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**West Virginia GEARUP**  
Evaluation

Priority Group Student Survey

Narrative Summary

July 14, 2009

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## Priority Cohort Student Survey

The GEAR UP evaluation team at Edvantia surveyed 11th- and 12th-grade students (“Priority” group) in GEAR UP schools to gather information about their knowledge and awareness about college, academic progression, and aspirations for educational attainment. This brief summary highlights the major findings of the 11th- and 12th-grade student survey.

### Methods

The student survey was administered to “priority” students during August and September of 2008. The evaluation team mailed administration instructions, 11th-/12th-grade surveys to high schools in nine counties. The returned surveys were collected by site coordinators or mailed directly to Edvantia. The results were used as baseline data for setting benchmarks for WV GEAR UP program. A total of 546 11th-grade, and 699 12th-grade students completed the survey. The response rates of 11th- and 12th-grade students are 32% and 35%. Table 1 lists the number of respondents by each school.

**Table 1. Numbers and Percentages of Student Respondents by School**

County	School	11th Grade		12th Grade	
		N	%	N	%
Boone	Sherman High	66	12.1%	59	9.8%
Clay	Clay County High	30	5.5%	16	2.7%
Lincoln	Lincoln County High	38	7.0%	80	13.4%
McDowell	Big Creek High	21	3.8%	22	3.7%
McDowell	laeger High	18	3.3%	24	4.0%
McDowell	Mount View High	19	3.5%	32	5.3%
Mingo	Burch High	24	4.4%	43	7.2%
Mingo	Gilbert High	28	5.1%	28	4.7%
Mingo	Matewan High	30	5.5%	48	8.0%
Mingo	Tug Valley	22	4.0%	12	2.0%
Roane	Roane High	42	7.7%	69	11.5%
Summers	Summers High	31	5.7%	21	3.5%
Webster	Webster County High	24	4.4%	25	4.2%
Wyoming	Westside High	79	14.5%	44	7.3%
Wyoming	Wyoming County East	74	13.6%	76	12.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>546</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Major Findings

The major findings of the priority student survey are presented in this section.

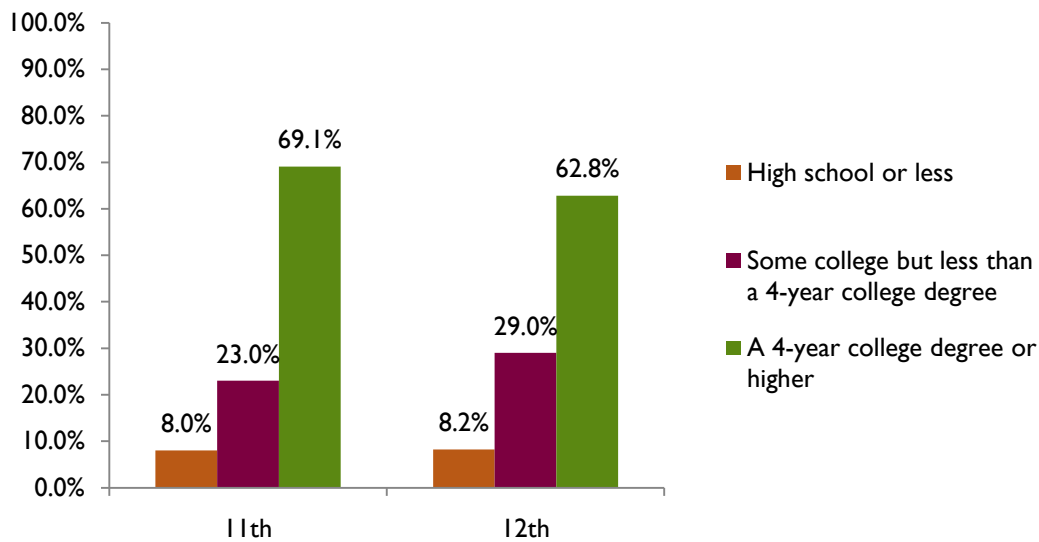
**Knowledge about college.** Students were asked to report whether someone from their school had spoken with them about college entrance requirements and the availability of

financial aid to help them pay for college (see Table 2). More than half of respondents from each grade reported that they had talked with someone in school about the college entrance requirements and the availability of financial aid. Generally, respondents from 12th grade were more likely to have such experiences than were 11th graders.

