

DATE 1991-03-18 DEAN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF THREE HIGH PERFORMANCE  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department

of

Communication and Social Foundations

We accept this dissertation as  
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ABSTRACT

Recent evidence suggests that strong, positive organizational cultures characterize high performance schools. Themes related to the concept of organizational culture (e.g. climate, ethos, values, underlying assumptions, style) have been the subject of investigation for more than half a century. However, because the concept has been examined with numerous variables, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks, there is a lack of common understanding in the literature about the term organizational culture, particularly as it applies to schools. The general purposes of this research, therefore, are: (1) to contribute to the clarification of the concept of organizational culture as it applies to educational administration and organizational theory, (2) to describe the organizational cultures of three high performance British Columbia (BC) secondary schools and to describe the similarities and differences among their cultures, and (3) to evaluate the research technique for discovering and describing the organizational cultures of schools.

Anticipating cultural variation associated with population size, geographic location, and public/private school settings, one urban, one rural, and one independent school were selected for study from among the highest performing British Columbia secondary schools. Academic

achievement on specific provincially developed assessment instruments was used to gauge the relative performance levels of the province's secondary schools. Data were primarily gathered using semi-structured audio-taped interviews with all school administrators and randomly selected samples of students, teachers, parents, and secretaries or custodians. The taped interviews were later transcribed and analyzed using content analysis. Examination of school documents and informal observation also provided sources of data.

The principal conclusions of this study are listed below:

1. The values held by the members of the study's schools were highly congruent, and common values were enumerated. With reference to Hodgkinson's (1978) value paradigm, the vast majority of values were interpreted as Type 2A and/or Type 2B.
2. Although many attitudes were unique features of individual schools, the majority were common among the schools. These are analyzed and described.
3. Despite the fact that normative expectations were highly congruent among the organizations, a great deal more variability existed for cultural norms than was the case for attitudes and values.
4. Within each school the cultural perceptions of organizational members were highly congruent.

5. Although all three schools were characterized by relatively strong organizational cultures, that of the independent school was interpreted as stronger than either the rural or the urban school.
6. No appreciable difference in cultural strength was identified between the rural and the urban school.
7. A positive relationship appeared to exist between respondents' perception of the organizational culture and the length of time they had been associated with the school. Furthermore, after one year in the independent and after two years in the public schools, organizational members appeared to have become acculturated.
8. The study's semi-naturalistic approach allowed the researcher to discover and describe school-wide organizational cultures in the study schools.
9. This research suggests that perhaps most important to the success of an organization are the underlying values and attendant attitudes. The research, therefore, promotes the notion that future investigations concentrate on the organizational values and attitudes associated with schools.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation.

I wish to express my appreciation to Glenlyon-Norfolk School, and in particular the headmaster, Mr. David Brooks and an assistant headmaster, Dr. Stephen Johnson, for assisting with pilot testing the interview questions. Furthermore, although the names of the study's high performance secondary schools must be kept confidential, I wish to thank all participants for their cooperation, time, interest, and insights.

The fine work of Mrs. Karen Weber is acknowledged. Mrs. Weber patiently and competently transcribed more than one thousand pages of interview transcripts from audio cassettes.

To Professor Alan Ryan, Department of Curriculum Studies, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, and Professor Fernand Gervais, Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Regina, I am indebted for their significant commitment in time and energy in examining the interview transcripts and validating the schools' cultural summaries.

I would like to thank the members of my Committee, Drs. Martin-Newcombe, Storey, Chabassol, Cutt, and Lim for their valuable comments on the initial research proposal and final draft of this dissertation. Special thanks are due my

supervisor, Dr. Christopher Hodgkinson. It was he who encouraged me to take the time to explore for a significant dissertation topic and not to be afraid of the inevitable "cul-de-sacs". Dr. Hodgkinson is appreciated for his ability to inspire and to provide clear, consistent supervision. I would like, therefore, to express my thanks to Chris for his friendship, sound advice, and support during my doctoral program in general and in the preparation of this work in particular.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the patience and unflinching support of my wife, Jean and my daughter, Amanda. During the years of my doctoral program I was typically preoccupied with studies at the expense of family life. The understanding and cooperation of my family provided a positive, supportive environment within which my work could be accomplished. I am grateful to them, and I eagerly anticipate our return to a more normal family life.

"So the hunt is on for the right and strong cultures, but the dilemma is that we do not know exactly what we are hunting for or what kinds of guns, traps, or other devices we should use to make the catch."

(E.H. Schein in Kilmann et al., 1985, p. 18)

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Many researchers have tried to answer the question of whether schools make a difference to students. For example, Mortimore and Mortimore (1984) reported that research conducted in Britain and in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s showed that schools did not greatly influence children's educational development. The authors cited studies such as those of Coleman et al. (1966) and Jencks (1973) which indicated that external factors such as social class and ethnic origin are likely to be of greater importance than internal school factors.

Mortimore and Mortimore (1984), however, maintained that this view is not always accepted by parents who may believe that a particular school exerts a strong influence on their children's learning. In both the public and private school sectors, parents often go to great lengths to send their children to particular schools in the conviction that their chances for success will be enhanced.

The belief that some types of schools produce better results than others is supported by the work of Brookover et al. (1978) which demonstrated that school climate (as measured by the student's sense of academic futility) is associated with student academic achievement. Further support is provided by the well-known longitudinal study of Rutter et al. (1979) titled *Fifteen thousand hours*:

*Secondary schools and their effects on children.* This research monitored the progress of 2,000 children through outwardly similar secondary schools in London, England. Controlling for student intake differences, it was demonstrated that organizational ethos (described by elements such as the teachers' behaviour at work, expectations for student academic performance, student rewards for success, and the degree to which students were permitted to take responsibility) were associated with higher levels of student academic achievement, attendance, and better behaviour. Similarly, Moos (1979) reported secondary school and college level research that supports the notion that student learning and development are associated with organizational culture (cited in Owens, 1987).

For decades, researchers have attempted to identify factors which positively relate to student educational outcomes. The ability to measure educational performance and to relate it to its determinants has been regarded as important for designing policies relating to school effectiveness, teacher accountability, and educational finance. The emergence of the effective schools movement in the 1970s, and the recent work being conducted on educational indicators (e.g., Smith, 1988) demonstrate the continuing interest in finding appropriate measures of the outcomes of schooling and the factors that relate to them.

### Research Approaches

The most common approach to the study of relationships between educational inputs and outcomes has been the input-output or production function approach. Standardized achievement tests have been the most common measure of student outcomes in this approach. Retention and graduation rates, proportion of students continuing to post-secondary education, awards such as scholarships, and student attitudes are other measures used to gauge the outcomes of education. Measures of educational input used in production function studies can be generally organized around the student (family background, school-related student characteristics, and attitudes), the school (school facilities/conditions and staff characteristics), and the school's exterior environment or district's characteristics. Typically, the relationships of these variables to student achievement measures are statistically calculated using correlation and regression techniques.

Recently, however, the utility of the rational production function approach to the study of student educational outcomes and their determinants has been questioned (e.g., Greenfield, 1973, 1986; Hodgkinson, 1978, 1983). Moreover, analysts such as Averech et al. (1974), Garms et al. (1978), and Hanushek (1979) described the problems of conceptual clarity and the analytical problems encountered by such methodology. Consequently, the findings

of production function studies are to some extent contentious, and divergent schools of thought exist as to how such research should be conducted.

While school climate has been the subject of numerous studies, largely in the areas of leadership and administration, relatively little research has been conducted on the concept of the culture of high performance schools.<sup>4</sup> As an alternative to the traditional input-output research paradigm, this study seeks to investigate the cultures of academically effective schools through a non-quantitative and comparative approach.

#### Importance of School Culture Research

Recent evidence suggests that strong, positive school cultures are characteristic of high performance schools. Saphier and King (1985) contended that school improvement results from the combination of four elements: (1) the strengthening of teacher skills, (2) the systematic review and renewal of the curriculum, (3) the involvement of parents and other members of the public in forging important school-community partnerships, and (4) organizational improvement. The authors maintained that the concept of school culture underlies all four elements, and culture is therefore fundamental to school improvement. Purkey and Smith (1982) held a similar view:

"We have argued that an academically effective school is distinguished by its culture: a structure, process, and

climate of values and norms that channel staff and students in the direction of successful teaching and learning.... The logic of the cultural model is such that it points to increasing the organizational effectiveness of a school building and is neither grade-level nor curriculum specific" (p. 68).

It was the view of Saphier and King (1985) that in the presence of strong school cultural norms, significant and widespread improvements in instruction are possible. Where cultural norms are weak, educational improvements are held to be less frequently achievable.

A summary of the literature on school culture, compiled by Van Sant O'Neill et al. (1988), suggested that "schools can become more effective if they develop the right kind of culture and that dysfunctional cultures can be changed in order to adapt better to environmental realities" (p. 1). Furthermore, there are indications that strong cultures can be created (e.g., Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Johnston, 1987; Ouchi, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982).

#### Purpose

The general purposes of this research are: (1) to describe the organizational cultures of three high performance British Columbia (BC) secondary schools and to identify similarities and differences among their cultures (specific research questions are enumerated in Chapter 3), and (2) to evaluate the research technique for discovering and describing the organizational cultures of schools. A

subsidiary purpose is to contribute to the clarification of the general concept of culture in the context of educational administration and organizational theory.

#### Research Method

Data were gathered primarily through the use of semi-structured interviews which were conducted with a randomly selected sample of students, teachers, parents, and secretaries or custodians. All administrators in the study's high performance secondary schools were interviewed. Document analysis and informal observation were also used to compile data and form impressions about school organizational culture.

#### Assumptions

The following research assumptions underlie the study:

1. Culture, as defined for the purposes of this research, exists in schools and specifically the schools involved in this study.
2. School culture can be discovered and described using the study's research method.
3. Potential variations in the schools' organizational cultures may be related to factors such as population size, geographic location, and public/private school differences.
4. The researcher, employing the stated methodology, is objective and unbiased to the extent that the results of the study will not be affected to any significant degree.

### Definitions

Working definitions of the key terms used in this research are as follows:

#### Organizational Culture

Organizational culture was viewed as one of four components of a school's internal environment, and was defined as the shared pattern of basic values, attitudes, and norms held by the organization's members.

#### Values

Values were defined as implicit or explicit concepts of that which is good, right, or preferred. They were seen as distinctive to individuals or groups, and they influenced decision making. Hodgkinson's (1978) Value Paradigm was used to conceptualize values as Type 1 (transrational), Type 2A (rational), Type 2B (consensual), or Type 3 (subrational).

#### Attitudes

Attitudes were generally defined as ways of thinking, acting, or feeling. Preferences, beliefs, opinions, sentiments, impressions, predispositions to act, and positions taken by individuals or groups were considered to be attitudes for the purposes of this research.

#### Norms

Organizational norms referred to group members' shared understandings about the organization's rules, rewards,

events and traditions, heroes and legends, processes, and expectations.

### Cultural Strength

The strength of the organization's culture was interpreted using three measures: (1) the inferred proportion of group members who appeared to hold common values, attitudes, and norms; (2) the existence of informal rules which guided behaviour, and the degree of group members' understanding of the organization's behavioural norms; and (3) the organization's value orientation with reference to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm.

### Significance

Recent literature suggests that an important leadership function is the creation and management of culture (e.g., Firestone & Wilson, 1985; Purkey & Smith, 1982; Schein, 1985; Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1984; Smircich & Morgan, 1982; Weick & Daft, 1983). By investigating the cultures of high performance schools and by comparative analysis, this research will provide a documentary resource for educational theorists and practitioners. Answers to the research questions should also bear implications for leadership training generally and for preparation of secondary-school principals in particular.

Researchers (e.g., Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1984) have observed that organizational culture is receiving ever-increasing attention in education. However, the term

"organizational culture" has been misunderstood and confused with other concepts such as climate, ethos, values, and style (Schein, 1985). This dissertation will seek to contribute to a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of this complex concept and its relevance to school organization.

#### Limitations

There are four important limitations of this research:

1. The conclusions drawn from this research apply only to the three study schools and cannot be generalized to other secondary schools.
2. The focus of this research was to investigate school-wide culture, although it is recognized that subcultures exist in most organizations.
3. This research is cross-sectional, revealing "snapshots" of the schools' organizational culture at one specific time.
4. Content analysis was used as the means of analyzing the interview transcripts, and it must be recognized that although efforts were made to limit researcher bias, content analysis can never be completely objective.

## CHAPTER 2

## Literature Review

Theoretical Approaches to Understanding Organizations

The following summary of major trends in twentieth-century organizational thought provides an historical perspective for the qualitative approach which forms the basis of this research.

Hoy and Miskel (1982) and Owens (1987) explained that theoretical approaches to understanding educational organizations have passed through three general eras. Although there is no universal agreement concerning the exact beginning and end of the first era, it is generally accepted that the classical period emerged prior to World War 1 and continued until mid-century. Taylor (1911), Fayol (1949), and Weber (1947) are associated with the development of this approach which emphasized concepts such as bureaucracy and scientific management. The classical view characterized organizations as possessing bureaucratic and hierarchical structures for the coordination, direction, and control of the work force, and having formalized regulatory mechanisms to maximize efficiency and productivity. The organization's members were seen as simple, passive, requiring supervision, and having no real influence within the organization -- the so-called "Theory X" man (McGregor, 1960). Although formulated many decades ago, classical concepts can still be detected in modern rational

administrative planning models such as Planning-Programming-and-Budgeting Systems and Management by Objectives (Owens, 1987).

During the early decades of the century, the human relations movement arose in reaction to the rational classical perspective. Theorists such as Follett (1940), Mayo (1933), and Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) contributed to the understanding of human behaviour in small groups and larger organizational settings by focusing on the social and psychological aspects of organizations. The human relations approach perceived the individual within the organization as "social man" committed to the small work group where allegiances, informal processes, and social belonging are powerful influences. Individual and group satisfaction at work was recognized as a strong motivational force which can be used to attain managerial goals. Essentially, human relations theorists stressed the need to develop and preserve harmonious relationships within organizations (Hoy & Miskel, 1982). Human relations research has demonstrated that worker participation, satisfaction, cooperation, morale, and cohesiveness are powerful influences in organizations (Owens, 1987).

Attempts to synthesize the classical approach (which has been characterized as focusing on organizations without recognizing people) and the human relations perspective (which has been described as dealing with people without

recognizing organizations) resulted in the rise of the organizational behavioural movement. "Drawing upon models from the social sciences, researchers attempted to describe the systematic relationships between organizational characteristics on the one hand and human characteristics on the other hand that could describe and explain organizational behavior" (Owens, 1987, p. 32). The movement, which spanned roughly the period 1950 to 1980, produced a steady flow of research and theory including topics such as systems theory (e.g., Getzels & Guba, 1957; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Merton, 1973; Parsons, 1951) and role theory (e.g., Bennis, 1966; Kahn et al., 1964).

In the 1970s and 80s, a new perspective of organizations has been evolving which Owens (1987) referred to as Human Resources Management (HRM). Owens explained that discovering the means by which organizations can become more effective while employees become both increasingly productive and satisfied in their work is the objective of HRM as a field of research and practice. Inasmuch as it is concerned with the processes through which individuals are socialized into an organization; how perceptions, values, and beliefs about an organization develop; and the influence of members' perceptions, values, and beliefs on behaviour, HRM is referred to as the field of organizational culture in the recent literature on organizational behaviour.

## Historical Perspective on the Concept of Organizational Culture

The concept of organizational culture is not new. Themes associated with the notion have appeared for more than half a century in the literature of organizational studies. For example, the Western Electric research of the 1930s noted that certain management styles produced feelings of belonging, competence, and achievement among workers which resulted in greater employee satisfaction and productivity. Furthermore, in the 1930s, two authors, Barnard and Waller, were writing about elements associated with organizational culture. Barnard described culture as "a social fiction created by people to give meaning to work and life" (cited in Owens, 1987, p. 164). Waller studied the school as a social system and perceived schools as miniature societies. In his studies of school culture, Waller focused on concepts such as shared norms, symbols, and values. Beginning in the 1940s, studies by Lewin, his colleagues, and students investigated the idea that the effectiveness of organizations could be increased by changing the social norms of both management and employees. The creation of solidarity, meaning, commitment, and productivity in organizations was a focus of Selznick in the 1940s. Work by researchers such as Halpin and Croft in the 1960s popularized the term organizational "climate". In the 1970s, Clark used the term organizational "saga" in his

studies of universities, and Rutter et al. referred to "ethos" in their high school effectiveness research (Owens, 1987).

