods

So everybody at an hour is 8 hours

Yeah. Yeah. And we have to get a perfect amount of sleep- 8-10 hours of sleep based on science studies and this much social contact do stuff with our families we have to eat –

it's too much I've had times where I've faked being sick just so I wouldn't have to come to school cause I was that stressed

That happens even at a job

Yeah like that's not ok

So has it changed for you this year?

Um I think this year has changed I feel like less stress and I don't know if it's because it's my senior year like I didn't take that many important classes I only took the classes I had to take or if it actually eased up –

So would junior year be really stressful?

Yeah that was my most stressful year

Yeah that's a hard year

Yeah that's like your most important year and it was so ridiculously stressful it was to the point where I would go home and cry every day

Oh my gosh that's not good

Yeah

Did anybody notice staff-?

Um Mrs. M she was like my favorite teacher and she flat out told us at the beginning of the year if you need help come and talk to me because she wanted to be like a second major or something and she didn't and she turned to teaching and whenever I had my problems with self-harming I automatically went to her cause I felt comfortable with her and as soon as I went to her she took me and sat down and talked with me she emailed me –whenever I was gone

Lot of follow through

Yeah

Was guidance helpful?

Ah my gosh yes Mrs. Y – she’s amazing –I’ve heard bad things about the other guidance counselor like she just doesn’t care but I know for a fact Mrs. Y does. She would actually try to relate with me she told me her own stories trying to relate so I understood she knew what I was going through- my parents didn’t know but she like helped me open up and talk to them about it and tell them what was going on in my life and now me and my parents are best friends like me and my mom and dad we’re inseparable –

Is there a lot of self-harm here do you think

Um I don’t know I know people that used to but like they don’t now that I know of but in years past people would a lot

That’s a big deal in high schools and it’s not recognized

Yeah I know I know a lot of girls they just stopped eating because of how stressed they are

Yeah I have 3 daughters so I can

Yeah

Really relate. Let’s see what else –are there any of these that stick out or you had problem placing or something that you feel really strongly that you want to make comments about?

Um I already said how school was really stressful I don’t think our happiness is the school’s main priority I understand that education and all that comes first – but how can we be educated if we can’t get up in the morning? Especially with depression not even me but other people they can’t get up in the morning of how like sad they are and they

just don't have any motivation and like and if you say that to a teacher they're just gonna say you're lazy. That's not helping at all so it feels like they don't really care about our happiness – they just care about we ace our test and we're the next group passing along  
Do you think they understand that they're properly educated about these things?

No. not at all.

So may be staff needs some educational

Yeah

What about other students? So you think other students know enough about recognizing signs or things that might be

Um like self-harm and stuff like just in general

Self-harm, anxiety, stress, how to handle stress- maybe does the school do anything to address that

No nothing at all.

Ok

I feel like a lot of students are really stressed, which- this is high school – we're gonna be stressed I've noticed that a ton of people have anxiety, like, I will shake my leg and stuff when I'm really anxious or I'll fidget and I notice a lot of other kids doing that and it's obvious they haven't done anything about it so it'd be really cool if we had warning signs cause what my therapist does is whenever I'm gonna have an anxiety or panic attack she helps me recognize my warnings if I'm breathing heavy or my heart's racing what I'm doing if I'm shaking and that helps me like calm myself down and I've noticed with people with test anxiety they'll shake and tap their pencils while taking their test and

they don't calm down and id think it would be better if they knew how to calm down,  
how to recognize they were being anxious – yeah – I know it's really confusing but  
No. no. how about during the day is there anything – like where would anyone go is they  
were feeling anxious or depressed? Is there a chance for students to chill out?

Um lunch- the bathroom –

Are those at all relaxing – it depends on the school

Lunch is just like really loud and obnoxious it's our time to talk to talk to our friends and  
stuff

I really like your necklace

Oh thanks – and the bathroom is the bathroom – and during study halls there are people  
that go down to the library cause they have couches and stuff like that and that's really  
cool that you can sit down and chill out and stuff but you're not allowed to have your  
phone out so if you want to listen to music you have to do it on your Chrome Book so if I  
really came from a test and felt really (?) I could come here and be like it would calm you  
down

Do you feel student to student relationships are good though?

Yeah I do

That's really really good

I don't like middle school – nobody was supportive of anybody like we all hated each  
other and as you like get older you're pretty much friends I could sit down and talk to  
somebody I've never talked to before –and it would be a little awkward cause you've  
never talked to them before – and they would actually care – I felt comfortable at least  
with my class

So you think there's just a lot of emphasis on teaching the lessons and curriculum and not a lot of creativity

Yeah

Ok

So I would define our school atmosphere as kind and caring – you disagree is that  
That's not like as a whole like some teachers and most of the students care about you like everybody's nice – nobody like bullies people but the people that you spend the most time with like the teachers- they just kinda like lecture you they don't – they don't help they're not really nice about anything

Do you feel known here do you feel like they know you

Like the teachers?