**Table 2. Numbers and Percentages of Respondents Reporting Having Someone from Their School Speak with Them about Availability of Financial Aid and College Entrance Requirements**

Topic	11th Grade		12th Grade	
	%	N	%	N
Availability of financial aid	53.9	294	57.5	342
College entrance requirements	57.5	314	62.3	370

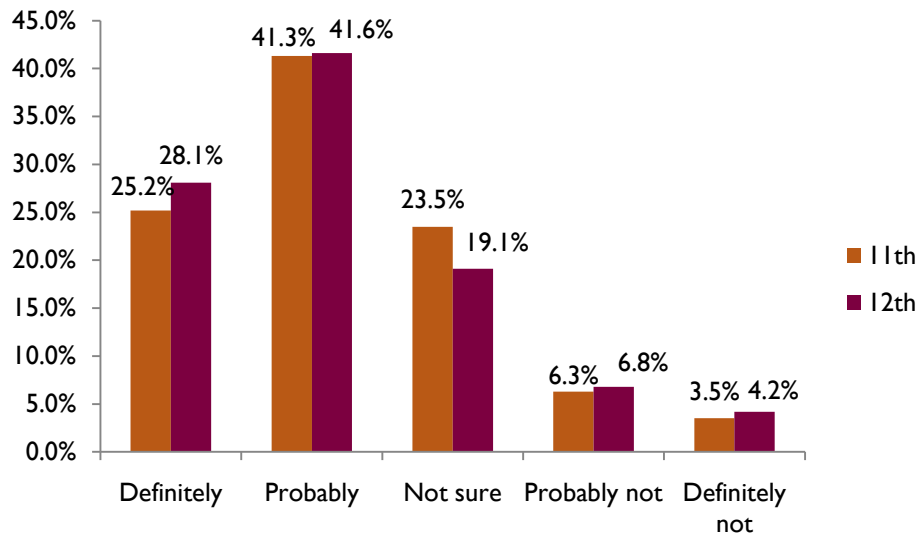
**Educational expectations.** Students were asked to report the highest level of education they expected to obtain. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of the respondents indicated that they expected to obtain a 4-year college degree or higher, regardless of their grade levels. However, the percentage of 12th-grade students who expected to obtain a 4-year college or higher degree is lower than their peers in 11th grade. The 12th-graders, however, are more likely than the 11th-grade students to expect to attend college but earn less than a 4-year college degree.



**Figure 1. Percentages of Respondents Reporting the Highest Level of Education They Expected to Obtain**

**Perceptions of affordability.** The survey asked priority students whether they thought they could afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and family resources (see Figure 2). For each grade, respondents were most likely to report they *probably* could afford to attend a public 4-year college using all available funds. About a quarter of all respondents believed that they *definitely* could afford a public 4-year college. There were slightly more than 6% of respondents from each grade thinking that they *probably could not*

afford a public 4-year college and only 3 or 4% of respondents believed that they *definitely could not* afford a public 4-year college.



**Figure 2. Percentages of Respondents Reporting Whether They Thought They Could Afford to Attend a Public 4-Year College Using Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Family Resources**

**Aspiration scales.** The student survey contains 23 items that focus on factors influencing student educational aspirations, including two internal orientations (as a leader and an achiever), and two external supports (a positive environment and teacher support). Factor analysis confirmed four subscales: leader orientation (7 items), achiever orientation (5 items), teacher support (6 items), and positive environment (5 items). The descriptive statistics of the 23 items, which had response options ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and 4 subscales, which were formed by taking the mean of the scores for each item in the subscale, for each grade are presented in Table 4. Significance tests were conducted between 11th- and 12th-grade students. *Leader orientation* refers to students perceiving themselves as leaders and role models for other students, and being able to solve problems and take control of situations. Respondents in 12th grade scored significantly higher than their 11th-grade counterparts ( $t = -3.26, df = 1137$ ). Students with high scores on “*Achiever orientation*” have high expectations for themselves and believe their teachers have high expectations about their ability to put forth the effort necessary to succeed and improve. Respondents from the two grades were similar to each other for this scale ( $t = .30, df = 1135$ ). Eleventh-grade students perceived significantly less teacher support than their counterparts in 12th grade ( $t = -2.499, df = 1136$ ). There was no difference between 11th- and 12th-grade students in their perceptions of the school environment ( $t = .45, df = 1124$ ).