#### Growing Interest in the Concept of Organizational Culture

The above demonstrates that over several decades a substantial literature developed around themes associated with organizational culture. However, organizational culture did not emerge as a key concept in the literature until the early 1980s and the publication of two books, William Ouchi's *Theory Z* and Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence*. The work of Ouchi (1981), comparing Japanese and American management practices, demonstrated that the competitive advantage achieved by many Japanese companies was to some degree attributable to their recognition of the importance of organizational culture. The so-called "Z culture" emphasizes commitment to the organization's members, humanized working conditions, and human relations. The 1982 research report by Peters and Waterman demonstrated that the successful American corporations shared a similar concern for the development of organizational culture. Common among the management characteristics was the importance of corporate values and culture.

Kanter's (1983) studies of successful and less successful American companies provide further evidence of the growing interest in the concept of organizational culture. Her research indicated that the successful

companies were characterized by a culture of pride and a climate of success. The less successful organizations, in contrast, were described as segmented, making it difficult for members to take pride in the organization (Owens, 1987).

Musella and Davis (1990) explained that the concept of organizational culture has received increasing attention because: (1) it offers a new way of thinking about organizations (e.g., Jelinek et al., 1983), (2) it provides a useful means of organizing ideas and perceptions of how organizations work (e.g., Smircich, 1985), and (3) it is thought to hold potential for effecting organizational change (e.g., Martin, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Sproull, 1979; Wilkins, 1983).

The growing interest in organizational culture is illustrated by the publication of an issue of *Administrative Science Quarterly* (ASQ) (vol. 28, no. 3, 1983) which was entirely devoted to the topic of organizational culture.

#### Perspectives on Organizational Culture

In this issue of ASQ the concept of culture was discussed from a variety of perspectives. In the introduction to the issue Jelinek, Smircich, and Hirsch explained that to understand organizations researchers must address the subjective, interpretive aspects of organizational life and not merely the rational, economic aspects which have been the traditional focus of much organizational research. The following summary of the

issue's nine articles provides an overview of the variety of perspectives that exist on the concept of culture in organizational studies:

Smircich examined the potential and limitations of the concept of culture for organizational analysis. The author concluded that regardless of whether culture is treated as a background factor, an organizational variable, or a root metaphor for conceptualizing organizations it has potential for organizational analysis because it directs attention toward the subjective, interpretive aspects of organizations and away from the traditional rational approaches which are of limited value.

Gregory's article, with reference to anthropology, provided descriptions and critiques of organizational studies conducted in industrial settings. For the purposes of the article, culture was defined as "learned ways of coping with experience" (p. 364) and was conceptualized as "a system of meanings that accompany the myriad of behaviors and practices recognized as a distinct way of life" (p. 364). The author concluded that most studies have neglected to include a multicultural perspective. They have emphasized shared culture and emphasized the management perspective. Gregory suggested, that in reality, organizations are multicultural in that there are subgroups characterized by their own shared understandings, views, and

priorities. Consequently, it was recommended that researchers adopt a multicultural image of organizations.

Semiotics, the study of signs or systems of signs, was offered by Barley as an approach for studying the systems of meaning that underlie organizational cultures. A sign was defined as the relationship between or the combination of a sign vehicle (an expression such as a word or a sound) and its signification (the meaning communicated by the sign vehicle). Since this approach is concerned with the processes by which meaning is transmitted to members of an organization, "semiotics is ultimately the study of how communication is possible, since all communication presumes shared codes. The essence of semiotics is the isolation of systems of signification and the rules that govern their use" (pp. 394-395). Barley explained that semiotics has only recently gained acceptance in the field of sociology, and so, to date, relatively few studies have employed this research approach.

The theory of structuration was proposed by Riley as another approach to the study of organizational culture. Riley explained that structures are the rules and resources that people use in interaction, and that they form both the medium and the outcome of interaction. Structures are the medium, since given rules and resources are required before individuals are able to interact. Rules and resources are also the outcome of interaction because their existence is

contingent upon being applied and recognized through the processes of interaction. Structuration was therefore defined as "the production and reproduction of social systems through the application of generative rules and resources" (p. 415). The author emphasized the importance of people in the process of structuration. Individuals within organizations create, carry, and communicate the rules and resources. They each have knowledge or a perspective about how interaction works in the organization itself and may use their knowledge to achieve their own ends. Riley used this approach to investigate organizational politics. She made a connection between culture and power and viewed structuration as a process by which the power structure is created. Structuration and cultururation were seen as closely paralleled processes. Results of the study suggested organizational cultures should be conceptualized as integrated systems of subcultures, rather than generalizing single sets of values that apply to all members of organizations.

The article by Martin et al. focused on the interrelationships between organizational culture and organizational stories. The authors pointed out that as organizational stories of events, personages, and accomplishments are passed along to new generations of organizational members, over time these stories become part of the folklore and engender a sense of cultural uniqueness.

Although stories may appear to be unique to organizations, it was demonstrated that there are common story types which have persisted in other organizations. Stories communicate important information about the organization's character, its norms, expectations, beliefs, and values, and hence, through the stories members form positive or negative impressions of the organization. It was therefore suggested the results of the stories give organizations their uniqueness.

Jones argued that the form of the organizational culture develops as a result of the types of arrangements that are established to organize and regulate the "exchanges" or "transactions" which occur among the organization's members. In particular, the organization is concerned with the minimization of coordination and control costs. The author equated organizational culture with a "property-rights system" which was described as "the set of economic and social relations that define the position of each individual with respect to other team members and with respect to the use of resources" (p. 456). Jones proposed three "ideal-typical" cultures: production, bureaucratic, and professional, which were founded upon the premise that given "property-rights structures" are better matched with given "production environments". It was the author's contention that the production culture will develop "when the production process is routine, and the most technically

efficient means of production is likely to be based on the use of capital-intensive technology and the standardization of the work process" (p. 461). The bureaucratic culture will occur "when task nonroutineness increases and the process by which inputs are converted into outputs becomes obscure, monitoring becomes difficult and transaction costs rise" (p. 462). A professional culture becomes established "when task nonroutineness, both in terms of task variety and task coping difficulty is high, and when the production function primarily depends on the skills of specialized personnel, (and) transaction costs will be high" (p. 463).

Wilkins and Ouchi maintained that although some organizations may have developed distinct organizational cultures in which members hold shared social understandings, this happens relatively infrequently at the level of the whole organization. Instead, the authors suggested organizations are more commonly characterized by social fragmentation. Cultures develop in subgroups of large organizations where there is less social contact among members, less chance for acculturation, and hence, less opportunity for creation of an organization-specific culture. Consequently, it was suggested that small groups or organizations are more likely to develop shared social understandings. Effective administration of large organizations, therefore, requires effort in establishing a culture which fosters shared social knowledge of two types:

(1) development of a process that assists organizational members to contribute to the determination of that which is in the group's best interest (the shared general assumptions) and (2) a perception of shared common goals. Relatively stable membership and a sense of long history are needed to create the common social understandings associated with culture. Japanese organizations were cited as examples. Individuals typically devote their working lifetime to one company, and this results in a stable membership, allows for the development of myths, stories and legends, and supports the institutionalization of social knowledge. A multicultural situation was viewed by the authors as a negative influence when establishing an organization-wide culture. Shared culture in organizations will more likely develop where contradictory social knowledge is absent or disregarded, potential new members are screened for value congruence (for example, it was pointed out that some organizations, in attempts to have personnel with similar outlooks, will hire graduates from specific institutions), job specialization is deemphasized to discourage the formation of subcultures, and collective decision making occurs.

Smith and Simmons emphasized the importance of leaders attending to unresolved conflicts in organizations. By describing the development of a new organization the authors illustrated the value of myths, symbols, and stories in

understanding "operative dynamics" which may otherwise remain hidden. Administrators and researchers can obtain useful insights into the interpretive, intangible, nonrational side of organizations through in-depth examination and interpretation of the culture's myths, symbols, and stories, and by searching for the unifying messages which underlie these surface cultural elements.

Broms and Gahmberg identified two methods of communication that distinguish cultural groups. The first is the more traditional view of communication, the "sender-receiver" mode, in which messages are transmitted. The second is "autocommunication" in which individuals communicate within themselves. The authors explained that these personal thought processes are mechanisms which yield mythical information, "those very symbols and shared images that form the nucleus of any culture" (p. 484). In the authors' view, an appreciation for autocommunication and the ability to discover and interpret personal and organizational myths can provide valuable insights into that which is beneath the surface with regard to the self and the organization.

Jelinek et al. explained that researchers have been searching for means of addressing the subjective, interpretive aspects of organizations beyond the traditional rational or economic approaches. Consequently, there has

been widespread and growing interest in culture as a root metaphor for organizational studies.

Organizational Culture and its Relationship with Student  
Academic Success

A variety of perspectives on organizational culture have been illustrated by the 1983 issue of *Administrative Science Quarterly*. In addition, the work of numerous researchers and theorists has emphasized the nonrational nature of schools as organizations. For example, it has been demonstrated that educational institutions are characterized by ambiguity (e.g., Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; March & Olsen, 1976), loose coupling (e.g., Weick, 1976), uncertainty, fluid participation, unclear and conflicting goals, and uncertain technologies (e.g., Firestone & Herriott, 1982). If schools are nonrational in many respects, and if they are "organized anarchies" as suggested by Cohen et al. (1972) and March and Olsen (1976), then it was Owens' (1987) contention that under such conditions, teaching, the primary activity of educational organizations, cannot be conducted under the bureaucratic control of the classical approach. Rather, teaching is coordinated and controlled more by the culture of the organization, meaning its values, traditions, and norms of acceptable behaviour which have been established over time.

If instructional activity is regulated and directed by organizational culture, then it is reasonable to conclude

that culture is associated with the outcomes of education.

This view is shared by Johnston (1987) who stated that:

"It is easy to dismiss the need to manipulate the culture of a school as too theoretical and too abstract. Unfortunately, it is the culture that makes people behave as they do. The culture will affect school performance and student outcomes" (p. 88).

Johnston (1987) advocated the manipulation of organizational culture; however, it should be explained that other researchers and theorists hold a different view. For example, like Johnston, Morgan (1986) recognized that organizational culture can be shaped, but because of its evolutionary nature, he believed that organizational culture could not be simply manipulated. Instead, Morgan maintained that:

"Managers can influence the evolution of culture by being aware of the symbolic consequences of their actions and by attempting to foster desired values, but they can never control culture in the sense that many management writers advocate" (p. 139).

Having implied a relationship between student academic success and school culture, the next logical step is to define the term "organizational culture" for the purpose of this research. The following two sections review definitions of both "culture" and "organizational culture" respectively, to provide a context and support for the study definition of school culture.

### Culture

A dictionary definition provides an appropriate point from which to launch an investigation of the term "culture". *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (1987) defines culture as:

- a: "the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations, and
- b: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious or social group" (p. 314).

Because of the growing awareness of the importance of culture, not only in Canada, but worldwide, it is not remarkable that the Canadian Commission for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) should concern itself with the question. In support of UNESCO's cultural program, Belshaw et al. (1977) developed a working definition of culture for this Commission. The authors identified three principal components of culture.

1. Culture is essentially a value system. Although the authors did not clarify what is meant by "value system", they proceeded to describe characteristics of cultural systems. They stated that a system is comprised of many and varied interrelated elements, and that a change in any one component will affect the others. Hence, a cultural system is dynamic. The members of a cultural system may also

participate simultaneously in other cultures. The role of culture is to allow for coexistence among its members and the reaching of consensus. A degree of loyalty is part of the commitment that members have to their cultures, although it was emphasized that the level of commitment may be variable and may become negative in some cases, as is evidenced in so-called counter-cultures.

2. Culture is learned behaviour. Behaviour patterns of people form as the elements of culture (assumptions, conventions, beliefs, rules, and manners) are communicated and learned within the group. This concept supports the notion of culture as a dynamic, changing system. It also emphasizes the importance of communication, particularly spoken language, as an important vehicle for transmitting cultural information within a group or organization. Many of the cultural elements listed above have no meaning for individuals who are not members of a particular culture.

3. Culture possesses a creative potential. Members of a culture develop and extend themselves through culture by identifying with it, and are therefore able to fulfill their potential to an extent that would not be possible outside the cultural framework.

Having elaborated on cultural components, Belshaw et al. (1977) provided this working definition of culture:

"Culture is a dynamic value system  
of learned elements, with assumptions,  
conventions, beliefs and rules

permitting members of a group to relate to each other and to the world, to communicate and to develop their creative potential" (p. 6).

Morgan (1986) explained that culture is typically referred to as:

"the pattern of development reflected in a society's system of knowledge, ideology, values, laws, and day-to-day ritual. The word is also frequently used to refer to the degree of refinement evident in such systems of belief and practice" (p. 112).

The field of sociology affords another perspective on the meaning of culture. Theodorson and Theodorson (1979) offered the following definition of culture in *A Modern Dictionary of Sociology*:

"The way of life of a social group; the group's total man-made environment, including all the material and non-material products of group life that are transmitted from one generation to the next" (p. 95).

The same dictionary of sociological terms provided classic definitions of culture as stated by Tylor (1871) and Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). Tylor viewed culture as:

"That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 95).

Having surveyed the literature of the period, Kroeber and Kluckhohn provided a definition of culture that they claimed was the consensus of most contemporary social scientists:

"culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values" (p. 95).

Besides identifying shared values, beliefs, and norms as three key components of culture, Parkinson and Drislane (1986) explained that culture is ideational, it is learned, it is shared, and it distinguishes one group from another. Culture is ideational in that it encompasses the so-called "mental baggage" possessed by group members:

"To assert that culture is ideational is to suggest that the content of culture is a set of beliefs, values, knowledge, symbols, meanings, expectations, and so on" (p. 6).

Culture has been described as all that is learned by individuals. The emphasis on learning suggests that culture is transferred through processes of socialization, processes by which people learn the culture and become members of it:

"sociologists are now more likely to say that behavior patterns are the result of learned culture -- the result of the transmitted mental baggage of the group" (Parkinson & Drislane, 1986, p. 7).

Inasmuch as culture is learned, it is learned from members of a group who share it. Although a given organization will possess a culture that is distinct from others, many organizations will also have subunits which are

imbued with their own distinctive cultural attributes (Owens, 1987).

This investigation of the term "culture" reveals several common threads among the definitions. In the next section, the meaning of "organizational culture" will be explored, followed by a summary of what appear to be the most commonly held aspects of culture.

#### Organizational Culture

Although the concept of organizational culture is considered important and has been receiving increasing attention, authors (e.g., Geertz, 1973; Lundberg, 1985; Musella & Davis, 1990; Schein, 1985) have realized that there is a difference of opinion in the literature concerning its definition. For example, several definitions of organizational culture were enumerated by Schein (1985). Schein explained that Goffman (1959, 1967) and Van Maanen (1979) referred to culture as the "observed behavioral regularities" such as the language used and the rituals associated with deference and demeanor when people interact. Organizational culture was equated with norms in the work of Homans (1950). Deal and Kennedy (1982) referred to culture as the "espoused dominant values" of an organization, or "the way we do things around here." Philosophy and culture were synonymous in the opinion of Pascale and Athos (1981). Schein (1968, 1978), Van Maanen (1976, 1979), and Ritti and Funkhouser (1982) considered culture to be the rules that

must be adhered to in order to get along in an organization. The feeling or climate within an organization (as expressed by the physical surroundings and the way in which organizational members interact with outsiders) was equated with its culture (Tagiuri & Litwin, 1968). Schein, himself, (1985) referred to the culture of any group or social unit as:

"A pattern of basic assumptions -- invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 9).

Musella and Davis (1990) provided another list of definitions by various authors to illustrate the difference of opinion in the literature concerning the meaning of organizational culture. For example, Tunstall (1983) defined culture as "a general constellation of beliefs, mores, customs, value systems, behavioral norms, and ways of doing business that are unique to each corporation"; Louis (1980), on the other hand, viewed it as "a set of common understandings for organizing actions and language and other symbolic vehicles for expressing common understandings"; Beres and Porterwood (1979) considered organizational culture "a cognitive frame of reference and a pattern of behavior transmitted to members of a group from the previous generations of the group"; Herskovits (1948) defined it as

"essentially a construct that describes the total body of belief, behavior, knowledge, sanctions, values and goals that make up the way of life of a people"; Kroeber and Parsons (1958) viewed culture as the "transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behavior and the artifacts produced through behavior"; Smith and Peterson (1988) defined organizational culture as "agreed ways of interpreting signs, symbols, artifacts, and actions"; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) identified basic underlying assumptions which included the relationship of the organization to its environment, as well as the natures of: (1) reality and truth, (2) human nature, (3) human activity, and (4) human relationships; and Van Maanen and Barley (1985) saw culture as a product of its ecological context, differential interaction, collective understandings, and reproductive and adaptive capability. Musella and Davis, themselves, perceived organizational culture as comprised of system norms, values, and practices.