Yeah or you're like a number –

Just kinda like a number – I'm just kinda like another student

Ok so on the disagree – you're not so sure about the feeling that teachers are preparing you for your future – how so – how can they make that better –

Like I'm taking this class called personal finance – and it teaches you how to write a check –how to use credit and I feel that that class should be mandatory cause my oldest sister didn't take it and her credit score is like awful – cause she didn't understand how it worked and my middle sister she took that class and she's good –

That's almost like a life skill class -

Yeah it's been like helping me cause I'm like 18 so I have to start getting my credit up and stuff – and I'm like trying to research things that I like know is it like going to be harmful to me – or to my credit score –

Now I'm impressed

Thank you

Yeah and it's only like the 4<sup>th</sup> week of school and it's already teaching me stuff—we're doing projects about what you can buy with bank credit and loan credit it's like really helping—

Yeah I wish I'd had that

Tell me about rules and policies what you think about that gripe about that do they make sense to you

I think it depends which teacher is enforcing which rule—like last year I had Mr. S and he is an awful awful man—he's so rude—like most teachers if you're like doing a project or you're working on your own you can listen to music like if you're working on your own you can pretty much do what you want—as long as you get it done and he was like he would scream at us for like asking to listen to music—and we were like it helps us focus and he was like no it doesn't you're lying and he was awful that was a bad class—  
Are people targeted?

Um maybe—like in a class that I took in 10<sup>th</sup> grade my teacher would favor the girls over the boys and we would have to learn CPR and stuff—and he would mark their grade up if they were wearing a low-cut shirt so like yeah that's gross—there are some teachers that are extremely sexist so like if guys get a better grade they like favor them more because they're guys and they can do all

Yeah, if you could change things in the school like what would you change in the school to make it not just academically better but like you've said if the students are happier—feel secure in their school they do better -



I would probably make like if I were in charge of everything I'd make it like mandatory to take a music class or an art class or something cause I'm not like really good with the core subjects I'm like a music person, a theater person and I didn't even know that there were classes like that until 2 years ago because they never bring it up

Oh wow

Yeah

That's too bad

So I feel like there should be a theater class or something mandatory and I feel like the core classes like math science reading should only be mandatory up to a certain point cause I didn't take a math class this year cause I am awful at math like it's been proven that with math you're either born with or without it and sadly I was born without it but they like force us to take them so even if you fail you have to re-take them and if you're bad at a music or theater class it's like oh well you just weren't born with that – I wasn't born with math either so why am I forced to take it – I understand it's the curriculum but it's not fair to us so I'm not a genius

Well you might be in something else but

Exactly

So what you're talking about is different styles of learning

Yes. Yes. Like I'm awful at taking tests I get so nervous I get super anxious but some kids are really good at taking tests so if they take a test and they get a good grade on it and even though like I've studied I'm gonna get a bad grade cause I'm bad at taking tests like Albert Einstein once said if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree it'll spend its entire life thinking it's stupid

Exactly

Yeah. Exactly – it makes me so angry

You don't think there's enough opportunity – like the assessment is always based on tests and there's not opportunities to show different ways?

Yeah and if it's not a test it's a presentation other people get test anxiety like I can't walk through a crowd without getting a panic attack so someone who has like extreme anxiety goes up before a class and they freak out they'll get points taken off – for like having a nervous thing I used to play with my hair and I got points taken off for that cause I was nervous –

Did they do projects where you produced something to show mastery of class – do you know what I mean?

No.

Ok. I guess I'm thinking more of even when you're talking about math and do they call them specials – like music and art and stuff?

Yeah I know what you're talking about

But sometimes maybe one way of showing that you understand math concepts is actually through art

Yes

Do you have opportunities to do that sort of thing?

No. not really.

What else could help school atmosphere

Teachers learning the warning signs of depression and anxiety so they know what they're looking for instead of oh that person's just sitting at their desk just crying now they're

stressed they're fine –instead of actually talking to them – and whenever somebody didn't get enough sleep or like they're sleeping on their desk – like you're working them too hard if they're literally sitting there sleeping – I feel that shouldn't be labeled as lazy –

So you feel like teachers have a responsibility to find out what's happening with kids I feel like to be a teacher you should have to take a psychology class – to understand what happens with depression – anxiety – so they're not 'oh they're just lazy, they're stupid' – they're not! – I'm so glad we're having this conversation – I get so heated

This is a big deal

I know like I get so mad –

I think adults are under their own stress and sometimes that's all they can see

It's been proven that high school times and intermediate times should be switched because we need more sleep than they do and we have other stuff we have to stay after for band for football – we work we have jobs – they just go color and play and stuff –

I don't know if that'll ever change

I don't know but I hope so

Yeah that way back to farming society

Yeah I know my dad's a farmer

Same thing with the summers off

How about school environment just the actual building places and spaces

I kinda like the school – I think there's a good amount of space, it's like our house like

I've called this place my home, like I spend more time here than I do at home –

That's good though – you like it – that's great

Yeah I like it back to actual climate – it's too hot or too cold like usually I'm sweating my butt off and today I walked in and I was freezing and I was upstairs and I texted my friend like Hailey I need your hoodie – it's freezing – it's either super-hot or super cold  
So they should regulate temperatures?

Yeah about like time and stuff I feel like we should be able to eat in class –

Oh ok you're not allowed to have snacks or water

It depends on which teacher you have cause I've had multiple teachers who throw full water bottles away cause we're not allowed to have them I think that's ridiculous in the morning we don't have enough time to eat breakfast we have to sleep we have to shower and they serve breakfast here but you still have to pay for it and some people don't have the money to pay for it like my dad makes me breakfast every morning he drives me to school like happy fun time – in middle school I never ate breakfast cause I never had time I feel we should be able to eat in class or have snacks like in middle school we had snack time – I was a very bad kid in middle school like I got suspended me and Mr. Cabot – we're best friends but they were a lot more lenient we were allowed to have snacks like my 4<sup>th</sup> period teacher he keeps food in his room and we can go in there and get food I've brought Pop Tarts to eat and used his toaster – like it's great

Do you think kids are hungry?