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Aspiration Items by Grade**

Scale Item	11th Grade			12th grade		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
<b>Leader Orientation</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>0.66</b>
I can take control of situations.	542	4.04	0.86	589	4.14	0.83
I am a good leader.	542	3.85	0.95	592	3.93	0.93
I can select the best way to solve a problem.	542	3.74	0.89	589	3.86	0.87
I do what I say I will.	539	4.01	0.92	589	4.17	0.79
I am a positive role model to other students.	540	3.66	0.93	584	3.81	0.92
I like to lead others.	538	3.59	1.11	584	3.73	1.02
Other students look to me for direction.	537	3.47	1.01	583	3.63	0.95
<b>Achiever Orientation</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.57</b>
I believe I can always improve.	542	4.38	0.73	588	4.39	0.72
Teachers expect me to succeed.	539	4.14	0.86	591	4.14	0.86
I am confident in my ability to do well.	542	4.23	0.80	590	4.30	0.75
I put forth the necessary effort to reach a goal.	538	4.22	0.74	585	4.20	0.72
Anyone can succeed if they worked hard enough.	537	4.39	0.77	581	4.40	0.77
<b>Teacher Support</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>0.79</b>
Teachers care about my problems and feelings.	541	3.49	1.03	586	3.58	1.04
Teachers respect my thoughts.	540	3.51	1.04	591	3.62	0.98
Teachers value my opinions.	538	3.57	0.92	582	3.61	0.96
Teachers support me when I try something new.	536	3.61	0.92	585	3.70	0.90
I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.	537	3.75	1.12	581	3.97	0.98
Teachers allow me to explore topics I find interesting.	536	3.53	1.02	583	3.64	1.04
<b>Positive Environment</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>0.84</b>
I am proud of my school.	535	3.80	1.05	586	3.76	1.08
I am not usually bored in school.	537	3.01	1.25	582	3.08	1.25
Teachers encourage me to ask questions.	535	3.88	0.96	585	3.86	0.92
I like my school.	533	3.79	1.10	582	3.76	1.09
School is a good place to be.	535	3.71	1.02	583	3.63	1.08

Note: The rating scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings from the student survey indicated that priority students presented some similarities across the two grades. They generally possessed high educational aspirations. The majority of the respondents expected to obtain a postsecondary education degree after high school. The majority thought that they could afford to attend a public 4-year college using all available funds. They generally perceived themselves as leaders and role models and were confident in making achievements. They also reported a high level of teacher support and positive school environment.

However, there were still some 11th- and 12th-grade students who had not talked with school staff about the college entrance requirements and the availability of the financial aid for college. Similarly, some 11th and 12th grade students were not sure about the affordability of attending a public 4-year college. While it may not be reasonable to expect that 100% of priority group students will ever report having spoken with school or GEAR UP staff about college or financial aid or believe they can afford college, the GEAR UP staff may wish to reflect on whether the percentages found in this survey align with their expectations for the program.

## APPENDIX A:

### Priority Cohort (11th and 12th Grades) Student Survey Data

#### Program Level Overview



West Virginia  
GEAR UP State Grant:  
2008-2009  
11th and 12th Grade  
Student Survey

County: All Counties

School: All Schools

N: 1,164

## School and School Work

1. Who usually helps you with your homework? *(Select all that apply.)*

52%	Parent or guardian	52%	Friend
5%	Grandparent	26%	Teacher
14%	Brother or sister	9%	Some other person
7%	Other family member		

2. Compared with other students, how hard do you think you work in school?

2%	Not nearly as hard	35%	Harder
6%	Not as hard	9%	Much harder
48%	About the same		