Various other investigators of organizational culture have attempted to define the term "culture". For example, Sergiovanni and Corbally (1984) argued that culture includes:

"the system of values, symbols, and shared meanings of a group including the embodiment of these values, symbols, and meanings into material objects and ritualized practices. Culture governs what is of worth for a

particular group and how group members should think, feel and behave. The "stuff" of culture includes customs and traditions, historical accounts be they mythical or actual, tacit understandings, habits, norms and expectations, common meanings associated with fixed objects and established rites, shared assumptions, and intersubjective meanings" (p. viii).

A similar view was held by Gregory and Smith (1987) who saw school culture as defined by its symbols, norms (patterns of behaviour), and underlying beliefs and values. It was their opinion that an important aspect of school culture is the degree to which all members perceive a sense of community where everyone collaborates as one to make the school work. Caring, commitment, and trust characterize healthy communities. Furthermore, the researchers provided examples of elements that in their opinion comprise a school's culture and subcultures. School cultures include:

"lesson plans, units of instruction, tests, grading remediation, evaluation .... It also includes such elements as control, discipline, reward and punishment, movement, time, and individual responsibility" (p. 48).

In the opinion of Ouchi (1981), an organization's culture is comprised of tradition and climate. Furthermore, culture implies the existence of organizational values that are reflected in the organization's way of doing things.

Smircich (1983) explained that culture is usually defined as:

"the social or normative glue that holds an organization together. It expresses

the values or social ideals and the beliefs that organization members come to share. These values or patterns of belief are manifested by symbolic devices such as myths, rituals, stories, legends, and specialized language" (p. 344).

A description of the components of organizational culture, provided by Morgan (1986), supports Smircich's definition. Morgan viewed organizational culture as:

"patterns of belief or shared meaning, fragmented or integrated, and supported by various operating norms and rituals" (p. 121).

Van Sant O'Neill (1988) provided a metaphor in which culture is likened to a flower. Three levels are distinguished:

"its petals represent the day-to-day visible behaviours, the stem represents the values core, and the roots, the assumptions. The basic assumptions, the deep roots, are the essence of culture. The values and behaviours are observed manifestations of the cultural essence" (p. 1).

It must also be pointed out that not only have definitions of culture, as a component of organizations, varied, but also some authors (e.g., Evered, 1983; Hirsch & Andrews, 1983; Smircich, 1985; Trice & Beyer, 1984) have contended that organizations do not contain cultural components, but rather organizations are cultures.

The preceding definitions and descriptions of culture and organizational culture demonstrate the variety of component dimensions that have been the focus of study.

Having reviewed previous research there appears to be some convergence among the definitions of organizational culture. The review of research on organizational culture, conducted by Smircich (1983) concluded that the principal elements of culture are values and beliefs. However, Smircich's review of the field of culture and comparative management identified attitudes as an additional cultural component:

"These works share a conception of the organization-culture relationship.... Culture is treated as an independent variable; it is imported into the organization through the membership.... Its presence is believed to be revealed in the patterns of attitudes and actions of individual organization members" (p. 343).

The literature reviewed here also suggests that norms are intrinsic to culture. Although it is true that norms reflect culture, they become a part of culture when they are transferred to new members through processes of socialization and when they become part of the individuals' so-called "mental baggage". This view is supported by the work of sociologists (e.g., Parkinson & Drislane, 1986) who identify norms as a cultural component.

Four components of culture have emerged from the review of the literature; however, the identification of beliefs, as distinct from attitudes and values, is problematic. For instance, beliefs can be stated in such a way as to permit their interpretation as values. To avoid confusion over

whether statements should be considered beliefs or values, the researcher elected to eliminate beliefs as a cultural component. Consequently, for the purposes of this research, organizational culture is defined as the shared pattern of basic values, attitudes, and norms in a school.

#### Aspects of Organizational Culture

Having identified the components of organizational culture for the purposes of this study, the following section provides meanings for each cultural element.

#### Values

Deal and Kennedy (1982) described values as the bedrock of the organization's culture. They contended that values provide a sense of common direction for employees and guidelines for day-to-day behaviour. Values are often not written down. But if employees are aware of what the standards are and what the organization stands for it is more likely they will make decisions and behave in such a way as to support those standards. Therefore, shaping and enhancing values should be an important task of educational administrators. A clearly articulated vision, incorporating central values of what the school represents, stands at the foundation of the organization's culture (Saphier & King, 1985).

The following definition of values, first formulated by Kluckhohn and presented by Hodgkinson (1978), underlies this research:

"A value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action" (p. 121).

Hodgkinson (1978) proposed a value paradigm which presented four grounds or justifications for values. Type 1 values were considered transrational because they go beyond reason, and are grounded in principle. Type 2A values are based on an analysis of the consequences of making a value judgement. Type 2B values are justified by consensus or the will of the majority of a group. Type 3 values are justified on the grounds of preference, or the degree to which something is liked or preferred by the subject (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm (1978)

Grounding	Psychological Correspondences	Philosophical Correspondences	Value Types
<u>Principle</u>	Conative	Religionism (transrational) Existentialism Ideologism	1
<u>Consequences (2A)</u>	Cognitive	Humanism Pragmatism Utilitarianism	(rational) 2
<u>Consensus (2B)</u>			
<u>Preference</u>	Affective	Logical Positivism Behaviourism Hedonism	(subrational) 3

The value model separates the concept of value into two components, what is "good" and what is "right". Type 3 values represent the former. Such values are grounded in the individual's preference structure and refer to what is enjoyable, likeable, and pleasurable to the individual. In

Hodgkinson's view, Type 3 values are hedonic and provide a relatively primitive basis for values. The remaining value types represent a hierarchy of the "rightness" or "correctness" of value. Each of the value levels is considered to be of a higher order than those below it. According to Hodgkinson, Type 1 values are of the highest order because they are grounded in principle and imply acts of faith, belief, or commitment.

#### Attitudes

The following are selected definitions of attitudes obtained from the writings of theorists and philosophers in the fields of sociology and educational administration. For example, Theodorson and Theodorson (1979) defined an attitude as:

"An orientation toward certain objects ...or situations that is emotionally toned and relatively persistent. An attitude is learned, and may be regarded as a more specific expression of a value or belief in that an attitude results from the application of a general value to concrete objects or situations" (p. 19).

Hovland et al. (1963) provided the following definition of attitudes:

"The term "attitude" will be used exclusively for those implicit responses which are oriented toward approaching or avoiding a given object, person, group, or symbol" (p. 7).

Hodgkinson (1978), in discriminating among attitudes, motives, values, and behaviour, described attitudes as:

"expressions of preference and predispositions to act in response to the countless issues of living and life style" (p. 108).

The following dictionary definitions provided alternative perspectives on the term "attitudes":

(1) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1932) defined attitudes as "settled behaviour, as indicating opinion; settled mode of thinking, (2) the *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary* (1977) defined an attitude as a "State of mind, behavior, or conduct regarding some matter, as indicating opinion or purpose", and (3) *Webster's New World Dictionary* (1982) defined an attitude as "A way of acting, thinking, or feeling; one's disposition."

Attitudes, then, for the purposes of this work, refer not only to the predispositions that people may have to act in certain ways, but also they are meant to subsume the continuing preferences, beliefs, opinions, sentiments, impressions, or positions that persons, either individually or shared in groups, express or demonstrate about people, things, or situations; they are specific manifestations of underlying values. It should be noted, however, that although attitudes are intermediate between values and behaviour, they do not necessarily entail consistency between these two aspects of organizational culture; they are tendencies only.

### Norms

The following definitions and examples of cultural norms guided the study meaning of the term. For instance, norms were defined by Theodorson and Theodorson (1979) as:

"A rule or standard of behavior defined by the shared expectations of two or more people regarding what behavior is to be considered socially acceptable. Social norms provide guidelines to the range of behavior appropriate and applicable to particular social situations" (pp. 276-277).

Parkinson and Drislane (1986) simply described norms as "relatively precise rules specifying which behaviors by group members are permitted and which are prohibited" (p. 27).

Examples of positive cultural norms are those of Saphier and King (1985) who identified the following norms or behaviours which characterize effective schools:

- collegiality (professional staff assist one another)
- experimentation (the administration encourages staff to experiment with new ideas)
- high expectations (teachers and administrators are held accountable for high performance through regular evaluations)
- trust and confidence (administrators and parents trust the professional judgement of teachers)
- tangible support (support in terms of time and resources is available to help teachers improve instruction)

- reaching out to knowledge bases (teachers and administrators avail themselves of knowledge bases associated with teaching skills and student learning)
- appreciation and recognition (good teaching is honoured by the school and community)
- caring, celebration, and humour (caring for one another, celebration of significant events, and humour are the norm)
- involvement in decision making (teachers are included in the school organization's decision-making process)
- protection of what is important (administrators defend staff interests such as protecting their preparation time)
- traditions (curricular and noncurricular events and ceremonies are integrated into the life of the school)
- honest, open communication (people can openly disagree, discuss, and confront to resolve matters in a constructive manner)

On the basis of the above definitions and descriptions of cultural norms, and in light of the norm classifications employed in other studies (reported in a subsequent section), norms, for the purposes of this research, refer to the shared understanding about rules, rewards, events and traditions, heroes and legends, processes, and expectations evident in the study's schools. They are social attitudinal expectations based on underlying values, with a definitive behavioural aspect.

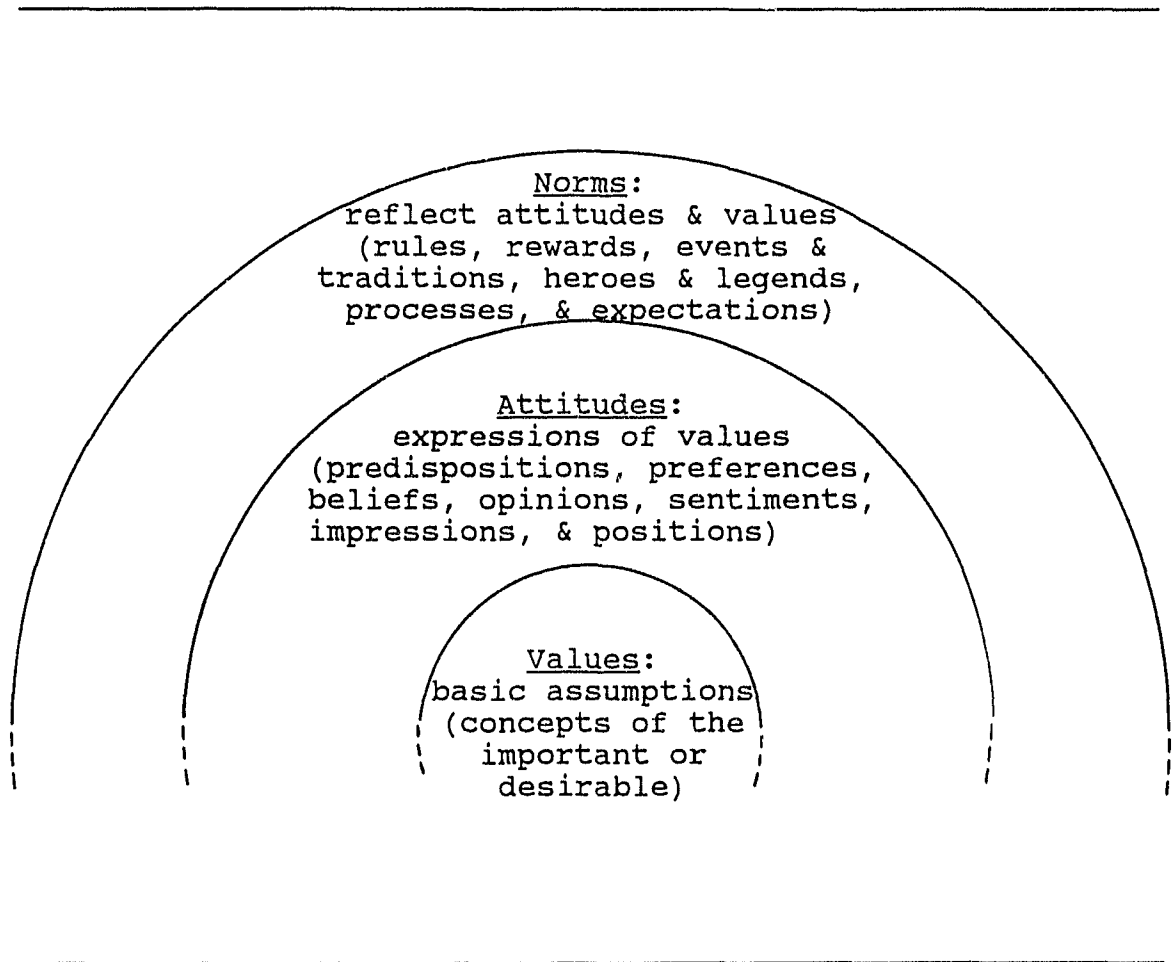
### Theoretical Framework

Hodgkinson (1978) proposed a schema of value-related terms which consisted of self-concept, motives, values, and attitudes. In Hodgkinson's view, observed behaviours are connected through cause-and-effect linkages to the psychological phenomena of attitudes, value orientations, values, motives, and self-concept. His scheme suggested that there are larger numbers of values than motives, larger numbers of attitudes than values, and far greater numbers of observed behaviours.

The theoretical framework for the present cultural study is somewhat similar. For the purposes of this research, values (which are smallest in number) are at the core of school culture. Linked to the underlying values are somewhat greater numbers of attitudes. Related to values and attitudes are numerous observable organizational norms (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Schematic Representation of School Culture

Components



The Climate and the Culture of Organizations

Organizational climate and organizational culture are two terms which have been confused. Owens (1987) explained that organizational climate has been described as individuals' perceptions of various aspects of the organizational environment, and that the notion of satisfaction (the degree to which individuals' perception of

some aspect of the organizational environment is satisfying to them) is often associated with the term "organizational climate". For instance, Halpin and Croft (1962) were pioneers in the study of organizational climate. Their research into the relationships among elements such as leadership characteristics, teacher personality, teachers' social needs as work group members, and teacher group characteristics (morale, for example), demonstrated that school organizational climate may be assessed.

Schwartz and Davis (1981) held a similar view of organizational climate, and they made the distinction that:

"Climate is a measure of whether people's expectations about what it should be like to work in an organization are being met. Measurements of climate can be very helpful in pinpointing the causes of poor employee motivation, such as unclear organization goals, dissatisfaction with compensation, inadequate advancement opportunities, or biased promotion practices. Culture, on the other hand, is a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organization's members" (p. 33).

Musella and Davis (1990) explained that the above definition, also supported by Dyer (1985), suggests that "while climate measures whether expectations are being met, culture is concerned with the nature of these expectations themselves" (p. 3).

It was the opinion of Anderson (1982) "that school climate includes the total environmental quality within a

given school building" (p. 369). The author found merit in Tagiuri's (1968) taxonomy of climate-related terms which viewed ecology (physical and material aspects of an organization), milieu (characteristics of the organization's members), social system (pattern of relationships among people and groups) and culture (reflecting the norms, beliefs, values, and meaning of people) as the dimensions of climate, atmosphere, or the overall environmental quality. This taxonomy was adopted as part of the conceptual framework for this research with one modification. Whereas Tagiuri referred to climate, atmosphere, or the overall environmental quality, for the purposes of this research, organizational culture was viewed as one of four components of a school's internal environment. Climate on the other hand, was considered to be subsumed under organizational culture. Owens (1987) shares this view of the relationship of organizational climate to organizational culture.

#### Methods of Uncovering Organizational Culture

To recapitulate, school culture, for the purposes of this research, is comprised of shared values, attitudes, and norms. Definitions of these cultural components have been provided, and a theoretical framework for the study of school culture has been established. It is therefore appropriate at this point to elaborate methods that have been used to expose organizational culture and to provide a rationale for the methodology selected for this study. In

this section, a sampling of research studies is presented by categories representing the principal data-gathering techniques employed.

### Observation

Sarason (1971) attempted to understand school culture as it relates to change in schools. Culture, as defined by Sarason, is comprised of programmatic regularities (events occurring or decisions made to which members of the school adapt) and behavioural regularities (observable student, teacher, administrator, and other school personnel actions). Sarason's process of studying culture involves observing and describing such regularities.

Employing an organizational culture perspective, Carlson and Matthes (1988) presented a description of a rural school, widely recognized as being successful. A variety of observations relating to rituals (e.g., meetings, staff room exchanges, customs, and committees), symbols (statements and phrases which suggest what the organization stands for and what its mission is) and beliefs (including attitudes), and a set of assumptions inferred from these observations form the framework for the cultural description. The authors contended that although the underlying assumptions are not formally recognized, they influence the functioning of the school and are in reality "the essence of the organization" (p. 4).