Yes. Yeah I really do I hear people complain all the time they're hungry it's gonna make you more tired so if you don't eat breakfast you come here you have to sit here for 3 ½ hours til lunch

Some classes let you have water

Yeah like I think it's like a teacher rule most of my classes I'm allowed to have a drink not in art – we're allowed to have it as long as it's on the floor in band we're not – but we just got new carpeting – like once again Mr. S last year you weren't allowed to have anything to eat no drinks not allowed to talk at all he was so strict like a dictator in that class it was awful like I warn people so much

When you're taking some of these standardized tests do they allow you to have snacks then?

No. like I have a teacher she gives us mints when you take tests if you eat mints it's supposed to help and I wanna just give you candy and it's like thanks

Did I ask you which ones you struggled with placing?

Yes you did

Ok let's talk about teachers some of the attributes of the best teachers you've had?

Is attributes like examples?

Yeah some of the things like characteristics as a teacher preparing for their classes what they did and how they related to students

Ok um some are really outgoing they share stories with you like my English teacher she's only like 20 she's really young and just today we were having a conversation and she has her input like when I went to school here and this happened – I really like that when they try to relate to us

So they're real people

Yeah yeah they're real like not just a face they have emotion like an actual person

What about rest of the staff like non-teachers do you feel supported?

Like lunch ladies

Yeah office ladies

I love the lunch ladies – they are so sweet and the office ladies are really nice too

Guidance school nurses?

I don't like the school nurse but I think that's just me

Anything else you'd like to add a really important topic even if it's not covered here to make it known

Just that not every student's the same – all through school we get compared to the higher ups and valedictorians class cabinet and that stuff but I'm not them do not compare me to them everyone does it – it's just like a thing- and I hate being compared to other people and I feel we just shouldn't have that - we're not the same people we're different kids different ages different genders

### **DH15663**

Just a little note – I really agree with that one –extra activity – the school forgets that we do other things and school is important but other things are important too- here's another one – *I feel the education I am receiving here is preparing me to lead a successful life* – I guess I'll agree- so I agree with this but It's like some things – obviously it prepares you for a lot like to have a successful life but I definitely think that things that are required like some people know what they want to do and certain classes are like – this is setting me up for failure – I know I'm bad at this subject and I have to take it and it has nothing to do with what I want to do in life- this one I was iffy on too – I agree with that but there's also a lot of things that like contribute into that and that's not there like it should be –

*our school environment contributes to our happiness by allowing me time with my friends and creating opportunities to make new friends* – on that one I think like it's really nice when teachers notice if we're sad or distracted cause a lot of times people are and kinda like it's not their job but it's kinda like their job to make sure we're ok cause that stuff can influence how we learn

Have you had that experience personally?

Yeah – I don't know how you guys feel about naming teachers but I know Mr. Z(?) always says at the beginning of the year I understand that you guys have other things going on – and I don't know whatever – and I remember that we were in class and he held one kid back and I heard him say you ok you seem quiet today – I just think that's really nice cause it's like reassuring that some people care cause other teachers are like – just get out

I think we all want to know that other people recognize us as people

Yeah yeah I don't think I came across it yet but one of them was I feel like I'm just a face in the crowd –that's how it is in some classes –you're just there- alright I'm pleased with this

Ok you put a lot of thought in them –I noticed your bracelets now are they Alex and Annie?

Yes they are

I have 3 daughters and I don't have any on today but we're all like – in fact I noticed the one with the lotus –and I love that one it's on my list of things to get – I have my own symbol –my girls bought me some of them but

Yeah I love them

Somebody else came in and she had some on and they looked like Alex and Annie but she said – I forget she got them at a store – they were like knockoffs but I thought they're not bad knockoffs –do you get yours online then –

I actually got them all as gifts cause everyone that I know knows that I like them my cousin got me 2 and my mom got me the one –I'm assuming on line I don't think they ever got them at a store yeah I know they sell them at Nordstrom –

You have a whole bunch here that you really – you feel that the school should value your emotional wellbeing do you feel they do that or

Um it's like certain teachers do definitely certain teachers do and certain teachers don't you can tell like some teachers –they're there to teach and that's it

And then they just want to go

Yeah and obviously that's their job to teach – but you definitely have a responsibility to like care about your students because how would a student learn if they feel like they're just a face in the crowd –it just doesn't work – I know that at the beginning of this year I remember thinking I'm not that close with any of my teachers like I have been in the past – I feel like this year not as many teachers of mine have made more of like a friendship

To get to know you –

Yeah like a friendship like they did in the past – like I said some teachers definitely and some teachers definitely not

How about things like – I'm just curious about this myself – as far s guidance counselors and I guess there's a school social worker that works here –if someone did have an emotional problem or if even the stress was getting to them –or stuff at home – who do students go to – would you go to one of those people?



If it was like – I mean you’re referring to stress but if it was something more serious than that I would definitely go to one of them – but stress me personally I’m fine with stress I can handle it – I know how to calm down and do what I need to do but I’ve never personally gone to a guidance counselor – I guess I’ve vented a little to teachers but I think more of that stuff I would go to friends or my sister

So you have a support network

Yeah

Do other students use

Um...

Or is it pretty much career and college planning

I think people go to guidance for more like careers

Does anyone talk about how to manage stress or mental health or emotional wellbeing is that ever addressed?

By teachers?

Yeah or are there any classes or sort of like groups that meet –it’s not unusual in a high school that students might be faced with a death of a family member or a friend – depression suicide anything like that?