3. What type of student do you consider yourself to be?

0%	Poor	69%	Good
11%	Fair	21%	Excellent

4. How important to you is what each of the following people think you should do about your education?

	<i>Not Impt.</i>	<i>Some Impt.</i>	<i>Very Impt.</i>
a. Parent or guardian	1%	10%	89%
b. Grandparent	2%	12%	86%
c. Brother or sister	9%	31%	60%
d. Other family member	18%	39%	43%
e. Friend	15%	45%	39%
f. Religious leader (minister, priest, rabbi)	19%	45%	37%
g. Teacher	25%	34%	41%
h. Guidance counselor	9%	29%	62%
i. Principal or assistant principal	15%	35%	50%
j. Coach	18%	32%	50%
k. Some other person	30%	33%	36%

5. I am doing well (a grade of A or B) in each of these subjects:

	Yes	No	Not Taking
a. English	71%	9%	19%
b. History	66%	9%	25%
c. Math	52%	17%	31%
d. Science	59%	11%	30%

6. If you are not doing well in a particular subject, why not? (Select all that apply for each subject.)	English	History	Math	Science
Have a C or D	9%	10%	17%	11%
Subject is too hard	4%	5%	15%	7%
Subject is boring	9%	15%	12%	9%
Don't do well on tests	9%	11%	18%	12%
Don't do all the assignments	4%	4%	6%	5%
Don't like the teacher	4%	4%	6%	5%
Don't understand the subject	3%	5%	15%	7%
Don't like the subject	7%	8%	15%	7%
Don't pay enough attention in class	4%	6%	6%	5%
Don't study hard enough	5%	9%	9%	7%
Other	3%	4%	5%	4%
Don't know	4%	4%	5%	4%

7. Which subjects do you think you need help with? (Select all that apply.)

16%	English	25%	Science
20%	History/Social Studies	12%	Spelling
46%	Math	8%	Other
9%	Reading		

8. What is your favorite subject in school?

10%	Art	2%	Reading
4%	Band	14%	Science
17%	English	1%	Spelling
15%	History/Social Studies	19%	Other
18%	Math		

9. What makes that subject your favorite? (Select all that apply.)

36%	It's fun or cool	32%	I like the activities
37%	It's easy to understand	30%	It's challenging
40%	I like the teacher	49%	I like the subject
55%	I am good at it	9%	Other

10. Have you taken the ACT yet?    29% Yes    71% No

If yes, what was your highest score?    20

11. Which of the following courses have you taken or plan to take in high school? *(Select all that apply.)*

88%	Algebra I	87%	Geometry	49%	Chemistry
79%	Algebra II	48%	Trigonometry	25%	Physics
33%	Applied Math	20%	Calculus	69%	Foreign language

12. For each of the following subjects, about how many hours each day do you spend on homework?

	0	½	1	1½	2	2½	3	Not Taking
a. English	24%	32%	17%	6%	3%	0%	1%	17%
b. Science	26%	27%	14%	5%	2%	0%	1%	25%
c. Math	20%	27%	15%	7%	4%	1%	1%	25%
d. History/Social Studies	28%	30%	12%	5%	2%	0%	1%	22%
e. All other subjects combined	26%	24%	21%	10%	6%	2%	4%	7%

	Yes	No
13. I think I have good study skills.	66%	34%
14. I would be interested in attending an after-school tutoring program.	21%	79%
15. I think I have the ability to go to college.	91%	9%
16. In school, I participate in sports.	46%	54%
17. In school, I participate in clubs.	56%	44%
18. In school, I participate in student government.	17%	83%
19. I use a computer for school projects.	92%	8%
20. I have taken a computer class at school.	90%	10%
21. I use a computer at home.	90%	10%
22. If you have a computer at home, do you have Internet access?	85%	15%
23. I plan to be living in West Virginia when I'm 30.	54%	46%
24. I plan to be working in West Virginia when I'm 30.	53%	47%
25. I would be interested in having a "college-type" mentor or buddy.	61%	39%

### Knowledge about College

	Yes	No
26. Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about the availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?	56%	44%
27. Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about college entrance requirements?	60%	40%
28. Do you have an idea of what courses you need to prepare you for college?	76%	24%