### Individual Discussion and Group Forum

Wilkins and Patterson (cited in Kilmann et al., 1985) provided a strategy for examining companies' organizational cultures. The authors suggested that at the core of any culture are the members' shared assumptions about organizational equity, competence, and ability to adapt to new situations. The first phase of cultural investigation provides for a process that allows key members (such as administrators, staff committee chairmen, department heads, other long-time respected staff members, secretaries, custodians, and influential parents) to meet and express their opinions about those elements of the organization they view as unique and valuable. The authors noted that this initial step may be time-consuming because the intent is for the group to arrive at shared understanding of employee-organization relationships, organizational competence, and adaptability. The second phase in cultural analysis is to conduct group discussions (about "Who we are" and "Where we should be going") with representatives of various organizational subcultures. This could include members of different student and parent groups. The purpose of these forums is to discover the variety in subgroup orientations.

### Iterative Interview

Schein (1985) proposed a more complex method of uncovering organizational culture. The strategy, joint exploration through iterative interviewing, involves two

aspects, on-site observations and interviews by an outsider, and joint explorations between motivated insiders and the outsider. Schein's procedure for revealing culture included the following ten steps:

1. Look for surprises and other information, and in so doing, begin to get a feel of the culture.
2. Verify that the surprises and information uncovered in step one are iterative and not random occurrences or situations.
3. Locate a motivated insider, one who is perceptive, interested, and willing to discuss any aspects of the organization.
4. Reveal to the insider the surprises and information uncovered in step one and verified in step two.
5. Discuss the surprises and information with the insider and begin to develop hypothetical or tentative assumptions.
6. Formulate hypothetical assumptions.
7. Conduct numerous interviews and read a variety of documents in order to check the validity of the assumptions.
8. Enumerate the basic assumptions (from step six) and if possible, uncover other assumptions based on the information gathered in the previous steps.
9. Conduct additional interviews and check more documents to finally validate that basic assumptions are operating and are actually taken for granted.
10. Write a formal description of the culture.

Sathe (cited in Kilmann et al., 1985) suggested that the following three basic questions could be used to guide the utilization of Schein's method:

- "1. What is the background of the founders and others who followed them? ...
2. How did the organization respond to crises or other critical events, and what was learned from these experiences? ...
3. Who are considered deviant in the culture, and how does the organization respond to them?" (pp. 237-239).

An understanding of the background and personality of the organization's founders and the traditions and history of the school could offer clues concerning the content of culture. Responses of staff, administrators, parents, and students in stressful periods could provide insights into attitudes, loyalties, and priorities. And since deviants are individuals who violate important cultural assumptions, they represent and define the culture's boundaries. An understanding of who and what is considered deviant in an organization assists in deciphering culture.

A dissertation by Plath (1987) had as its primary purpose, to assess the suitability of the Schein method for uncovering a portion of school culture. Suitability included two dimensions in the study, the ability of the method to reveal culture and the practicality of the method. Conducting investigations in three schools, Plath concluded that Schein's method is capable of uncovering a segment of

culture, the basic underlying assumptions of an organization. However, regarding practicality, Plath found the method extremely time consuming both for the observer/interviewer and for the school personnel.

#### Interview and Observation

The purpose of a research project by Rossman et al. (1985) was to study school improvement efforts, definitions of effectiveness, and the interrelationships with school culture. The definition for improvement included demonstration that the school was getting better in areas such as instruction, student achievement, order and discipline, attendance, and school climate. School culture was defined by its patterns of norms, beliefs, and values.

Three improving secondary schools were selected for study, and a qualitative, ethnographic research approach was employed. Each researcher was assigned a school and spent at least thirty days becoming acquainted with the members and learning about the school's culture. The principal method of data collection was by means of open-ended interviews with teachers. Observations were made of classrooms, department and staff meetings, parent-teacher association meetings, and informal interactions in places such as hallways and lounges. Some documents were also examined.

The data-collection activities varied somewhat with each of the three settings. Although interviews were

unstructured, data gathering was guided by a common set of events, settings, actors, and artifacts which were to be observed, examined, or the focus of interviews. Seventy to ninety interviews were conducted at each site. Data were categorized, interpreted, and verified. The process of verification involved three elements. Insights were shared and discussed among the researchers, participants from the schools were asked to provide reactions to the case study descriptions, and two external scholars also provided feedback on the interpretations and summaries of the schools.

Willower and Smith (1986) conducted a study to determine whether school-wide cultures could be identified. The authors collected data from two public secondary schools in the United States, one large urban school (approximately 2,300 students and 150 professional staff) and one small rural school (about 500 students and 35 professional staff). For the purposes of this study, culture was comprised of shared norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and patterns of activity in the school. A total of 100 structured and unstructured interviews, 60 at the urban school and 40 at the rural school, were conducted with students, teachers, administrators, and other staff members. The structured interviews were comprised of questions designed to uncover shared aspects of culture. Examples of questions were, "What does this school mean to you?" and "What is most

important to you about this school?" (p. 3). In addition to interviews, a total of 26 days of participant on-site observation was undertaken, and newspaper clippings, school yearbooks, bulletin boards, and trophy cases were examined. Any leads derived by earlier study were pursued during subsequent research.

#### Interview, Observation, and Document Analysis

Owens (1985) employed ethnographic research strategies and the concept of culture to study one secondary school's organizational structure and the manner in which organizational control and leadership were used. The investigator "inhabited" the school on a full-time basis from mid August until late December, during which time observations and interviews were recorded and a variety of documents were examined. Throughout the second part of the school year "theme analysis" of the data was conducted. During this time, the researcher visited the school approximately once a week to check perceptions and "triangulate the themes that were emerging from the data analysis" (p. 3).

The school was selected by a panel of experts (school administrators) who were asked to rank schools within a district of New York State, using reputed principal effectiveness as the criterion. After this initial screening process, the principals of the potential study schools were interviewed to assist the researcher in

determining in which facility the study was most likely to succeed.

In a dissertation by Hansen (1986) the cultures of three high performance departments of one secondary school were described. Seven cultural elements were identified for study: values, leaders, rites, networks, professional beliefs, history, and setting. The primary data sources were interviews with a total of twenty-six senior teachers, six junior teachers, sixteen students, two alumni teachers, and three community residents who were also alumni of the school. Prepared questions served as guides for the interviews which could be termed evolving or emergent. The researcher also examined minutes of department meetings and visually inspected teachers' rooms, chairpersons' offices, and departmental centres.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) also suggested that interview, observation, and document review techniques be used to uncover organizational culture. Key questions the authors asked respondents related to the organization's history, perceptions about why the organization was successful, what members believed were important in the organization, what the organization's members were like, what the organization was like to work in, what an average day was like, and how things were done.

### Interview and Survey

Pettigrew (1979) explained the value of longitudinal, process approaches to the study of organizations. It was the author's contention that sound theory must take into account not only the present, but also the past and future of organizations. Specifically, Pettigrew suggested the study of "social dramas" (such as the points of leadership change). It was the author's view that by examining social dramas, the researcher is afforded an opportunity to understand continuous processes within the organization. The continuous processes revealed would include the evolution of the organizational goals and the changes in the "systems of beliefs, power relationships, and culture" (p. 571). The paper also introduced some concepts from the fields of sociology and anthropology: symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual, and myth which the author claimed have value in the understanding of organizational culture. Pettigrew's long-term longitudinal study of school culture involved interviews and questionnaires which were administered to students and staff.

### Interview, Observation, Survey, and Document Analysis

As part of a problem-solving process for organizational improvement, Allen (cited in Kilmann et al., 1985) suggested a focus on organizational norms for analyzing culture:

"Since norms are the elements of culture least dependent upon abstractions, most readily recognizable in all aspects of

our daily lives, and most general in their applications, they provide an excellent vehicle for helping people understand and manage the cultural aspects of organizational life" (p. 334).

Norms, in Allen's view, encompass all behaviour (whether stated or unstated) that is expected, accepted, or sanctioned by the group. Chastisement, confrontation, and ostracism are evidence that group norms have been violated. Allen's process for analyzing cultural norms included examination of documents and organizational statements that publicly express desired behaviour, interviews and observations, and a cultural audit using an opinion-survey instrument. Particular attention was devoted to the following key elements that Allen identified as important cultural influences: rewards, modelling behaviour, information and communication systems, interactions and relationships, management and supervisory skills, organizational structures, training, orientation, and allocation of resources. Allen stated that the principal purpose of these cultural analyses was to determine "the way things are done around here" (p. 341).

Musella and Davis (1990) provided a methodology for assessing organizational culture which included interview, observation, survey, and document analysis. To develop their methodology, research was conducted in four Ontario school districts. To obtain the beliefs and values underlying the school systems' operating procedures, 165

interviews ranging from thirty to sixty minutes each were conducted with a variety of types of school district personnel such as school trustees, central office staff, school administrators, and teachers. The Norms Diagnostic Index (adapted from Allen & Dyer, 1980) was used to assess the existence of certain school system norms, and 330 school district administrators from schools and central offices completed the questionnaire. In addition, the research involved observation of school board meetings, informal discussions with trustees and board staffs, review of school board documents, and participation in various board activities. The beliefs and values interviews (containing fifteen items) and the norms questionnaire (containing forty-seven items) were considered to be most useful in obtaining perceptions of system norms, values, and practices.

#### Anecdotal Ethnography

Willis (1987), a teacher at Columbia Academy, an international school in Kobe, Japan, presented an anecdotal ethnography to describe the student culture. The paper described a typical day at the school and provided information about student backgrounds, attitudes, and interactions. Insights into the experiences of new students and a detailed description of the socialization process were also presented. The author identified numerous student subgroups based on style of dress, musical tastes, other

common interests or traits, and language. During his tenure at the school, Willis was a participant observer, recording and compiling anecdotal records.

#### Study Method For Uncovering School Culture

The value of interviewing and observation as methods of examining organizational culture was implied by Morgan (1986) who stated that:

"The characteristics of the culture being observed will gradually become evident as one becomes aware of the patterns of interaction between individuals, the language that is used, the images and themes explored in conversation, and the various rituals of daily routine" (p. 121).

Having reviewed various strategies for uncovering school organizational culture, the decision was taken to reject some methods, either because they were grounded in definitions of culture deemed inconsistent with the present study (e.g., Allen, 1985; Carlson & Matthes, 1988; Pettigrew, 1979; Plath, 1985; Sarason, 1971; Sathe, 1985; Schein, 1985; Wilkins & Patterson, 1985), or because they appeared to be too time-consuming, and they were therefore considered impractical under the constraints of this research (e.g., Owens, 1985; Pettigrew, 1979; Plath, 1985; Rossman et al., 1985; Schein, 1985; Wilkins & Patterson, 1985; Willis, 1987; Willower & Smith, 1986). The Musella and Davis methodology appeared after the present research

had been conducted, but does not contravene the methodology adopted.

The decision was made to adopt an approach similar to the one used by Hansen (1986), and in addition, questions such as those proposed by Deal and Kennedy (1982) were incorporated into the research design. Although for the purposes of this research, the components of culture vary from those of Hansen, original protocols, or interview guides, served as the principal means of collecting data relating to cultural values, attitudes, and norms.

The study's method of data collection has been identified in general terms, and a rationale for its selection has been provided. In Chapter 3, details of the research methodology will be discussed.

Research questions pertaining to specific aspects of school culture will also be introduced in Chapter 3; however, before their presentation it is necessary to provide evidence from the literature to support the research questions.

#### Literature in Support of Research Questions

##### Public Versus Independent Schools

Citing the work of Kraushaar (1972), James and Levin (1983) characterized private or independent schools as generally small; cohesive; relatively autonomous; enrolling manageable numbers of students; privately governed by boards of trustees or religious organizations; and financed by

student fees, endowments, and philanthropy. Another important characteristic is what Kraushaar termed "mutuality of choice". Students may apply to any private sector school, and similarly, such schools may be selective in their choice of students. Religion, academic ability, and the ability to pay tuition fees are examples of bases upon which students and schools make such educational decisions.

A report by Erickson et al. (1979) demonstrated that social cohesion is more characteristic of private as compared with public schools:

"...people connected with privately supported schools will tend to be held together by mutual commitment to the enterprise as a whole, to the shared goals of the enterprise, and to each other.... They will agree. They will work together harmoniously. They will view the school as vital to their community as a whole" (p. 123).

On the basis of the above, a research question is concerned with cultural variations between public and independent schools.

#### Urban Versus Rural Schools

Sher (1977) contended that rural schools are different than urban ones, largely due to the close relationship between rural communities and their schools, and the size of the rural schools and their districts. Unique qualities of rural schools include a:

"... slower pace and less pressured environment, the spirit of cooperation, the opportunities for leadership

development, the less formal interactions among students, staff and parents, and other similar qualities" (p. 5).

In consideration of the qualities of rural schools, it may be conjectured that the cultures of schools in rural areas may differ from those of urban schools. Consequently, a research question deals with this issue.

#### Strength of Culture

Some research questions, enumerated in Chapter 3, include the element of cultural strength. Deal and Kennedy (1982) referred to strong and weak cultures. In their view, strong organizational cultures are characterized by the existence of informal rules which provide guidelines for how members are to behave. In weak cultures, on the other hand, members are less sure about how they should behave. Sathe (cited in Kilmann et al., 1985) explained that another method of estimating the strength of culture is to describe the proportion of individuals in the organization who appear to share the same "physical attributes, slogans, practices, and feelings" (p. 241).

For the purposes of this research, the inferred proportion of members who appeared to hold common perceptions of the organization's values, attitudes, and norms provided one estimate of the relative strength of school culture. The existence of informal rules to guide group members' behaviour, and the degree of understanding among members regarding behaviour norms was a second gauge

of cultural strength. Furthermore, the value orientation, with reference to Hodgkinson's value paradigm, furnished a third estimate of cultural strength. For example, the existence of Type 1 values suggested a relatively strong culture, whereas the existence of Type 3 values indicated a relatively weak culture.

#### Cultural Perception and Time

If culture is learned from members of the organization, then it follows that a given length of time is required before a new member has the opportunity to become integrated into the culture. Wilkins and Patterson (cited in Kilmann et al., 1985) explained that:

"...every organization provides clues to new recruits about the kind of relationship they can expect to have with the company. People learn through direct or vicarious experience whether the company is fair or selfish and whether they should cooperate or protect themselves. When people assume that they must protect themselves, they tend to develop countercultures..."  
(pp. 272-273).

It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the longer individuals are members of a school, the greater will be the likelihood that they have been socialized to the school-wide culture, or alternatively, they have become members of countercultures. One research question is directed toward the relationship between individuals' cultural perceptions and the length of time they have been associated with a school.

Having provided evidence from the literature to support the study's research questions, Chapter 3 will describe details of the research design including the introduction of specific research questions.

## CHAPTER 3

## Methodology

Research Paradigm

The study of group values, attitudes, and norms does not lend itself to the relatively rigid nature of formal printed questionnaires or statistical analyses (Owens, 1987). Instead, the work of researchers such as Ouchi (1981), Peters and Waterman (1982), Deal and Kennedy (1982), and the ethnographic tradition generally suggest that to understand school culture, and to produce "rich" descriptions of it, it is necessary to collect information and insights from within the school and to talk at length with its members to discover what they believe to be true and important. Consequently, students of organizational culture tend to rely on field research techniques, rather than traditional questionnaire-based studies (Owens, 1987).

Rationalistic and naturalistic research approaches are described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Owens (1987) as dichotomous paradigms of systematic inquiry. The rationalistic paradigm, the dominant research approach in educational administration, generally refers to inquiries that collect and categorize data using formal instruments and a priori methods, quantify the data, and attempt to generalize the findings to populations beyond the study sample. The rationalistic or logical-positivist approach isolates variables for study while attempting to control

others in a given situation. Naturalists would argue that by doing so, the circumstances are altered, and hence, one's understandings of reality are distorted.

By comparison, the naturalistic approach to inquiry is founded upon two principal concepts. The first, the naturalistic-ecological hypothesis, contends that human behaviour is profoundly influenced by the context in which it occurs. The second underlying notion, the qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis, is that human behaviour cannot be understood unless there is knowledge of how organizational members interpret their environment. Naturalistic inquiries rely on direct contact with subjects for data collection, the research design emphasizes emergent strategies rather than a priori methods, categorization of information occurs following data collection, and findings are not generalized to populations beyond the bounds of the given study. True naturalistic research usually involves prolonged observation which may include analysis of gestures, language, and behaviour patterns (Owens, 1987).

The present research is characterized by elements of both the rationalistic and naturalistic paradigms. Interview protocols were constructed to elicit information from individuals; however, the interviews were semi-structured. The purpose of the prepared questions was to provide a basic, consistent interview structure and to initiate investigation of cultural aspects with respondents.