Um I know like I took psychology last semester and that was with Mr. Z(?) and we did like a big unit on stress and I feel like sometimes teachers are just giving like general

announcements like calm down it's almost the end of the year – everything'll be ok – but nothing like stop stressing

Nothing to tell you techniques to tell you what to do to stop stressing

No yeah nothing like that

Overall what do you think the general atmosphere is in the whole school – do you feel it's kind and caring – is there a question like that

Yeah right here –

Ok and you would not define it that way?

Yeah

Can you talk a little about that

I personally feel that people like care and I'm not talking myself up but I know that people care about me –I know some people don't and like and I feel I'm lucky that I feel like that cause not everybody does but I definitely feel like my friends and my family make me feel like that they're kind and they make me feel like that – teachers do too but I would say more of like the students a lot of them would like I would tag a lot of our school's cliky or people judge other people so fast and it's like you're doing the same thing so why are you judging them? I think like definitely with the students is where I disagree with that –I think more students than teachers

Do teachers address that at all?

Um I don't know – teachers are nice sometimes –teachers never really say anything like – I feel like if I was a teacher I would like make sure that my students would know that I

care about them and I want them to do well and I want them to be happy here because this is where we spend most of our time it's really so important that we feel good here – and I don't think a lot of teachers so that –like I think I would

Yeah most of your days here – most of your week at this point they see you more than your parents do

Yeah

I mean there's a lot of that and if you're not gonna get some of this stuff at home and some kids don't have that – then who's going to?

Yeah that's a good point cause my family life is good and I love my family but I feel our wellbeing is supported here – but it's not that strong – no one is ever like are you ok stuff like that – I get that from my family and some kids don't get that from their family and if they don't get it from their family and friends and not here where else do they get it- so like definitely need a source of that somewhere

What would you like to see either more of in your school or –again we're talking about the emotional wellbeing versus the academic – and the emotional supports the academic you know – so what would you like to see more of- see changed or something new introduced

I think I would like to see teachers not involved in their students' lives but like they care more and like a lot of teachers I think this all the time – you went to college to be a teacher at some point I wanna be a teacher this is what I want to do with my life – and now you just look at some and say why are you a teacher? You look like you hate your life why are you here if this isn't what you want to do? And another thing I always think is –everyone's like I wanna be a teacher – now that's what I want to do but there are so many younger kids like freshmen or graduated from college searching for a job or would do anything for a really good teaching job and like then we have these teachers that don't

even care about what they're doing and the younger kids that are so passionate about it – they're excited to get in there and other people are excited to get out so like why are you still here? And I know you obviously can't just fire someone like oh you hate your job you're out of here – I just think that teachers should act like they like it more-some do for sure and some don't

Does that affect your – how well you do in class do you think?

Um I don't know – maybe a little bit not that much like I've never like

Yeah like that's their problem

Yeah yeah yeah

Does the school do any assemblies as far as emotional health or wellbeing or things students deal with? Like suicide – there are students that are cutters – students involved in drug and alcohol and all kinds of stuff that kids do now a day –how do you find out about that what sort of information is given

Um I can't think of anything specific but I know there have been –I don't know if I've been to assemblies but like I know that it's addressed – and this is tough – I don't know it's like –I don't know

Do you think it's enough?

Um yeah

Yeah?

I think so yeah

Divorce can often be a big impact –

Um hmm

We talked about grief –and loss- are those things addressed at all

Um I don't think I've ever like heard of anything or been anywhere where it's being talked about –I'm sure people that like seek that could find it but I don't know

What do you think is needed in the school?

Um these are tough questions um I don't know give me some examples of things that could be needed in a school –how do you say

This is my 2<sup>nd</sup> day and I don't think I've said it right yet

What is it Z-u-p-s-i-c?

Yeah let's see examples of what is needed

I think it needs to be enforced more like the whole standardized test thing I think that should not be as big as it is and I don't know if that counts as something being needed but like – but that really takes a toll on how you do and some people are good with it they're like ok I need to pass this test I need to do what I need to do but other people it gets in their heads and it's like oh my gosh there's no way I'm gonna learn all this and that makes it worse than it already is I know in the past – I don't know if they still do it but there were remediation classes that failed – I was in one – so there's that but I don't think it should be a graduation requirement

Yeah and that starts next year

Yeah so I don't have to do that

Ok I know some students have talked about tutoring or access to tutoring

Yeah um I know Wednesday night there's math tutoring here and I've gone like a lot this year but there's only 2 teachers and if you like (?) they're pretty good about explaining things pretty well but like if they could have more than 2 cause usually it's in the library here and there will be a calc section and they sit here and the pre-calc students sit here and like Mrs. V(?) she's the calculus teacher she'll like sit with them and help them and she will sit-with-them and if we need her it'll be like hey Mrs. V can you come here and then there'll be Mr. L who's there helping with algebra II and geometry and so like it's sometimes you're not like fighting for their attention but I wish I could just have someone just come sit by me and help me personally not as a group because a lot of times for any class it's hard to learn in a group than in a smaller group or one on one – so tutoring is helpful but maybe more time

Availability? How about art or music or any sort of creative type curriculum –have you guys had any chance to do anything like that?

Um yeah there's art electives like art 1,2,3,4

If you're not in it do you have access to anything like that?

Ah no- that's actually funny that you bring that up cause I always wish I could have taken an art class but I never really had room in my schedule and you can't just add a 9<sup>th</sup> period so I wish I would have had somewhere to add like learn more art stuff

Experience

Yeah cause like I said I didn't have room in my schedule and music I know there's like music electives too and there's like band and all that but I was never into any of that

It's kinda like if you're not signed up for those things as a class

Yeah it's an option for sure

So there's no chance of getting that – I don't know if there's anything after school or they do

Not really

How about any chances to go outside in some green space – to help to de-stress

Yes it does at lunch when the weather is nice just recently they started doing that just this year we have like several courtyards and up until this year we weren't allowed to eat outside for lunch – like we're in a courtyard we're not gonna climb over the wall and escape – just let us go eat out there and there's like a couple of picnic tables out there now – if people wanted to sit on the ground outside let them – it's just lunch like why do you care – we're not being

Oh do you have to sit at a table?