29. Have you heard of the following types of schools? Yes No
- |    |                                       |     |    |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----|----|
| a. | Two-year or community college         | 97% | 3% |
| b. | Four-year college or university       | 97% | 3% |
| c. | Vocational, trade, or business school | 97% | 3% |
30. Do you think a person with a college degree typically earns more money in one year than a person who does not have a college degree? 87% 13%
31. How much do you think it costs for one year of tuition at a four-year public college in your state? (This estimate should not include food, housing, or book expenses.)
- |     |                     |     |                     |
|-----|---------------------|-----|---------------------|
| 1%  | Up to \$1,000       | 18% | \$15,001 - \$20,000 |
| 13% | \$1,001 - \$5,000   | 9%  | \$20,001 - \$25,000 |
| 26% | \$5,001 - \$10,000  | 6%  | \$25,001 - \$30,000 |
| 21% | \$10,001 - \$15,000 | 7%  | More than \$30,000  |
32. How important to your future is getting an education beyond high school?
- |    |               |     |                    |
|----|---------------|-----|--------------------|
| 2% | Don't know    | 14% | Somewhat important |
| 2% | Not important | 82% | Very important     |

## Plans for the Future

33. What occupation would you like to have after your education is complete?
- |                              |                       |                    |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1% Actor/actress             | 8% Doctor             | 0% Pilot           |
| 1% Architect                 | 5% Engineer           | 1% Police officer  |
| 1% Artist                    | 2% Lawyer             | 0% Race-car driver |
| 2% Athlete (any sport)       | 2% Mechanic           | 1% Scientist       |
| 0% Astronaut                 | 1% Military           | 0% Singer/musician |
| 2% Beautician                | 0% Model              | 8% Teacher         |
| 2% Chef                      | 18% Nurse             | 1% Truck driver    |
| 2% Computer/video technician | 4% Pharmacist         | 2% Veterinarian    |
| 2% Construction worker       | 1% Photographer       | 21% Other career   |
| 1% Designer/decorator        | 3% Physical therapist | 8% Don't know      |
34. Do you plan to continue your education after high school (that is, go to college or attend a trade school, etc.)? Yes No
- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
|  | 92% | 8% |
|--|-----|----|
35. Have you heard of GEAR UP? 61% 39%

36. From whom do you get most of your information about your options for continuing your education after high school? *(Select all that apply.)*

66%	Parent or guardian	55%	Teacher
16%	Grandparent	51%	Guidance counselor
17%	Brother or sister	17%	Principal or assistant principal
18%	Other family member	8%	Coach
31%	Friend	20%	Some other person
4%	Religious leader (minister, priest, rabbi)		

37. What is the highest level of education that you expect to obtain?

8%	High school or less
26%	Some college but less than a 4-year college degree
66%	A 4-year college degree or higher

38. What is the main reason you would not continue your education after high school?

60%	No reason, I definitely will go	2%	I want to join the military
15%	It costs too much or I can't afford it	1%	Don't want to be away from home
1%	Don't need college for planned job	2%	Just don't like school
3%	My grades are not good enough	2%	I want to start a family
1%	I'm just not interested	2%	Some other reason
3%	I need or want to work	8%	Don't know

39. Do you think that you could afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?

27%	Definitely	7%	Probably not
41%	Probably	4%	Definitely not
21%	Not sure		

	Yes	No
40. During the past year, have you discussed academic requirements for attending a four-year college with any adults in your household?	67%	33%

	Yes	No
41. Have any of your family members attended college?		
a. Mother or female guardian	41%	59%
b. Father or male guardian	37%	63%
c. Grandparent	23%	77%
d. Brother or sister	31%	69%

42. How much education do you think your father or male guardian wants you to get?

- 9% High school or less
- 18% Some college but less than a 4-year college degree
- 72% A 4-year college degree or higher

43. How much education do you think your mother or female guardian wants you to get?

- 6% High school or less
- 16% Some college but less than a 4-year college degree
- 77% A 4-year college degree or higher

**Background**

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
44. What is your gender?	37%	63%

45. What is your current grade level?

- |            |              |              |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| 0% Grade 6 | 0% Grade 9   | 52% Grade 12 |
| 0% Grade 7 | 0% Grade 10  | 0% Other     |
| 0% Grade 8 | 48% Grade 11 |              |