Additional interview questions became apparent as the data gathering was conducted. Clues and cues from the respondents guided the posing of new questions which resulted in a deeper appreciation of the schools' culture. Prolonged observation in the schools was not intended. Research findings were reported qualitatively rather than quantitatively. Consequently, this study can be termed semi-naturalistic, as the method of inquiry lies nearer the naturalistic (as opposed to the rationalistic) end of the research paradigm continuum.

In keeping with the naturalistic approach to inquiry, research purposes and questions are presented, rather than hypotheses.

#### Research Questions

As was previously stated, the general purposes of this exploratory research are: (1) to describe the organizational cultures of three high performance B.C. secondary schools and to identify similarities and differences among their cultures, and (2) to evaluate the research technique for discovering and describing organizational cultures of schools. A subsidiary purpose is to contribute to the clarification of the general concept of culture in the context of educational administration and organizational theory. More specific guiding research questions are as follows:

1. Do common cultural values exist among the high performance schools?
2. Do common cultural attitudes exist among the high performance schools?
3. Do common cultural norms exist among the high performance schools?
4. Do student, teacher, administrator, parent, and secretary/custodian perceptions of the school's organizational culture vary?
5. Is there less divergence among student, teacher, administrator, parent, and secretary/custodian perceptions of the school's organizational culture in the independent as compared with the public schools?
6. Is the independent school characterized by a stronger organizational culture than the public schools?
7. Is the rural public school characterized by a stronger organizational culture than the urban public school?
8. Does the perception of organizational culture vary with the length of time the individual has been associated with the school?

#### Selection of High Performance Schools

Specific student academic achievement scores were used to identify the study's three high performance secondary schools. It must be noted at the outset, however, that there are educational objectives other than academic achievement. For example, the B.C. Ministry of Education

(1988,1989) recognized three goals of education: (1) intellectual development, (2) human and social development, and (3) career development. In B.C., however, school performance data on the social, human, and career development of students were not readily available at the time of the study. Furthermore, although other goals of education were considered important, intellectual development was listed as the primary goal of B.C. public schools. It is recognized that intellectual development constitutes much more than academic achievement; however, for the purposes of this research, secondary school performance was measured by student academic achievement on provincial learning assessments and Grade 12 students' provincial examination results.

Annually, the B.C. Ministry of Education conducted a major province-wide assessment in one of four core subject areas mathematics, science, English reading and written expression, and social studies. At the secondary level, all Grade 10 students participated in the given year's assessment. The primary purpose of such assessments was to provide educational decision makers and the public with information about the strengths and weaknesses of the public school system. Reports were generated to summarize student achievement at the school, district, and provincial levels.

The Ministry of Education also examined Grade 12 students in 15 subject areas. Ten subjects (Algebra,

Biology, Chemistry, Communications, English, English Literature, French, Geography, History, and Physics) were relatively high-enrolment, while five (Français-Langue, German, Geology, Latin, and Spanish) were considered low-enrolment examination subjects. The provincials were generally two-hour examinations which contained a mixture of objective and written-response items. The students' final achievement scores were a blend of school-awarded marks (weighted 50 %) and provincial examination-awarded marks (weighted 50 %). In the 1989/90 school year, the weighting changed to 60/40 in favour of school-awarded marks. Results were reported at the student, school, district, and provincial levels.

For the purposes of this research, secondary school performance was measured by Grade 10 students' achievement on the 1985 mathematics, 1986 science, and 1988 reading assessments, as well as Grade 12 provincial examination results for 1987 and 1988.

Mean school scores for Grade 10 students were computed for each of the above provincial assessments from Ministry of Education records. On the basis of the school mean scores, all public secondary schools and all Group 2 independent secondary schools in the province offering Grade 10 were rank ordered. Similarly, all public and Group 2 private secondary schools in B.C. offering Grade 12 were rank ordered according to their performance on the 1987 and

1988 Grade 12 provincial examinations. Mean final school scores (based on the blended teacher-awarded and provincially awarded marks) for the ten high-enrolment subjects were used to rank order all secondary schools for 1987 and 1988. Once all public and Group 2 independent secondary schools were rank ordered according to the standardized tests, the sum of the rankings was calculated for each school to derive the highest performing schools by the above definition. Because of the sensitive nature of this information, school rankings are not reported in this document.

The cultures of three schools were studied to account for potential variations which may have been related to geographical location, community size, and public and private school differences. Consequently, one school was selected from among the top performing urban, rural, and Group 2 independent secondary school groups. For the purposes of this research, urban schools were located in municipalities with populations of 10,000 or greater, and schools situated in municipalities or unincorporated places under 10,000 population were classified as rural. Group 2 independent schools were those which, among other things, participated in provincial testing programs that included provincial learning assessments and Grade 12 provincial and scholarship examinations. The names of participating schools have not been given to ensure anonymity.

### Pilot Testing

In April, 1989, draft interview protocols were pilot tested at Glenlyon-Norfolk School, Victoria, B.C. Based on evidence from the pilot testing, interview questions were modified wherever they appeared to be redundant or where wording was inadequate.

### Field Research

Data for the study were gathered primarily through the use of semi-structured audio-taped interviews which were later transcribed. Interviews were conducted with all administrators and a random sampling of students, teachers, parents, and secretaries/custodians associated with each of three high performance urban, rural, and independent secondary schools. On the basis of pilot test results which indicated a high degree of homogeneity among interview responses, and giving consideration to the relative sizes of the schools, it was determined that three administrators, five teachers, five students, five parents, and one secretary or custodian would be interviewed at the independent school; two administrators, five teachers, five students, five parents, and one secretary or custodian would participate at the rural school; and three administrators, ten teachers, ten students, ten parents, and one secretary or custodian would be interviewed at the urban school.

Random sampling of teachers was conducted by first listing and sequentially numbering teachers, followed by the

selection of either five or ten individuals (depending on school size) referring to a table of random numbers. Selection of students was conducted by initially listing and sequentially numbering students by grade level. Using a random numbers table, either one or two students (depending on school size) were selected from each grade level. Parents to be included in the study were identified in a manner identical to that used for student selection. School secretaries and custodians were listed, sequentially numbered, and one per school was randomly chosen. The random selection process proceeded satisfactorily; however, in the urban school only seven sets of parents randomly chosen were available for interviewing. Therefore, it became necessary to request three volunteers through the School Consultative Committee, a parent advisory group. An analysis of the randomly selected and volunteer parents' transcripts revealed no significant differences in the responses of the two groups.

Consent forms were signed by all participants prior to interviewing, and parents of student interviewees were asked to sign letters of permission. Authorization letters were also signed by participants whose transcripts were selected as samples within the dissertation. Appendix C contains samples of letters and forms used in the research project.

In addition to data gathering through interviewing, impressions were also formed informally through examination

of documents such as staff and student handbooks, brochures, newsletters and yearbooks, and by observation throughout the schools. In some instances, followup letters and telephone calls were made to participants to clarify specific points.

#### Preparations With District and School Staff

Telephone and mail contact was made with the appropriate District Superintendents of Schools and the Director of Independent Schools to explain the nature of the research and to request the schools' involvement in the study. Upon receipt of such approval, similar contacts were made with school principals (or headmaster) to elicit their consent and support for the project and to identify an appropriate period in which to conduct the research. Assurances were given that the name of the school and its members would not be revealed in the dissertation.

All respondents were informed of the general purposes of the conferences as they were being interviewed, but care was taken not to reveal details of the specific research questions.

The study interviews were conducted during the fall, 1989 and winter, 1990. Interviews ranged from thirty minutes to one hour in length. Approximately one week was spent at each of the three schools.

#### Guiding Interview Questions

The interview protocols appear in Appendix A. Questions were designed to initiate discussions from which

information about the three cultural aspects, values, attitudes, and norms, were derived. To expand the scope of the discussions, questions were sometimes followed by comments such as "Can you elaborate?", or "What do you mean by that?", or "Can you give some examples?". Following each question in parentheses is the cultural component the question was designed to address; however, many responses provided information beyond the cultural component indicated. Introductory dialogue, not intended as part of the formal interview, was used to put the respondent at ease and to initiate a rapport between the interviewer and interviewee. The introductory dialogue was not recorded. Many of the interview questions were either patterned after or inspired by the work of Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Hansen (1986).

#### Data Analysis

Content analysis was used as the research methodology for analyzing the qualitative interview data. Stone et al. (1966) confirmed the value of content analysis for analyzing qualitative data:

"The content analysis process makes systematic and objective measurements on the texts by identifying occurrences of specific characteristics. These measurements then serve as a reference for drawing inferences" (p. 16).

Each response was assigned a four-part code according to the school type [I (independent), U (urban), & R (rural)]; response group and respondent number [e.g., S1 (student 1), P1 (parent 1), T1 (teacher 1), A1 (administrator 1), & SC1 (secretary or custodian 1)]; cultural component(s) [N (norm), At (attitude), & V1 (value Type 1), V2A (value Type 2A), V2B (value Type 2B), & V3 (value Type )]; and the length of time at the school (number of years). This coding system was based on the research definitions, purposes, and questions.

Some interview data were assigned more than one code, and therefore, were placed in more than one category. Once information was sorted into categories, the data were further grouped into finer clusters which were given descriptive names (e.g., rules, rewards, heroes and legends, as subgroups of cultural norms) for use in the interpretation phase.

#### Reporting of Results

Following interpretation of data, the research findings were combined in qualitative cultural summaries. The intent had been to provide a cultural summary for each of the schools' interview groups (students, parents, teachers, administrators, and secretaries/custodians), and then for the school at large. However, a high degree of homogeneity was found to exist among responses of respondent groups within each school; therefore, only the school-wide cultural

summary was reported. Results relating to each of the general study purposes and specific research questions were also reported descriptively. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the cultural summaries for the independent, rural, and urban schools, respectively. Chapter 7 considers the research questions and purposes and provides the study's conclusions.

#### Validity and Reliability

Owens (1987) emphasized the importance of providing sufficient evidence in a field study to demonstrate that the processes used to gather data are reasonable and that the study findings are credible. Guba and Lincoln (1981) proposed an "audit trail" to permit examination of study procedures and results and allows the study to be reproduced by other researchers. The "audit trail" may include raw interview and observation notes, edited notes, records of meetings, data source documents, procedures for content analysis of data, and interview guidelines.

This research provides a detailed methodology to permit reproduction of the study. Samples of typical transcripts are presented in Appendix B. Punctuation within the transcripts reflects the manner in which the dialogue was delivered.

Guba and Lincoln also recommended that an external auditor be employed to conduct an examination of the reasonableness and appropriateness of the study findings.

For the purposes of this research, the cultural descriptions were independently adjudicated. Professor Alan Ryan, Department of Curriculum Studies, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, and Professor Fernand Gervais, Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Regina, both of whom are experienced in qualitative, naturalistic inquiry, examined the cultural summaries and adjudicated their appropriateness with reference to the interview transcripts. The researcher also submitted the cultural summaries to representatives of the study's respondent groups for validation.

The university-based adjudicators found the cultural summaries to be accurate reflections of the interview transcripts. It was also the opinion of the school-based reviewers that the summaries captured the essence of the schools' cultures. The researcher considered all recommended modifications, which were few. Any errors in factual information were corrected, some language was modified to convey a more suitable tone, and a few additional insights were incorporated where they were deemed appropriate.

#### Limitations

There are four important limitations of this research:

1. The conclusions drawn from this research apply only to those schools that participated in the study. No attempt

has been made to generalize to other public and independent secondary schools.

2. The intent of this research was to investigate school-wide culture, although it is recognized that subcultures also exist in most organizations.

3. Since the research is cross-sectional, the study findings reveal "snapshots" which reflect school culture at a fixed time period.

4. Content analysis of communication is a subjective undertaking. For example, Spradley (1979) explained that words derive their meanings from context and content analysis may at times remove such context. Words may also have different meanings for different people because each individual brings a unique background of experience and values to the interpretation of words. Personal differences can also influence data collection and categorization decisions. Although efforts have been made to limit these effects, content analysis will never be completely objective.

## CHAPTER 4

### Research Results

#### Introduction

Three high performance B.C. secondary schools participated in this study. Each school's cultural summary is comprised of descriptions of the cultural elements: norms, attitudes, and values. Information about cultural strength, and the degree to which the cultural perception varied with the length of time the individual had been associated with the school is also provided. A concluding section provides an overview of the school's culture. Before each cultural summary, some school background information is presented to provide a context for the cultural description.

#### The Independent School

The school, located in southern British Columbia, was an independent, nondenominational university preparatory school which offered kindergarten through Grade 12. Although there were separate elementary schools for boys and girls, the secondary school was coeducational. In September, 1989, the senior school enrolled 257 students in Grades 8 to 12. The school was directed by a Board of Governors which was elected by a School Society. A headmaster and two assistant heads dealt with the day-to-day administration of the senior school which was staffed by 25 full-time equivalent teachers.

The school had undergone significant changes in recent years. In 1986, after several years of planning and controversy, a formerly separate independent school for girls and a boys' preparatory school amalgamated to create one consolidated independent school.

An annual registration fee (ranging from \$5,170 for Grade 8 students, to \$5,970 for Grade 12 students) covered the costs of tuition, materials, and student activities, and there was a waiting list for enrolment. It follows that most students came from affluent family backgrounds where parents tended to be successful business or professional people.

Examination of the respondents' transcripts showed that the cultural perceptions of interviewed subjects were highly congruent; therefore, it is appropriate to provide a single description of the organizational culture of the school as a whole.

#### Norms (Rules)

School rules were deemphasized, and there was a conscious effort to have as few written rules as possible. Instead of a lengthy list of "commandments" that students were expected to memorize, the school was guided more by a series of unwritten expectations for behaviour linked to common sense, cooperation, courtesy, decency, and safety (these expectations will be discussed in a following section). Through these expectations, students were

intended to learn respect for the individual, the school, and the community.

There were, however, a few basic written rules which formed a part of the student handbook, and these are listed below:

- Anyone who persistently disrupted the work of another would be dismissed.
- Senior students were not permitted to drive other students during school hours.
- Out-of-town students were only permitted to live in accommodations approved by the headmaster.
- Students were expected to arrive at and leave the school in full uniform.
- Students who were found to possess, or who were found to have consumed alcohol or illegal drugs were liable for expulsion.
- Students who were found to be smoking during the time they were in the school's care were suspended.

There were procedures regarding students leaving the school grounds, lates, and examinations, and there were policies concerning school uniform and tests, but clearly, written rules were few. In fact, the perception of most was that this was largely a "rule-free" school.

#### Norms (Rewards)

Rewards were integral to motivation. Although rewards were primarily student-focused the staff, too, recognized some benefits of working in this school's environment.

Students were rewarded in a variety of ways: awards systems, public and private recognition from teachers and peers, and personal satisfaction.

To some extent, grades themselves were part of the reward system. Students derived self-satisfaction and self-esteem from their own achievement. Many students were gratified by the knowledge that their parents and the school were pleased with their performance.

The traditional British "house system" had been adopted by the school and was an important student motivational device. The system was meant to stimulate healthy competition and foster school spirit. Each child contributed to her or his house's point total by being rewarded with merit points for participation in school activities and for academic achievement.

Some students were rewarded by their election or appointment to prestigious positions within the school. For example, students appointed as prefects (school monitors) could be identified by the distinctive school crests on their blazers, and head boy and head girl wore a special school pin. Outward displays of status in the form of pins and badges were a form of public reward for such select students.

Another form of public recognition or reward was by means of a regularly published newsletter in which students, who were participating in clubs and special events, and who

performed well academically, were named. The newsletter was a vehicle by which parents and all other members of the school were kept informed of student achievements and progress.

Student commendations were also made through a system of "blue slips". The blue slip was a congratulatory note that was completed by a staff member in recognition that the student had done something commendable. The student was asked to sign the slip to ensure their awareness of the formal commendation, then the note was placed in the student's permanent record.

Weekly and biweekly assemblies were used to constantly reinforce positive things that occurred in all aspects of school life. Students were publicly recognized for their community involvement, their participation in activities such as sporting events and arts performances, and their academic achievement.

In the classroom, teachers, either publicly or on a "one-on-one" basis, acknowledged students for their achievement or improvement. At the end of each term, students receiving sufficiently high grades were recognized by being placed on the honour roll, and they also received a small gold pin. Top academic rewards in the form of book prizes, certificates, and scholarships were awarded by subject and grade at a prize giving at the end of the school year. Students also received rewards for demonstrating

special effort, for excelling in sport, and for participation.