Yeah if you sit outside you can't sit on the ground – I don't know if they would stop you but people don't sit on the ground if there aren't tables – a lot of times people bring up in classes oh I wish we could just sit outside for just this one period – I wish we could go outside for study hall today and I know gym goes outside when it's nice but other than gym and lunch there's really no other opportunity- I think there is an environmental science class they like get outside sometimes and sometimes I do wish that teachers would be like alright we're going outside to learn outside today – that would be nice cause with these white walls you can only do some much in these hours with these white walls

And the lighting

Yeah oh my gosh yeah some people like have all the lights on and I don't like all the lights on cause it's so bright with the white walls and you're like oh my gosh I don't have anything to look at but definitely lighting is a thing and those that close their blinds – I'm like really just open your blinds I want like real light not this yellow light

I'm thinking how about exercise opportunities is there anything that's offered for students – I mean that might even be something outside of school that the school could host like exercise Yoga or something

Um well obviously there's things like sports and stuff and gym class and I know I'm not really sure how the weight room works but people go to the weight room like the football boys but I've never looked into it but I think if you play a sport you can go to the weight room like that's just what I think I don't know if I could just go I probably could

Do you think students would like that?

Um yeah I think so

Do you feel there's a difference between teachers and administration as far as how they view students do you feel cared for by administration?

I think so yeah there's like- wouldn't you consider administration like principals guidance stuff like that yeah like Mr. T(?) I've never talked to him personally but he seems pretty cool like he would be willing to help you and that's good cause he's the principal – Mr. V he's the Vice-Principal he's nice too but I would say Mr. T(?) is more approachable for sure so the principals are good and guidance they're nice – I go to tutoring every other day cause I have a double period of chem every other day so I go to study hall every other day and they're always really nice – I love them (names) what about janitors are they administration –

Oh staff



A lot of them are really nice you'll see them walking up and down the halls and they'll give you the most bright hello and you're like oh my gosh they're so cute

Do you have cafeteria staff and library?

Yeah the library and Ms. D(?) and Mrs. C(?) they're nice I would consider them approachable if I ever had a problem depending on how close you are with them –I would say that's an option –I haven't bought a lunch in like 11 years so I don't really know any of them

What's your environment like with the cafeteria?

I hate the cafeteria that's the 1<sup>st</sup> thing they – is this your first time at Knoch?

Yeah it is

So like the past for forever there's a junior café and a senior café and the senior café they had students paint the whole thing and I wish I had a picture to show you cause it was so cool almost just like a kingdom –hills and princesses on the wall that people painted and it was really like – it looked like a cartoon it was really bright and fun – there was a castle painted on the wall – it was like fun to look at and this year they painted over it – they painted it white – with a gold and a blue stripe –oh wow that blue and gold was so necessary –but the cafeteria is gross – and the air is gross and me and my friends – it's so gross – we always say it smells like worms and sweat –it's just gross I honestly dread it I don't like being there cause like I can just feel my body getting oily

I have to admit I was here yesterday and I did walk by at lunch and I thought yep yep it's lunch time alright

Yeah – gross

So it'd be nice to have something else to look at on the walls beside white?

Yeah yeah that's why it's so nice to sit outside at lunch cause you get out of that and it really is a nice break in the day cause you're inside all day then when it's really nice outside you can go out and you're like ah 30 minutes of just eating of just nice breeze – cafeteria needs air flow

Poor kids like my son he could never even eat cause he'd puke basically he just got to the point where he had to – which is not cool when you're a senior. Let's see was there anything else? Was there anything that when you were doing it you were surprised?

That people said that?

Yeah that people said that and maybe even how you felt like oh wow I didn't realize I felt that way

I definitely need to look – this – I was like wow unrealistic – I feel it is unrealistic to think that the school is responsible for my wellbeing. I understand that some people do that but I would not say that it is unrealistic that should be part of the thing

That should be part of teaching?

Yeah. This I was really like it says they shouldn't be involved and concerned about my emotional wellbeing and I was like who said this who's thinking of these things? This and a lot of the ones about stress like crying over grades that's definitely relevant to a lot of people – like I'm in pre-calc this year and I'm not that bad at math but I'm so bad at pre-calc and I have honestly and I hate to say it I sound so much like a baby I have honestly cried so many times this year cause I hate pre-calc and I cannot wait to get out of this so that's definitely relatable to all the stress ones with classes and stuff and something random like a lot of people pressure themselves into getting good grades but a lot of peoples' parents pressure them and they're like you need to get good grades or your

grounded or I'll take your keys and stuff like that – and obviously parents need to make sure you're doing your best but I know my parents are always saying – they'll look at my report card and this is good if this is your best –you just need to do your best and some people just don't

Some people really get pressured by their parents

So it sounds like you feel that taking care of well not taking care of but being attentive to a student's emotional wellbeing kinda goes hand in hand with education

For sure

Ok alright that's good alright is there anything else you want to mention or want to be heard?