	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>Other</i>
46. How old are you?	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	50%	14%	1%

47. How do you describe yourself?

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1% American Indian or Alaska Native | 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| 0% Asian                            | 93% White                                    |
| 3% Black or African American        | 1% Biracial                                  |
| 1% Hispanic or Latino               | 1% Multiracial                               |

	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
48. How many brothers do you have?	34%	39%	17%	7%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
49. How many sisters do you have?	35%	37%	17%	5%	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
50. Counting yourself, how many people live in your home?	0%	0%	7%	30%	35%	17%	6%	2%	1%	1%

## Aspirations

Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement for each of the following items:

1 = Strongly Disagree (**SD**)    2 = Disagree (**D**)    3 = Don't Know (**DK**)    4 = Agree (**A**)    5 = Strongly Agree (**SA**)

	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
51. I need more education or training after high school to get a satisfying job.	2%	4%	6%	24%	63%
52. I want to make some money immediately after high school.	2%	4%	14%	42%	39%
53. I plan to continue my education after high school, no matter what my career.	3%	5%	13%	26%	53%
54. I can get a satisfying job without further education after high school.	22%	24%	20%	18%	16%
55. Continuing my education after high school might help me decide what to do.	5%	5%	16%	39%	35%
56. I am anxious to begin my career as soon as possible after high school.	9%	16%	25%	27%	23%
57. The opinions/plans of friends help me make decisions for after high school.	10%	23%	25%	31%	11%
58. Getting a job right after high school might help me decide what I want to do.	10%	23%	31%	26%	10%
59. I won't be able to afford to continue my education after high school.	20%	26%	35%	11%	7%
60. The opinions/plans of family help me make decisions for after high school.	5%	10%	16%	45%	24%
61. I can take control of situations.	2%	3%	13%	51%	32%
62. I am a good leader.	2%	5%	24%	41%	28%
63. I can select the best way to solve a problem.	2%	5%	25%	47%	21%
64. I do what I say I will.	1%	4%	13%	48%	34%
65. I am a positive role model to other students.	2%	5%	31%	40%	22%
66. Teachers care about my problems and feelings.	5%	8%	33%	36%	18%
67. Teachers respect my thoughts.	5%	8%	29%	42%	16%
68. I believe I can always improve.	1%	1%	7%	41%	50%
69. Teachers expect me to succeed.	1%	2%	15%	43%	38%
70. I am confident in my ability to do well.	1%	2%	9%	46%	42%
71. Teachers value my opinions.	3%	8%	33%	41%	16%
72. I am proud of my school.	5%	8%	19%	43%	26%
73. I put forth the necessary effort to reach a goal.	0%	2%	10%	52%	36%
74. Teachers support me when I try something new.	2%	7%	31%	44%	17%
75. I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.	4%	7%	17%	42%	30%
76. Teachers allow me to explore topics I find interesting.	4%	10%	25%	43%	17%
77. I am not usually bored in school.	14%	22%	20%	33%	11%

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 = Disagree (D) 3 = Don't Know (DK) 4 = Agree (A) 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
78. Anyone can succeed if they work hard enough.	1%	2%	8%	37%	53%
79. Teachers encourage me to ask questions.	2%	6%	17%	50%	24%
80. I like my school.	6%	8%	15%	46%	26%
81. School is a good place to be.	5%	9%	19%	47%	26%
82. I like to lead others.	4%	11%	25%	38%	19%
83. Other students look to me for direction.	3%	9%	35%	36%	17%

Items 65-79 are from the *Students Speak* survey developed by the National Center for Student Aspirations, College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine.

### Conditions that Support Aspiration Subscales

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Teacher Support: Students perceive that their teachers serve as positive role models, care about them, and encourage them to explore new topics.	3.63	0.78
Positive Environment: Students perceive school as a good, interesting, and open place to be.	3.63	0.81
Achiever Orientation: Students have expectations for themselves and believe their teachers have high expectations about the students' ability to put forth the effort necessary to succeed and improve.	4.28	0.57
Leader Orientation: Students perceive themselves as leaders and role models for other students, and able to solve problems and take control of situations.	3.83	0.68