Clearly, an extensive reward system existed for students, but teachers, too, perceived that they were recipients of some rewards. Although teachers lamented the lower salary scale as contrasted with their public system counterparts (about 10 percent lower), the extra week's holiday at the Christmas and spring breaks, and the sizable student fee discounts for children of staff were viewed as perquisites of working in the independent school. Also, some staff members had formed negative impressions (whether correctly or incorrectly) of the public school system, and perceived the independent school as a more pleasant and productive educational environment. Members felt there was a positive school atmosphere, characterized by mutual respect and a rapport among students and staff. Generally speaking, students wanted to learn and there were few motivational or behavioural problems. Frequent mention was made of working with "terrific kids". The teachers seemed to genuinely like the young people with whom they worked. Teachers felt they had a "fighting chance" to do the job they were hired to do, because they were dealing with a select group of students that were relatively bright and motivated, and there was a lower student-teacher ratio than in most public schools (the approximate student-teacher ratio in the public secondary system was 17 to 1, while in

the independent school it was about 10 to 1). The perceived positive teaching and learning environment was identified by teachers as a significant reward for teaching in the independent school.

There was a consistent school-wide effort to reinforce positive behaviour. Rewards were widely distributed among students, they were an effective motivational device, and they had become an important feature of school life.

#### Norms (Events and Traditions)

Both the former girls' and boys' campuses had a proud history. Although some respondents felt that a part of this tradition had been lost in the amalgamation of the two schools, there was evidence that some traditions had been retained. Most interviewees were able to enumerate events and traditions that had persisted over the years. For example, an Old Girls' Association had existed for some 70 years, and three times annually, the alumnae held a social event at some B.C. Lower Mainland location.

Senior students, in cooperation with the Student Council, continued to organize special events such as track-and-field and swim meets, assemblies, concerts, and dances throughout the school year. Apart from the numerous special events, there were many other traditions. For instance, new students were always oriented at the school opening which marked the beginning of the school year. There was the tradition of electing a head boy and a head girl as the

academic, athletic, and social leaders of the school's student population. The traditional British "house system", established with the schools' founding, continued to thrive. Students belonged to one of four houses for the duration of their schooling. Each house had a captain whose responsibility it was to generate house spirit. Sports teams, too, exhibited vestiges of tradition. For example, the captain of the girls' field hockey team wore a 1920s raccoon coat at the home coming game and the fall fair.

Traditional events organized for parents included a parent-teacher information evening which was always held within the first two weeks of school, and a new parents' evening, a social gathering which assisted parents new to the school and teachers to become better acquainted.

The Parents' Auxiliary was active in organizing fund-raising and social events such as a Christmas tea and bake sale, traditionally attended by the Lieutenant-Governor's wife. Other annual events included a Christmas carol service, a music festival, a reunion of the Alumnae Association, a family barbecue held in September, a parents' winter dance, and the spring and fall fairs. Closing ceremonies, including the prize giving and graduation, were traditional events that brought the school year to a close.

Although since amalgamation, links to the schools' past had somewhat diminished, some traditions endured. They contributed to parents feeling they were a part of the

school, they helped to bring families closer together, and they fostered an atmosphere of cohesiveness and school spirit that permeated the school.

#### Norms (Heroes and Legends)

For the most part, members of the school were aware of its history, and it can be said that the institution's founders were venerated. For instance, the first headmistress of the girls' school was considered a legendary figure. The school was under her direction during five decades, from 1913 to 1956, and it was reported that during that period, she was instrumental in bringing life and spirit to the school. Furthermore, she was credited with ensuring the success of the school in the early years. Following her retirement, one of the school buildings was named after her. The second headmistress led the girls' school until she retired in 1978. Periodically, former students and staff visited the campus, and the children were impressed by these visible links with the school's past.

The boys' school was established and operated by one family for half a century. From 1932 to 1982 a father and son were successive headmasters; consequently, the family name was closely associated with the institution. Another long-time administrator of the boys' school, recently retired, was particularly remembered, and as one respondent put it, this person "is the guardian of their (the boys')

stories and legends of games and activities, and he is their image of the professional head of the school."

Not only were there founders and past administrators who were considered legendary, but also there were teachers, present and past, who were regarded as heroes among staff and students alike. It was commonly felt that the memorable teachers were demanding, but at the same time demonstrated real affection for and interest in the well-being of the young people. Their intelligence, their sense of humour, their sense of fairness and consideration, their involvement with and willingness to always find time for students, their enthusiasm for their subjects, and in general, their rapport with students and staff, were remembered.

Although their primary focus was on present and future concerns, the members of the school had an appreciation for its past. Stories of events and personages had been passed along over the years from student to student, from parents to their children, and they had been fostered within the school through a variety of means.

#### Norms (Processes)

A wide range of normative processes were evident in the independent school. Entrance examinations were administered to student applicants as part of a screening process. Although there was an academic test, it was not the sole determinant of admission. The examination was viewed in the context of the whole person, which is to say that if

students possessed desirable qualities other than academic ability, these were also taken into consideration. Regardless of the outcome of the entrance examination, students had to demonstrate that they genuinely wanted to attend the school. Customarily, at some early stage in the admission process, an administrator would take students aside to ask them privately if they truly wished to become members of the school. If there was any indication that the applicants felt negatively about any aspect of the school, the parents were advised to consider other alternatives for their children's education. From the outset, students had to make a commitment that they wanted to be there.

Returning students registered for the following year's courses before the end of the current school year. As a result, when they arrived in September, their timetables were already prepared, and so apart from the inevitable timetabling problems and changes students make, the school year began in a relatively smooth, orderly fashion. A "buddy system" assisted new students to adjust more easily to their new surroundings. As they arrived, new students were assigned a "friend" who guided them around the school. Buddies were expected to assist new students while they were making the transition. Although officially, the system was in place for only the first day, long-lasting friendships often developed which further assisted students to become settled in their new surroundings.

Every student was provided with a handbook called an agenda or a homework diary which contained a school history, a calendar, policies and procedures, and tips to achieve success. Students were responsible for noting homework, tests, and project deadlines in their diaries which were expected to be completed daily. Special handbooks (which were updated annually) for teachers and for parents enumerated policies and guidelines.

In the fall, interim reports were sent home to parents, and parent-teacher interviews were held. At the end of each term, parents received written reports of their children's progress. Regularly published newsletters kept all school members, including parents, current with school-related information. Apart from these formal processes, regular and frequent contact was encouraged between parents and teachers. Parent or student concerns were expected to follow a definite communications hierarchy. If concerns were not dealt with to the satisfaction of either party, they were expected to proceed to the next level of conciliation. Concerns were first directed to the appropriate staff member, then to the head of the department, next to the headmaster, and finally, should all else fail, to the Board of Governors.

School assemblies, held twice a week on Mondays and Fridays, were used to disseminate information to the school body. In addition, special assemblies were occasionally

held on Wednesdays. Bringing the students together daily in their home rooms also helped to foster school spirit and a feeling of group identity.

Grade meetings of all students in a given grade were also held regularly. Meetings were led by the student grade representative and were attended by a supervising teacher or administrator. The primary purpose of the Grade 8, 9, and 10 gatherings, held approximately once a month, was to organize and work on activities or projects which originated with the Student Council. Grade meetings for the 11s and 12s were held every Thursday from 8:30 to 9:00 am. Because they were responsible for the operation of the lunchtime cafeteria, the Grade 11 students mainly used this time for the coordination of cafeteria duties. The Grade 12 students used their time for such things as planning graduation activities, receiving counselling on graduation and university entrance requirements, and discussing leadership issues.

The students were supervised in the halls, lunch room, and ground before and after school and at recess and lunchtimes. A rotating schedule of supervision duties included all teaching staff and the two assistant headmasters. Although there were few instances of inappropriate behaviour, it was felt that the presence of staff members helped to establish an appropriate tone.

Whenever rules were violated or behavioural expectations were unmet, there was a process for dealing with such situations. Whereas the so-called "blue slip" was used as a commendation, the "yellow slip" identified misdemeanors. By writing yellow slips, the staff and administrators informed students that given behaviours were inappropriate. The child was required to sign the form as an acknowledgement of the infraction, then the slip was placed in the student's permanent file by the home form teacher. For relatively serious misdemeanors like smoking in uniform, formal letters of warning were sent to the home. If after a formal letter misbehaviour continued, then the student was subjected to an in-school suspension. Out-of-school suspensions resulted if problems persisted. Finally, children were dismissed when behavioural problems became chronic. The above process was viewed as a logical and just sequence of disciplining.

For the most part, students completed their assigned tasks, but one or two students per week were sent to the office of the assistant headmaster responsible for behaviour and discipline, for not doing their work. When this occurred, students were given the opportunity to finish tasks after school. Work was usually made up in this way. If the student continued to neglect homework, a meeting of the teacher, the parent, and the student was held to arrange

either extra-help sessions or some other mechanism to ensure the work was accomplished.

In its recruiting process, the independent school was concerned with attracting teachers who not only possessed subject expertise, but who also had a love of the subject and a good rapport with children. As part of the selection process, heads of departments either visited schools to observe short-listed teachers at work in their own classrooms, or candidates were invited to demonstrate their teaching ability with classes at the independent school.

Short weekly staff meetings provided a forum for regular discussion. Major staff meetings were held once a month. The administration felt that these gatherings were helpful in defusing issues before they became problematic. In addition, there were frequent department meetings which permitted teachers to discuss common concerns. Since departments were quite small, teachers were interdependent, sharing equipment, resources, information, and ideas.

The school realized it needed to do more to promote the professional growth of staff, and had just begun planning a professional development program. Funding was provided by the school so that each teacher had the opportunity to attend at least one professional conference annually within his or her discipline. Teachers were also encouraged to participate in Ministry of Education initiatives such as the preparation and scoring of Grade 12 provincial examinations

which were viewed as valuable professional growth activities. Most teachers were away from the school on professionally related activities for two or three days annually. Although funds were limited, there was a wish to involve teachers more in professional development.

Generally, the school's members were not apprehensive about voicing their opinions, and regular input on a variety of issues was sought by the administration. Weekly and monthly meetings provided staff with opportunities to air their views. On a weekly basis, the administrators met with the Student Council, head boy and head girl, and were present at grade meetings to hear the student point of view on issues. Parent concerns and viewpoints were communicated to the administration through the Parents' Auxiliary which met once a month. Apart from these formal lines of communication, the headmaster had an open-door policy which encouraged students, parents, and staff to provide individual input.

Although opinions were shared, the headmaster and Board of Governors controlled decision making. The specific decision-making process varied with the type of decision to be made. For example, issues such as the content of the school constitution, the fee structure, teachers' salaries, and property acquisition were among the types of issues determined by the Board. Although input may have been sought from the headmaster, the Board formulated broad

school policy. Decisions relating to the day-to-day operation of the school were the domain of the headmaster who employed a consultative approach to decision making. For instance, staff aired their opinions at regular meetings, but decisions were rarely made at that time. Rather, the headmaster, with reference to what he had heard would, either alone, or in consultation with the assistant heads or the Board of Governors (depending on the import of the matter), make the final decisions. In those instances when students were invited to vote on issues such as the school uniform, they were not given carte blanche; rather, a student committee was struck to recommend alternatives. The administration reviewed the recommended alternatives and selected those which were deemed appropriate. The suitable alternatives were then provided to students from which they were given the opportunity to choose. The same process was used for some issues involving staff input. For example, on the issue of expulsion versus suspension, a staff committee formulated recommendations. The headmaster, after reviewing the recommendations, brought those considered acceptable back to the staff for a vote on the policy they preferred. Occasionally, when the Board developed policy for the school, such as the policy relating to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), staff were asked to comment on draft documents.

Most individuals interviewed, perceived the organization to be open and consultative; some even said democratic. However, there were those (primarily from among the teaching staff) who felt that their opinions were of only limited value in the overall scheme of things. Nevertheless, individuals within the school were given the opportunity to have some input on issues, depending upon who was affected by decisions, but ultimately, most decisions were made by the headmaster or the Board of Governors.

#### Norms (Expectations)

There were high expectations of all organizational members. Students were expected to demonstrate appropriate decorum and be well-behaved, courteous, and respectful both on and off the school grounds. They were expected to maintain positive attitudes, be self-disciplined and hard-working, and they were expected to develop a social conscience, becoming compassionate members of society. It was also expected that students wanted and chose to be members of the school community.

The pursuit of achievement was another important expectation. Students were expected to give their best efforts and work toward developing their potential intellectually, physically, and emotionally. With an expectation of achievement, it almost goes without saying that students were expected to do their work. They had no option but to complete their assigned tasks.

Students were also expected to try new things. They were encouraged to be risk takers, to become involved in activities they might otherwise avoid, such as public speaking and debating. Furthermore, students were expected to diversify their interests by participating in extracurricular activities such as sports, drama, outdoor education, or community service.

It was expected that students would develop a sense of responsibility. This applied not only to their school work, but also to the school and its members. The school buildings and grounds were to be kept tidy, care was to be taken with equipment and resources, and older students were to serve as role models for younger ones. There was an expectation that if students saw others behaving contrary to the school's code of conduct, they would be responsible enough to say or do something about it.

There was also an expectation that the students would become good group members. During the screening process, care was taken to ensure that children with desired qualities and attitudes were admitted. As the students became socialized, they internalized the school norms, attitudes, and values, and developed, to some extent, a shared personality.

Teachers were expected to be professional and competent in their fields. They were also expected to demonstrate a passion for their subjects, relate well and enjoy their

interaction with the children, and motivate and inspire their charges. There was an expectation that teachers would be willing to devote substantial amounts of time and energy, not just in classroom-related work, but also in extracurricular involvement with the students. Moreover, it was expected that teachers would be willing to provide these services for fewer financial rewards than they would have received in the public school system, and that teachers would recognize and appreciate other types of rewards as compensation for their efforts. All staff were expected to be role models for the student body. It was revealed, for example, that when staff were hired, nonsmokers were given preference to maintain appropriate examples for the students.

There were also specific expectations of the administrators and the Board of Governors. The headmaster and the Board were expected to set policy, carry the organization's vision, and ensure the school moved in a direction consistent with that vision. The headmaster was expected to set the academic and moral tone, as well as the working atmosphere of the school. Furthermore, it was expected that the head would relate well with all school members, be successful in public relations, be accessible, be a good listener, be open to input from all members of the school, have a grasp of the organization's large

perspective, and be capable of pulling all of the pieces together to make the school work as intended.

The school had specific expectations for each of the two assistant headmasters as well. For example, the assistant headmaster responsible for behaviour and discipline, student affairs, and day-to-day operations was expected to be cognizant of everything that was happening in the building, from issues relating to the students and staff, to the physical plant. The second assistant head was expected to deal with graduation requirements, university entrance, and all issues relating to curriculum. There were expectations that the school's administrators would be approachable and accessible, be decision makers, cause the school's members to feel their input was acted upon, and maintain a rapport with students, parents, and staff. All school members including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and support staff were expected to be committed to and involved in the life and spirit of the school.

The first part of this cultural description has been devoted to organizational norms. In the following section, cultural attitudes are identified.

### Attitudes

A wide range of attitudes were common to the members of the independent school. There was a conviction, for example, that students that attended the school became

different people than they would have been had they attended another institution, particularly a public school. The school believed it was important that everyone treat each other with respect, courtesy, and decency. Quality, achievement, truthfulness, integrity, and compassion were also considered important ideals. There was a view that it was important to develop a well-rounded person, prepared for life, not merely university admission. Students obtained an appreciation for learning and a desire to learn more. They were encouraged to learn for themselves, an attitude which was designed to promote life-long learning. It was thought that if students were to succeed, they required positive, constructive attitudes; therefore, they were expected to have a desire to attend the school. If there were indications that the child was being coerced by the parents to attend, then the school usually denied admission. The student had to be personally committed to the school and its ideals.

A willingness to try new things was considered one of the most important student qualities. There was an attitude that everyone possessed strengths and weaknesses and that it was incumbent upon the organization to assist students to recognize their strengths, thereby raising self-esteem. The children were encouraged to realize their potential and pursue achievement, but the school also promoted the notion that work and enjoyment were not mutually exclusive;

enjoyment could be derived from hard work. Furthermore, there was a general opinion that students ought to be happy at school, that teaching and learning would be enhanced if they were perceived as exciting and fun, and that education did not involve merely the memorization of information.

There was an attitude that children needed to be challenged, and that a reasonable amount of pressure was a positive influence on achievement. Many expressed the opinion that parental expectations had much to do with the high level of student academic performance, and although some students said there was little pressure from home, most reported they were under pressure to achieve. Most interviewees agreed, though, that students did not experience undue stress, just sufficient amounts to encourage them to perform at their levels of capability.

By all accounts, students were treated as young professionals. Whenever tasks were assigned, an assumption was made that students would be responsible enough to complete high-quality work. It was reported that all of the organization's members strived to nurture student confidence and the belief that they could succeed provided they applied themselves. Consequently, there was a school-wide attitude that students would become more self-assured, confident in their own abilities to be successful at whatever they attempted to accomplish.

Class size was considered an important issue. The opinion of school members was that when student-teacher ratios were reduced, behavioural and other types of problems would be diminished and individual student learning would be enhanced. As a consequence, there was an attitude that smaller class sizes allowed teachers to teach, rather than having them devote valuable class time to sorting out behavioural problems.