Well one last thing if someone is actually going to listen dress code is annoying because some people like wear like the lady Miss V(?) I don't even know what she is but she works in Mr. T(?)'s office and she's always like if you get in trouble for something you're wearing you get sent to her and she's the most miserable person I've ever seen like she honestly looks like she hates her entire life and I'm like why are you here? She is really rude and like some teachers I was like some teachers will whisper to people hey you shouldn't be wearing that and that's fine you can urge people to not wear things but sometimes girls will wear short-shorts and they'll get called down and sometimes not get called down and I don't know if there's a way to make sure if everyone is following the rules or not following the rules but a lot of times it seems unfair –like the one day I was wearing a skirt and the rule is fingertip length and my dress or skirt wasn't fingertip length and at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> period – my outfit was really cute and I was so mad that they made me change I got called down and she was like your skirt looks a little short and I was like it's fingertip length and I'm a respectful person but I was like it's fingertip length I don't know what the problem is and she pulls out the handbook and like annoying and not to be rude but she was so annoying about it and she was like looking

through the pages and she said right here it says your skirt or dress has to be 3 ½ inches above the knee and I'm like ok sorry I don't pull out a ruler every morning and yep that's 3 ½ inches that's not like nobody does that you can't actually see if that's 3 ½ inches and obviously that was a change cause it's always been fingertip length dress code is annoying and the whole tank top thing I guess spaghetti straps I still don't really see the problem with that but you're not allowed to wear spaghetti straps it use to be your thing had to be 3 fingers and now I'm pretty sure the rule is it just can't be spaghetti strap- so that's an improvement but before that I just could not see the problem with a tank top that has a strap that's like this thick –sorry that boys have wandering minds and I can't show my shoulder I don't think a shoulder is gonna cause any problems in my learning environment or anybody else's.

Now are boys allowed to wear tank tops cause it seems like it should be across the board

It does seem that way um I don't know I feel like that would be a good experiment to send in a boy with a spaghetti strap because boys don't wear spaghetti straps but there are some that have normal tank tops

You're not the 1<sup>st</sup> one that the dress code has come up 4 times maybe 5 times

Really oh my gosh

I don't know what'll be done about it but I want you to know you're not the only one

Good I didn't think so

### **B5111**

I think this caring really in general *I believe is the school shows it cares about students and coursework allows for personal talents to be identified and demonstrated* I don't think it shows care I think it just shows a topic for a teacher to give you to work on.

I agree with this strongly *in general teachers show they care when they ask students about their lives outside of school they're going out of their way to get to know the student they don't even have to talk to the student outside of teaching them so*

Do many of your teachers do that?

I would say around half I talk to outside of class and talk about things that don't pertain to chemistry or German. *I believe that in this school getting good grades is valued more than my emotional wellbeing* I kinda agree with that because them wanting us to get better grades just means we're gonna do better on the standardized tests as a whole which means the school would receive more money and finances and other things they might want ah the stress from getting good grades wants me not to go to school I wouldn't say that's the main reason I don't want to go to school but it's definitely a factor because all that stress doesn't make me want to get up in the morning

Do you think that's increased over the years?

Definitely. The older I get the more stressful it gets.

*In general teachers show they care when they talk to students and they notice their grades are dropping or they seem sad or distracted.* I mean it does show they care to ask you if anything's going on at school or home that's keeping you from your grades or it could be the same thing with the emotional wellbeing versus getting good grades I feel like it's the same factor but you know

I'd go either way.

*I feel emotionally supported in the school*

I would agree with that. Even though all the stress is high just from friends and from teachers who ask me about my outside life.

*I believe this school does not take into account that students can be overwhelmed with coursework and extracurricular activities*

I don't really agree with that cause if you take a higher level class you should expect more coursework and it's your choices to take the higher level class and do extracurricular activities at the same time so the school really doesn't have control over that unless your grades are bad so they wouldn't let you into it but other than that it's not their duty to really do anything about that

Are you in AP classes?

I'm in AP history and I'm in academic English and just other classes that are not real higher level but they take a lot of work

Did you say you're in German?

I'm in German 3

Good for you.

I'm looking into history like teaching.

*I believe this school cares about test scores but not about how much is actually learned.*

I agree with that I kinda agree with that going back to getting good grades and all that they do care about that more than you being happy with it or how much you learn because once you're out of there you're not their problem anymore a lot of them just want money for the school which might be to get better facilities to ach their students so they can be more successful but they don't show that right now.

*The stress to get good grades and perform on standardized tests creates anxiety that negatively impact my performance.* I kind of read this wrong but if I were in 10<sup>th</sup> grade it doesn't matter if our class if we pass them cause it's only 10<sup>th</sup> graders and lower that have to pass them to graduate now so we don't really have to.

I can't imagine that stress

*In general teachers show they care when they try to give students' advice about problems or alleviate concerns about the future.* Yes the same with them caring about your outside life and supporting you.

*In general I feel students feel respected when a school shows it values students' emotional wellbeing.* Yeah I really don't have anything else to say about that I just agree with that.

*In general teachers show they care when they have planned lessons or cover the curriculum.* I don't think that really matters at all because that's just them doing their job what they were hired to do what they went to college for so it's not a big deal.

*In general teachers show they care when they make learning fun and interesting.* I agree with that but not all the way cause it shows like they care cause if you're having fun it makes it more interested in their class and they're having fun which is more interested with you like you said they're gonna get to know you better.

*Placing the added pressure of making the Keystone exam a graduation requirement helps students focus on doing their best.* I slightly disagree because some kids they can just drop out so they don't really care but for those the lower level grades below us they have to so they're probably studying hard to get that done so they can pass.

*I feel as if I am treated as an individual at the school rather than just a face in the crowd.* No not really it's just the school is too big for everyone to be treated individually and if you don't take action in your school you're just kinda drifting through school

Just another student?