The events of recent years suggested there was a commitment to change and improvement. During the 1980s, the amalgamation occurred, the academic program and facilities were expanded and enhanced, an Arts Program including its own theatre was created, and department heads were established to serve as subject coordinators.

Although the promotion of appropriate attitudes and values and an appreciation for physical fitness were considered necessary for a well-rounded education, a pervasive attitude existed in the school that academic achievement was of paramount importance. There was a school-wide understanding that the organization stood for higher learning. Even though academics were stressed and students were expected to do their best, the opinion of most respondents was that the pressures associated with competition were less than in other high performance independent schools. Inter-student competition was deemphasized, while personal (self) competition was

encouraged. Although the school was populated by a select group of academically strong students (in part, a product of the screening process), there were some less-able children in the school. There was no guarantee that children admitted in the early grades would be high scholastic achievers when they reached the senior school. Even though some were not academically bright, the school's attitude was one of commitment to these students, to assist them through to high school graduation.

The organization's members perceived an atmosphere of confidence and trust. Students felt they were trusted by staff, and teachers sensed the administration gave them a great deal of freedom and had confidence in their professional abilities. With few exceptions, people associated with the school were of the opinion they could publicly express their points of view and openly discuss and disagree to resolve issues. Furthermore, most felt they were consulted and had input into decision making.

Students were proud of their school -- what it stood for and its achievement record. School was a positive experience for the children. They were enthusiastic, and they found school interesting and even exciting. There was an overall perception that students were responsible, well-behaved, polite, dedicated, and proud of what they were accomplishing. The children treated the school with respect, and there was little inappropriate behaviour.

There were minimal incidences of foul language, students did not vandalize the school, and there was virtually no theft. There was a sense that although students' lockers were lockable, it was not really necessary. Whereas many students were uncomfortable about assuming the responsibility for telling others to cease inappropriate actions when they saw them, the older students were more comfortable in these situations and acted as role models, particularly for the younger children.

There was a prevailing attitude that people tend to be perceived and treated according to their manner of dress. It was generally held that if one dressed casually, one would be treated in a like manner. On the other hand, it was thought that if one was more formally attired, greater respect would be forthcoming. There was also the attitude that one dressed "up" for important occasions. The school's members believed that something important was occurring in the school and in the classrooms; therefore, they dressed for the occasion. It was thought that the manner of dress assisted in establishing an appropriate professional tone in the school. This attitude was an important rationale for the insistence on the professional appearance of the school uniform. Although many students wore the uniform with pride, there were those who would have preferred a more flexible dress code. An administrator identified breaches of uniform as one of the most consistently flagrant problems

in the school. It was reported that some children tried to get away with wearing the uniform sloppily, particularly in warm weather. Like most children, the students constantly tested the boundaries of what they could and could not do, but extreme behaviour problems were few.

Students shared the attitude that school was important, and that a well-rounded education was necessary to succeed in society. Many were unsure about their future careers, but they were aware that if they did not apply themselves to their studies, and were therefore unable to attend university, they would be less likely to secure satisfactory employment and they would be less-well-off financially. Accordingly, there was a shared attitude that it was important to become well-educated. That was the reason they attended the school, to excel academically and also to develop other personal attributes which rounded off the person. Most students appreciated that their education came at a cost to their parents. In some cases, they realized the family had to make sacrifices that they might attend, so they tended not to take school for granted.

For the most part, the school's teachers were viewed as competent, dedicated professionals who maintained high standards. There was a school-wide perception that the staff had respect for and were interested in the well-being of students, that teachers enjoyed their work, and that they generated enthusiasm among the students for their school

subjects and learning in general. Moreover, there was a perception the staff were fair and consistent. Children knew what the expectations were, and what the repercussions would be if they fell out of line.

The school's view was that students needed to learn self-reliance, self-inquiry, and self-education. Teachers did not pamper the children. They did not do the work for them by leading them through all the steps of a task. Rather, students were encouraged to discuss and explore to find their own answers.

It was widely thought that staff commitment was an important factor associated with the school's high academic achievement. Teachers cared for their charges and were generous with their time and energy. They assisted students with schoolwork outside of normal class hours, and their willingness to participate in nonacademic activities allowed the children to experience an extracurricular program. Although the teachers were enthusiastic and committed, some reported they were on the verge of burnout because of the amount of effort they put into their work. In spite of some resentment over lower salaries and job-related stress, the teaching staff were generally content in their working environment. Staff were considered good role models for the students.

Students, parents, teachers, and support personnel alike expressed the opinion that the administrators were

knowledgeable about current teaching strategies and modes of student learning. They were considered competent in their positions, each being credited with specific skills. One of the school's assistant heads was perceived as the educational leader in the sense that she was responsible for curriculum and graduation and post-secondary course requirements. The other was appreciated for his ability to organize and deal with day-to-day operations including student discipline. The headmaster was generally considered to be energetic, dynamic, and skilled in public relations and marketing the school. Although perceived by some teachers as not having a strong appreciation for staff, most of the organization's members felt the head related well with them and that a good rapport existed. Furthermore, there was an attitude among organizational members that within budget constraints the headmaster supported staff professional development. Nevertheless, the prevailing opinion was that more financial resources had to be channelled into this area, and much more needed to be accomplished to develop a strong professional development program. All administrators were highly regarded with respect to their caring attitude and ability and willingness to listen.

The headmaster's vision was that the school would remain relatively small in student numbers to retain the family atmosphere. Although the focus would continue to be

on academics, the headmaster foresaw a gradual evolution toward an arts orientation where performing arts, band, debating, and public speaking would be emphasized. Members were aware of the school's objectives: to provide an excellent academic program in preparation for university entrance; to promote health, physical fitness, and social awareness; and to assist students to realize their potential. However, for many, the school's vision for the future was not known or was unclear.

The general perception was that the professional knowledge of the administration and teaching staff was not unlike that in most educational systems. There were those who were not professionally current, but most availed themselves of professional development as time and resources permitted. When asked about what changes were required in the school, many respondents expressed the opinion that additional funds were necessary for equipment, facilities, and salaries.

Parents perceived a positive, supportive environment within the school. They believed the school was doing a good job of preparing their children for the competitive world they would encounter when they left. It was thought the students would obtain a competitive advantage, having acquired a sense of self-confidence, discipline, and a good work ethic.

Education was considered important and was taken seriously by the school's parent body. Parents had committed themselves to their children's education. At the very least they had made a financial commitment, and many had sacrificed to do so. Parents felt they had a stake in their children's education, and as a result, many volunteered to participate in the myriad of school-related organizations and activities.

The administration and staff were recognized as being accessible and available to hear parent concerns. Moreover, parents perceived that the school personnel related well to all organizational members and enjoyed their work.

Finally, many respondents acknowledged the benefits of "starting with a good product". There was a perception that the students were characterized by positive attitudes and strong academic potential. There was an attitude among all members of the organization that the school had performed well academically and had forged a good name for itself. Consequently, there was a sense of pride and a will to continue the tradition of achievement.

#### Values

The analysis of cultural norms and attitudes and value statements of respondents provided data for the identification of values which were shared by the members of the independent school. Most of the school's values are not unique to this organization, but rather are held by many in

society. However, there was a perception that because certain values were emphasized and acted upon, many parents were attracted to the school. The list of values, presented alphabetically in Table 1, provides a sense of the school's value system.

Table 1

The Independent School's Values

Value Name	Paradigm Type				Value Name	Paradigm Type			
	1	2A	2B	3		1	2A	2B	3
Accessibility		X	X		Happiness		X	X	X
Altruism	X	X	X		Integrity		X	X	
Commitment		X	X		Openmindedness		X	X	
Communication		X	X		Orderliness		X	X	
Competition		X	X	X	Perseverance		X	X	
Confidence			X		Politeness		X	X	
Conformity		X	X		Pride		X	X	X
Consideration		X	X		Professionalism		X	X	
Cooperation		X	X		Recognition		X	X	X
Courage		X	X		Reputation		X	X	X
Curiosity		X	X		Respect		X	X	
Discipline		X	X		Responsibility		X	X	
Education		X	X		Self-confidence		X	X	
Elitism		X	X	X	Self-esteem		X	X	
Family		X	X	X	Success		X	X	X
Flexibility		X	X		Tradition		X	X	
Friendliness		X	X	X	Trust			X	

*Accessibility* was considered important in the independent school. Students, staff, and parents alike

expected to be able to, and felt they could, approach the administrators to discuss any issue. The same was true for teachers. Parents and students felt they were welcome to meet and talk with the teaching staff at any time.

Accessibility was the source of a norm of expectancy within the organization, and hence, could be interpreted as a Type 2B value. However, it was felt that accessibility fostered a positive atmosphere and enhanced communications in the school; therefore, it was also interpreted as a Type 2A value, since there was a rational perceived need for accessibility.

*Altruism* was interpreted as a cultural value of the independent school. The expectation of student involvement in a variety of community service activities (such as visiting homes for the elderly) and the existence of the buddy system suggested the students were expected to develop a sensitivity to the welfare of others. Altruism, as a value, could be classified three ways in this instance. To the extent that this value was founded upon principle, it could be classified by Hodgkinson's value Type 1. Because altruism was consensual in nature among group members, it could be regarded a Type 2B value. Furthermore, it could also be considered a Type 2A value because of the pragmatic rationale that the buddy system assisted new students to settle more easily into the school.

*Commitment, pride, and reputation*, as cultural values, were demonstrated by the school's insistence that members desired to be a part of the organization, demonstrated a willingness to strive to meet the high expectations and goals held for them, and took pride in the school and its achievements. Furthermore, it was considered important that the school maintain a strong reputation to attract clientele. These values could be classified as Type 2B because they were the source of group norms of expectancy among organizational members; however, they were categorized as Type 2A values as well. The school, for example, pragmatically used the requirement for a demonstrated commitment on the part of new members as an important feature of its screening process. By insisting all members identify with the ideals and goals of the school and by fostering pride in the school's accomplishments, it was felt these same goals would be perpetuated. In addition, by maintaining a strong reputation, and thereby attracting new clientele, the continued operation of the school was assured. Pride and reputation were also classified as Type 3 values because members expressed satisfaction with the school's high level of student academic performance.

*Communication* was interpreted as a value of the independent school for a variety of reasons. An extensive system of communication, including newsletters, handbooks, reports, committees, meetings, and assemblies, was in place

to: provide and exchange information, to continually remind students of the school's expectations, and to develop a group identity. Communication appeared to be the source of an understood group expectation within the organization, and rational reasons were given for fostering it; consequently, the researcher classified communication as a Type 2B and a Type 2A value of the independent school.

*Competition* was viewed as an organizational value because students were encouraged to compete with themselves, or endeavor to continually improve, and because competition (as integral to the British "house system") was meant to motivate and to create school spirit. Moreover, there was a pragmatic, ongoing concern for the school's survival in relation to the other independent schools with which there was competition for clientele. Considering the rational nature of competition in the independent school, it was termed a Type 2A value. Competition was also classified as a Type 2B and a Type 3 value because it was the source of a norm of expectancy among group members, and furthermore, competition provided a source of pride and satisfaction amongst students and other members of the organization.

*Confidence and trust* were important to members of the school, and furthermore, both students and staff believed the other members of the organization had confidence and trust in them. On the basis of the interview transcripts, these values appeared to be consensual among group members,

or they were the source of group norms of expectancy in the school. Confidence and trust, therefore, were interpreted as Type 2B values of the independent school.

*Conformity* was another organizational value. The insistence that students wore the school uniform, and that all members had to adapt themselves to the variety of organizational expectations, were examples of rationally based ideas, meant to ensure the goals of the school would be realized. Such rational underpinnings suggested conformity was a Type 2A value. But it was also noted that system-wide, organizational members generally took the school uniform as a given. Since it was the source of a group norm of expectancy, conformity, therefore, was also classified as a Type 2B value.

*Cooperation* was identified as another school value. It was recognized that in order for the students and the school to be successful, all members had to work in tandem. Notions such as this were rational and pragmatic in nature; consequently, cooperation was considered a Type 2A value. It was also evident that cooperation was the source of an understood group expectation within the organization; consequently, the value was considered to be Type 2B as well.

*Courage, curiosity, perseverance, self-confidence, and self-esteem*, as values, were closely linked in the minds of school members. Students were encouraged to find the mental

strength and to develop the curiosity to venture into new areas and to participate in activities which they may have formerly avoided. Students developed self-confidence, their self-esteem was enhanced, and they became well-rounded individuals because they were encouraged to persevere, and because they were provided the assistance to realize success. These values were classified as Type 2A because there were rational, pragmatic reasons for their promotion. Just like many other organizational values, courage, curiosity, perseverance, self-confidence, and self-esteem were also consensual among members, and therefore, were considered to be Type 2B values as well.

*Discipline* was interpreted as a Type 2A and a Type 2B value of the independent school. There was an expectation that students would conduct themselves in a civilized manner, demonstrating self-control and decent behaviour. There was a rational perceived need for discipline to foster the variety of organizational goals such as academic achievement. Furthermore, discipline was the source of an understood expectation of group members. It was consensual within the group -- part of the organization's social programming.

Although the emphasis was on academic performance, there was a system-wide view that *education*, in general, was important. Members believed that students should become well-rounded and prepared to meet the challenges of life,

not just university studies. It was also believed that students should develop a desire to learn, and that learning should be a life-long process. There were rational, pragmatic grounds for the perceived importance of education, which was indicative of Type 2A values. However, in the researcher's opinion, this value was also consensual in nature among members of the organization, and hence, was considered a Type 2B value as well.

*Elitism* was also interpreted as a cultural value. The members of the school were conscious of belonging to a unique organization. Upon consideration of the cultural standards of other schools, particularly in the public system, the members viewed their school as preferable or superior, and they wished to maintain their ideals or standards. Although the decision to enroll a student in the independent school may have been founded upon personal preference (Type 3 values), such decisions could also be traced to rational, pragmatic grounds (Type 2A values) such as the type of school that would provide the greatest likelihood of success in later life. Moreover, it was the researcher's view that elitism was the source of a shared group understanding or consensus, and therefore, could also be considered Type 2B.

*Family, friendliness, and happiness* were also viewed as values associated with the school. Members believed the closely knit, friendly, happy atmosphere contributed to the

well-being and the success of the students. Since there was a conscious, rational effort to foster such an atmosphere, family, friendliness, and happiness were considered Type 2A values. Furthermore, because these values seemed to be consensual in nature across the organization, and because there appeared to be an hedonic aspect to them from the perspective of many respondents, they were also termed Type 2B and Type 3 values of the independent school.

*Openmindedness, flexibility, and integrity* were interpreted as both Type 2A and 2B values of the independent school. All members were encouraged to be open and honest with each other, and there were expectations that everyone would be flexible and receptive to the views, ideas, and arguments of others. Promotion of these values was rationally intended to produce tolerant individuals, as well as divergent thinkers. *Openmindedness, flexibility, and integrity* were also the source of group norms of expectancy, or were consensual in nature.

*Orderliness:* Members of the independent school felt it was important that the organization operate in an orderly fashion. Respondents expressed the belief that their school was well-run, and there was a perception that there were fewer problems related to order than in many other schools in the province. In general, organizational members emphasized the positive benefits for learning that resulted from an orderly environment; hence, orderliness was

interpreted as a Type 2A value of the independent school. The researcher also interpreted this value as Type 2B because it appeared to be consensual among group members.

*Politeness, consideration, and respect* were also important school ideals. These values were modeled by the staff, and there was an expectation that students would demonstrate the same qualities. There was a rational view that by observing these ideals, the learning environment would be enhanced, and valuable social skills would be imparted to the students. *Politeness, consideration, and respect* were also the source of norms of expectancy among members of the organization. In view of the rational, pragmatic, and consensual nature of these values, they were categorized as both Type 2A and Type 2B cultural values of the organization.

Members of the organization believed that *professionalism* was important. Staff members were expected to be competent professionals, and they were perceived as such. Students were expected to behave as young professionals, and were seen as responsible individuals with respect to their conduct and work ethic. To the extent that *professionalism* was the source of a norm of expectancy within the group, it could be considered a Type 2B value. It was the researcher's opinion, however, that more important to organizational members was the rational, pragmatic consideration that *professionalism* was a key to

success; therefore, it was interpreted as principally a Type 2A value in the independent school.

*Recognition* was viewed as essential to motivation and success; hence, there was a comprehensive system of rewards in the school. The rational underpinnings of this value suggested that recognition be classified as Type 2A. At the same time, the existence and the need for a reward system was virtually taken for granted (or was consensual in nature), and recognition was the source of personal satisfaction for many members; therefore, recognition was also termed Type 2B and Type 3.