Yeah

Are you involved in any extracurricular activities?

Me and my friends we just kinda hang out at the chess club it's not really big but I'm in the German club chem club kinda technically um tennis and bowling

So like your social groups

Yeah but also with the social groups the more activities you're in like the athletes people notice them more cause they represent the school and class cabinet they're in that and teachers the main staff will go to them individually they run our grade pretty much the school.

*In general I believe the pressure to pass the Keystone's is too much mental stress on students and teachers.* I agree that it puts stress on students but the teachers again they just have to do their job if they do their job right they're gonna do pretty ok.

*In general I feel the students' happiness isn't the school's priority but the school should be concerned about the overall mental and emotional state of its students.* I agree but I disagree more I think because the school being concerned about the mental state and emotional state of the students would be its happiness cause if a student isn't happy then the mental and emotional state isn't really going to matter but I don't think it's the school's priority that they should feel responsible to do not have to do cause

Ok so it sounds like you're saying it should be like a value?

Yeah it should be a value not a job description.

*I believe there is no other value at this school than to pass classes and do well in standardized tests*

yeah and no because me individually I guess but a student on the whole kids do have to run things they have priorities for the school other than themselves and ...



*our school environment contributes to my happiness by allowing me time with friends creating opportunities to make new friends and providing activities I enjoy.*

Yes it just makes people want to go to school more if they like the people that go there with them not all kids have that I guess.

*I believe our school is not responsible for students' emotional wellbeing or happiness but is responsible for our education and starting us on the right path for the future.*

That goes with the happiness they're not responsible but it should just be a moral that they want to do to make us happier so we can have a right path for the future.

*In general I believe our school shows it cares by offering challenging and career-focused courses*

I agree slightly them offering classes that'll help us in the future that's great but they don't offer all classes for people who want to do something with their lives like they have vo-tech for kids who know what they want to do but don't need a college degree I guess for what they want to do. There are classes for screenwriting and acting and I guess all the classes that they like have to give you are career-focused I guess but there aren't like they're more electives than needed classes. Most colleges I don't know if they're gonna go through with this but they're planning on getting rid of French when the teacher retires which I don't think is smart because they're adding classes that don't really need to be there they're good classes but they're not used well like screenwriting is basically just watching Netflix and just doing papers on it I guess that's accurate but there's much more things you can do.

Many more liberal arts colleges still require languages but some are doing away with that

Yeah a lot of colleges they require 2 years of high school language lots of telemarketing I guess

Yes and I don't know how I feel about that either.

*In general I feel that a positive atmosphere in a school makes students want to come to school and is better for learning.*

Yeah that might apply to some kids I think most kids but there are still a lot of kids that want to do it so for their future they don't care if they're in a positive atmosphere they're gonna have a better atmosphere in the future like with what they're doing.

*In general teachers show they care when they reach out and try to bond with the students in the class.*

That basically goes with all of that if they care they want to try to talk to them.

*I feel that this school is a very stressful place.*

In going over these cards not really in just explaining them changed my mind about that.

*In general teachers and administrators show they care when they actively listen to students' concerns and consider their opinions.*

I disagree cause I don't generally think that's true they don't really listen to us unless we're on student council

You don't feel heard?

Or if we do a petition(?) I don't have anything to say but I know that some kids have very valid things

And they just haven't been talking

Yeah

What kind of things have they been talking about? I'm just copying where you put these and then we're gonna put these we're gonna leave these where they are and put these under them so it sounds like somebody had something and it

Yeah well it's basically the class is being cut for other classes that we don't really need and there're more classes than French that are going to be cut I think I don't know what classes those are but probably languages altogether

Now have you had 2<sup>nd</sup> year or 3 years of German?

Do you have a facility for languages are you pretty good at that?

Um I'm better at like learning on my own with it but this class definitely helps me and I just like the teacher cause this was basically her

Ok the number 4 is very positive of your reflective of your German teacher. She doesn't treat us like students she treats us like people that she's helping more than student-teacher relationship

Like you feel known by her

Yeah

What's the size of the class is it smaller?

We're like the largest class she's ever had 30 something

30?

In that class I want to say or 27

Wow

We're a higher class though

That's a large class and she still connects with you that's awesome that's really something. Ok go ahead and put these down and you can move these if you find that you know that I don't want to have this one here

Oh I move them out? Or just move them around?

Yeah just move them around - just because you put them there doesn't mean they have to stay

*I would define our school as kind and caring environment.*

Um not really just because not everyone cares or everyone's kind but you're not gonna get that the same like on a whole I feel teachers are just there to teach not really do anything else

Do you think the now that's referring to teachers and up or are you also talking about students

Probably students too there are kids that are just jerks to other students and not supportive I guess.

*I believe the school values my happiness level*

um well I mean them having this the survey means they care about us I guess they going all out to have us have a survey to see what they can do.

*Regular procedures and school policies make me feel I am valued.*

I mean I don't think that really matters a lot but them having them for like a skeleton I guess it means they care enough for us to have like boundaries it's hard to explain I mean they're following the law but it's more of a law they do value us by doing that for us but they also value the school's protection like their staff just legally they don't want to do anything wrong

So it's kinda a two-fold thing

It's 50-50

They value your safety but they also don't want to get a lawsuit

*Because of stress and anxiety I have cried over standardized test results.*

No I have not personally but I'm sure someone has.

*I believe I learn better in school and perform better on tests and activities if I am in a positive mood.*

I guess that makes sense that if I'm in a better mood I'll do better but basically if I just study for the test and I feel prepared that will put me in a positive mood to do it but being in a positive mood isn't gonna make me ace tests

So you can sort of separate it if you're in a bad mood from what you have to do

It's all based on how I do on a test not how I feel about a test.

*In general teachers and administrators show they care when they are consistent with policy and don't decline discipline enforcement.*

I have to totally disagree with that because I don't think that even makes sense to me cause they don't that's just the law to have a policy for discipline and that has nothing to do with how we feel it's just keeping us alive.

*I feel confident the education here is helping me to have a successful life.*

I guess I agree with that a little bit because the education here is preparing me but it's more of what I need to do for self to have a successful goal.

*I believe our school as a responsibility to care for students' wellbeing.*

No they don't have a responsibility like I said before it should be a value yes.

*I believe our school should not be involved or concerned about my emotional wellbeing.*  
No they should care they just don't have to.

*Because of stress and anxiety I have cried over grades.* No not personally again.

*In general I believe a school shows it cares about the students by offering additional help with remedial courses to help students graduate.*

I do agree with that because even though them passing the Keystones is them making money so we can graduate but it's also additional help they care enough to see that we need help so they set up tutoring sessions and remediation tutoring for the Keystones.

*There are times when I am concerned that what I am learning here will not be used in real life and high school is a waste which is a cause for anxiety.*

I agree and disagree I agree about the first part about us using this is real life like some things I'm never gonna use but high school definitely isn't a waste not a cause for anxiety it's just some things you need and some things you won't basically.

*In general I believe it is unrealistic to ask the school to care about my emotional wellbeing.* I agree with that a lot. Not their job.

*In general teachers show they care when they let students do what they want and not expect too much from them.*

This is always the tough one

*In general teachers show they care when they teach to standards and prepare students for exams.*

I disagreed with this before but... I they don't have to teach to the standards at all they could just teach around the curriculum and they prepare us by teaching around the curriculum. If they teach to the standards depending on whose standards they are it

could be school standards Keystone corporation standards I guess or our standards but I feel they should teach to all those standards and more to help us prepare

Alright is that your next class?

Yeah

I want to make sure we've touched on everything. You made some real distinctions between values about the value of caring and showing concern as opposed to whether it should be part of a job

Yeah they don't need to care with if they should conscious(?)

Overall do you think the school should offer stress management

No I don't think they should feel obligated to that's something you can do on your own time I feel like you can talk to friends talk to the teachers even the guidance counselors

Do students use the guidance counselors for that kind of stuff?

No they just usually use them for switching classes or talking to them about grades like college and stuff.

College plans and that sort of thing.

Do you think the school environment has changed over the years as less caring or more caring?

Um I haven't really noticed but I'm sure it has just because I'm so used to it everything's changing with me

Good point

It's not like me leaving and going to a different school and coming back

What would you like to see different in schools anything?

I would like it a lot I think it would be ok I think we have extra classrooms we have 3 computer labs that we don't use maybe like a guidance counselor or something they could have that there for emotional support but it wouldn't be a class it'd be something you'd go down in a study hall a free period

Like a coping

Yeah

Mental health or wellbeing

Yeah

Was there anything that surprised you? One thing that I noticed was that you said you changed your mind about how you felt about the school the emotional you realized the school cared about you more just in placing the cards\_ that's kind of cool

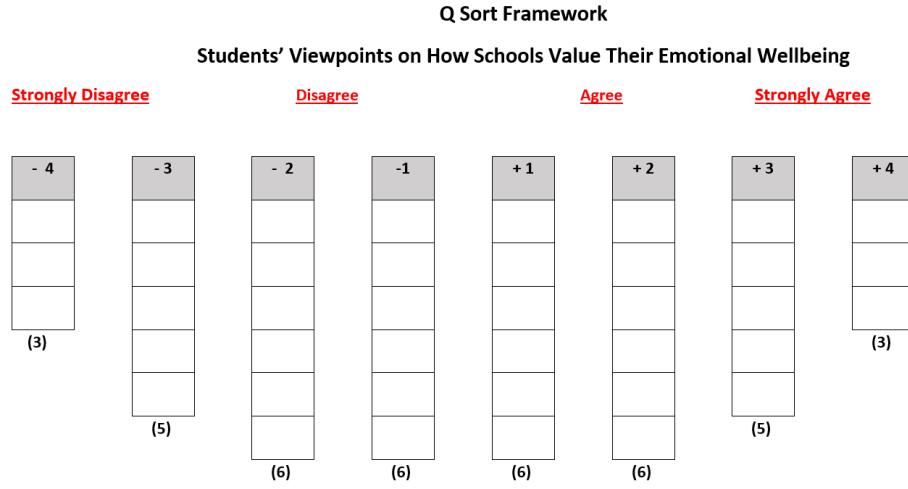
Yeah yeah



## APPENDIX C

Figure 1. Distribution Framework Participants Will Use to Rank Q Set Items.

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## APPENDIX D

September 18, 2015

Dr. Karen Larwin, Principal Investigator  
Mr. David Zupsic, Co-investigator  
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology & Leadership  
UNIVERSITY

RE: HSRC Protocol Number: 016-2016  
Title: We don't need no education: Student viewpoints, the values of education, and the performance wall that fails to support emotional wellbeing

Dear Dr. Larwin and Mr. Zupsic:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the abovementioned protocol and determined that it is exempt from full committee review based on a DHHS Category 5 exemption.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,



Mr. Michael A. Hripko  
Associate Vice President for Research  
Authorized Institutional Official

MAH:cc

c: Dr. Charles Vergon, Chair  
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology & Leadership