*Responsibility*: Students were encouraged to value education, to learn for learning's sake, and to become independent, life-long learners. Within this context, students were expected to assume responsibility for their own learning and for their actions. To the extent that responsibility was fostered to assist students as they progressed through life, it could be considered a Type 2A, rational value. Concurrently, responsibility could also be termed Type 2B because of its consensual nature among group members.

*Success* was another important value held by members of the organization. Everyone was encouraged and supported in their quest to improve and to achieve. The school took great pride in its impressive academic achievement record, but the primary focus was on stimulating students to realize

their potential, and success was measured by the standard of the students' capabilities. Success, particularly academic achievement, was understood to be the key to one's future and financial security; therefore, it was classified as a Type 2A value. The importance of achievement and success were virtually taken for granted as the source of expected organizational norms; consequently, success was also interpreted as a Type 2B value. Furthermore, the preferential or hedonic nature of success was interpreted by the researcher as indicative of a Type 3 value as well.

*Tradition* was classified as both a Type 2A and Type 2B value. To some extent, tradition was a matter of social programming in the school. On the other hand, certain information, beliefs, and customs (e.g., the house system and the raccoon coat) had been handed down or had been perpetuated for reasons such as motivation; therefore, there were pragmatic, rational grounds for their continuation.

It is undeniable that within the school there was an ideology, a set of organizational principles and values that influenced the culture, including decision making. However, most decisions were rational and calculated, and were based on pragmatism and utilitarianism. One example among many concerned class size. Due to financial pressures, there had been discussions about increasing the numbers of students to enhance revenue. The overriding consideration during decision making was that by increasing the student-teacher

ratio, many of the perceived advantages of smaller classes would be lost; thereby, jeopardizing the school's sense of uniqueness and its belief that it was a superior educational system. Another example of a pragmatically oriented decision was the amalgamation. Prior to this move there was a sense that students would be lured away in increasing numbers by another independent school which offered a strong senior-school program. The decision to unite the junior boys' and junior girls' schools, therefore, was made in consideration of the practical, inevitable consequence that the schools would cease to exist otherwise. Some decisions were also grounded in their usefulness as means to specific ends. For instance, in attempts to demonstrate a degree of openmindedness and flexibility, and to grant some measure of freedom of choice, the administration permitted students to vote on some issues such as the dress code alternatives. Such examples of decision making reflect Type 2A values.

Few decisions were made at the level of personal preference; therefore, there was little evidence of Type 3 values.

With regard to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm, it was inferred that the organization in question was characterized by Type 1 (transrational), Type 2A (rational), Type 2B (consensual), and Type 3 (subrational) values. Furthermore, the data suggested that Type 2A and Type 2B values predominated.

### Cultural Strength

For the purposes of this study, an estimate of cultural strength was provided by three measures: (1) the inferred proportion of organizational members who appeared to hold similar perceptions of the organization's culture; (2) the existence of informal rules to guide group members' behaviour, and the degree of understanding among members regarding behavioural norms; and (3) the value orientation with reference to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm.

After analysis and interpretation of student, parent, teacher, administrator, and secretary interview transcripts, it was inferred that the cultural perceptions of the organization's members were nearly homogeneous in nature. The school was guided by basic rules and unwritten expectations for behaviour of which everyone was aware. Furthermore, the earlier analysis of organizational values suggested the organization was characterized by relatively high order, or relatively strong values. In consideration of the value paradigm and its application to the school, the absence of uncertainty among members concerning behavioural expectations, and the level of congruency of the cultural perceptions held by the members, it was implied that the organizational culture of the independent school was quite strong indeed.

### Strength of Cultural Perception and Time

Following the examination of each interview transcript, the researcher made a judgement concerning the relative strength of the respondent's cultural perception, or the degree of the individual's awareness of the school-wide norms, attitudes, and values. Table 2 illustrates the relative strengths of interviewees' cultural perceptions on a five-point scale. The length of time the individual had been associated with the school is also plotted. Based on this analysis, there appeared to be a positive relationship between the two variables. Respondents who had been associated with the school for relatively longer periods of time seemed to display stronger impressions of the school culture than newer members. Furthermore, the table suggests that after the first year with the organization, members held very strong perceptions of the school's culture. They appeared to have become acculturated.

Table 2

The Degree to Which the Perception of Culture Varied With the Length of Time the Individual Had Been Associated With the Independent School

		Strength of Cultural Perception				
		Weak		Strong		
		1	2	3	4	5
	5+				PPPSC	STTAA
	4				STP	
Years	3			P	S	A
at						
School	2				ST	
	1-	S	T			

Note. S = Student  
 T = Teacher  
 P = Parent  
 A = Administrator  
 SC = Secretary/Custodian

Summary

The independent school was characterized by a relatively strong organizational culture, both from the point of view of its value orientation and the high degree

of congruence among members' cultural perceptions. Furthermore, it appeared that new members became acculturated quickly.

The school was a fairly open place where people seemed genuinely interested in each other's welfare. People were accessible to each other, they were willing to listen and to help each other, and they felt free to make their opinions known. It was a friendly, happy place where students not only had close ties with their peers, but they also viewed the staff and administration as their friends. It was a comfortable yet demanding place where academics were emphasized in a humane, caring environment. Dedication and cooperation were the norm. Everyone devoted long hours and much energy in the quest for achievement, and all of the school's members worked cooperatively to assist the students and the school to realize their goals. A sense of pride and a positive spirit permeated the school.

Due in large part to its relatively small size, the school was a closely knit society. It is interesting to note the metaphors used by members when referring to the school: United Nations, community, family, and team. After several days in the school, the researcher was left with a strong image of a happy place where staff and students enjoyed what they were doing, and appreciated where they were and what they were achieving.

Finally, it was interesting to note that the independent school's culture appeared to be comprised of many of the characteristics of clans identified by Ouchi and Price (1978):

- There was a high level of agreement concerning organizational norms, and the school's members shared common values and objectives.
- Legitimate authority based on tradition was recognized.
- Organizational norms, attitudes, and values were transmitted to members through rites and ceremonies, (unwritten expectations) more so than by written rules and regulations.
- There was low membership turnover, both on the part of staff and students.
- There were selective recruitment and screening processes to ensure that new members held values similar to those of the organization.
- There was an intensive process of socialization, and members displayed high levels of commitment to the school.
- There was a relatively high degree of cultural homogeneity.

## CHAPTER 5

## Research Results

The Rural School

The school, which offered kindergarten to Grade 12, served four small, rural communities in the interior of British Columbia. During the 1989/90 school year, 83 students were enrolled in the secondary grades which were staffed by eleven full-time teachers. The school administration consisted of a principal and a vice-principal, both of whom had some teaching responsibilities. The principal had been with the school in that capacity for three years, while the vice-principal had been associated with the school for eighteen years. At the end of the 1988/89 school year, six teachers left the school to teach elsewhere; however, apart from that exceptional year, there had been a very low turnover rate in teaching staff.

Located on a four-acre site, the school consisted of a turn-of-the-century building and a patchwork of additions. A separate secondary school was constructed in 1952, leaving the elementary school in the original building. In 1975, an addition to the high school was built to connect the two schools. While the researcher was in the school, a new secondary school building was under construction and was scheduled for completion in the spring of 1990.

The primary economic activities in the region were farming, mining, forestry, and tourism. Early pioneers, mainly of British, German, and Russian Doukhobor descent, arrived in the area in the late 1800s. The discovery of silver around the turn of the century attracted people from all parts of Canada, the United States, and Europe. During the Second World War, an internment camp was established in the area to isolate those of Japanese ancestry. In addition, during the 1960s many young people, the so-called "hippies" or "back-to-the-landers", settled in the region. Among this group were many Americans who came to Canada to avoid being drafted into the armed services during the Vietnam War. At the time of the study, population groups in the region reflected the settlement periods; consequently, the area was multicultural in character. The so-called "hippies" or "back-to-the-landers" were considered relatively well-educated and many had professional backgrounds, while the farmers, miners, and loggers were generally perceived to be a less-well-educated segment of the population.

The transcripts from the rural school indicated that the respondents' perceptions of the organization's culture were relatively homogeneous. It is appropriate, therefore, to present one cultural summary for the whole organization.

Norms (Rules)

The student handbook presented a general rule statement which proclaimed that everyone had a right to attend the school; therefore, all school members had to respect the rights of others. Basic, guiding principles were:

- Be on time;
- Be prepared; and,
- Respect each other's space, property, and right to learn.

Apart from the general rules identified above, there were a few specific regulations related to attendance, lates, absences, swearing, smoking, drugs and alcohol, snowballs, and vandalism. For example, if a student was absent, parents were required to contact the school either by telephone, or by means of a note when the student returned to class. Students were allowed two unexcused lates (to school or class) per quarter. For each succeeding late, students, including those who traveled by bus, were required to serve a one-hour detention after school hours. Those students who accumulated ten unexcused lates were suspended. Unexcused absences from school were not tolerated. The penalty was a one-day suspension, and students were also responsible to complete any school work missed as a result of the suspension.

Swearing on the school grounds was also not tolerated. For such offences, students were required to write an essay explaining what they had done and why it was offensive and disrespectful. The composition was sent home for the parents to sign, and then it was returned to the school.

Smoking, too, was prohibited on the school grounds. In fact, students were not allowed to smoke within a block of the school property. Infractions resulted in written warnings, followed by more serious consequences such as suspensions if misbehaviour continued. The main rationale for this rule was that the secondary students were expected to be good examples or role models for the elementary school children.

Using, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while on any school-sponsored function was strictly prohibited. The School Board had developed a series of consequences for such violations. For instance, drug and alcohol incidents resulted in immediate suspension for three to five days. Second infractions resulted in a student's appearance before the School Board. If such prohibited activity occurred during extracurricular events, students could be banned from future activities. Furthermore, for Grade 12 students, punitive actions for drugs or alcohol could jeopardize their attendance at graduation.

In the interest of public safety, snowball throwing was also not allowed within a block of the school grounds. The rule was adopted by administrative decree. No incident influenced the decision; rather, the principal opposed sanctioning an activity which he perceived as having great potential for student injury.

Finally, in the event of willful vandalism of school property, the minimum consequence was that the person responsible was required to bear the cost of all repairs.

Virtually every respondent believed the primary rule was to be considerate and to respect the rights of others. The general perception was that the school rules were few in number. Most interviewees were of the opinion the rules were not unlike those espoused in other schools, but felt they were enforced in the rural school.

#### Norms (Rewards)

Rewards were identified for both students and staff. For students, grades, themselves, were perceived as an important reward. Traditionally, interim reports had been sent to parents between report cards to inform them that their children were experiencing difficulties at school. Under the new principal, teachers were encouraged to write interim reports on all students to keep parents well informed of their children's progress. The personal satisfaction of knowing they were doing well, and having that information communicated to

parents, was rewarding for some students. Furthermore, it was suggested that, because of the small size of the school and community, everyone was well aware of how all students were doing academically. The knowledge that the entire community was following one's progress was seen as a motivating force. Positive feedback from peers was also perceived as a reward for students. Good grades were viewed as fundamental to success, allowing one to go on to college or university and launch a career. In short, academic grades were considered the key to escaping the region which was seen as holding limited opportunities for graduating students.

An honour roll system existed in the school. All courses, except for physical education, were taken into consideration when qualifications were reviewed for the honour roll. Students were awarded points for grades received on courses (for example, three points were awarded for an "A", two points were awarded for a "B", and one point was awarded for a grade of "C+"). The average number of points was calculated for each student, and those who received a minimum point average of 2.5, with no grades lower than "C+", had the distinction of having their name appear on the honour roll. Students with a point average of 2.0 to 2.5, and with no grades below "C+", were given honourable mention. The school newspaper reported the names of those who received

academic recognition, as did the local community newspaper.

Regular school assemblies were used to recognize students' achievement, their participation in competitions, and their other positive contributions to the school and community. An awards ceremony was held at the year end to recognize students for everything from their attendance and good citizenship to their academic and athletic accomplishments.

At the classroom level, teachers used a variety of methods to reward students. A great deal of verbal and written feedback was given students on their work, and either privately, or publicly before their peers, teachers congratulated students for their efforts and offered encouragement. In some cases, special privileges were extended to classes if they performed well, or were revoked if students failed to meet expectations. For example, one teacher reported that if students worked diligently for the first forty-five minutes of the class, they were rewarded by having the last fifteen minutes for doing other things such as catching up on homework. If certain classes, or the overall school, accomplished something well, students were rewarded with privileges such as trips to the local ski hill.

Every month, both the school and a local restaurant provided a pizza to each of two students who demonstrated the greatest amount of improvement.

Provincial scholarships were viewed as important rewards for academic achievement. Students in Grades 9 to 12 competed for awards of \$125, \$175, \$225, and \$275 respectively. To be eligible, students had to place in the top 30 % of their grade based two-thirds on academic achievement and one-third on effort and citizenship.

The staff, too, perceived rewards for working in the rural school. For example, the administrators provided positive feedback to staff. The principal regularly wrote personal notes of thanks or praise to teachers in recognition of their efforts such as coaching teams, dealing with student or parent issues, and effective teaching. Teachers appreciated receiving regular, supportive feedback on their work. In addition to the formal and informal communications between administrators and teachers, the local School Board held a staff appreciation night to honour the staff for their efforts and commitment to education in the community. All School Board employees received special pins in recognition of ten, fifteen, or twenty years of service to the School District.

Small class sizes were perceived by teachers as a reward of working in the rural school (the pupil-teacher

ratio was approximately 8 to 1 as contrasted with the provincial average of 17 to 1). Because of the small class sizes, behaviour problems were fewer, marking loads were lower, and teachers were able to offer students more individualized instruction than would have been possible in larger schools.

Teachers were rewarded through the satisfaction of seeing their charges perform well. The school had developed a reputation among rural schools for relatively high academic achievement. This knowledge, in addition to seeing a large proportion of graduates continue on to post-secondary studies and careers, was viewed as another reward of being associated with the school.

Many staff expressed the opinion that the children and the community at large were friendly, kind, generous, and supportive of them. Moreover, they felt they were respected in the community. These positive community attitudes were also perceived as rewards on the part of the teaching staff.

Finally, the rural, semi-isolated locale was considered by many a reward in itself. Staff appreciated what they felt was a healthy lifestyle associated with the range of outdoor activities available; furthermore, there was a perceived added attraction of a relatively lower cost of living in the rural area.

### Norms (Events and Traditions)

The Christmas concert and graduation were the two major annual events in the school. On both special occasions, whether they had children attending the school or not, everyone in the valley packed into the school gymnasium. These were perceived as times of great pleasure and celebration which brought the entire community together.

Halloween, May Day, and Remembrance Day were other special days which were traditionally recognized. On Halloween, all the elementary children dressed up in their costumes and trooped through the high school classrooms to show off their dress. Because May Day was such an important community event, very little was organized at the school to recognize the occasion. Instead, many school clubs were involved in various events within the community such as assisting with floats for the parade and operating food booths. The Remembrance Day ceremony was also a long-standing tradition of the school. A school-based peace group organized an assembly which involved local veterans of both world wars.

Student fun days created school spirit and fostered positive attitudes and behaviour in the school. On these occasions, the whole school, kindergarten to Grade 12, came together for fun competitions. For example, the

Grade 12s and Grade 1s might have formed a team to compete in the airplane throwing contest. As a by-product of fun days, the senior students became role models for the junior students, and the younger children learned that the older ones were willing to work with and help them.

Although not an annual event, approximately every three years an exchange trip was organized with students in the province of Quebec. Only students enrolled in Grades 10 or 11 French were eligible to participate in the student exchange. So popular was the program, that many nonacademic students registered for French 10 and 11 to be able to take part in the exchange.

Other traditional events and activities included an intramural sports program, the school newspaper and the school yearbook (both under the direction of the English teacher/librarian and school secretary), a bike rodeo, the milk run, an annual science fair, staff-student softball and basketball games, and the community cleanup in which the students tidied the school and community grounds.

#### Norms (Heroes and Legends)

Even though many interview subjects had long-standing ties with the school and the community going back generations, there was no expressed awareness of the school's history. Interviewees did not relate stories of

the school's beginnings or its founders; rather, those considered heroes or legendary figures were either present or relatively recent teachers or administrators in the school.

Teachers were appreciated for features of their personality and professional ability. Generally, it was thought the noteworthy teachers were able to relate well with everyone. They possessed energy and enthusiasm, and they were willing to devote extra time and took special interest in the children. These teachers held high expectations for students and they were strict, but the children enjoyed being in their classes. They had the ability to teach in ways that children were able to understand, and they brought out the best in their students.

Administrators were generally appreciated for their friendliness, approachability, helpfulness, consideration, integrity, and sincerity. An ability to be democratic yet firm was considered a positive attribute of these people. One former principal, in particular, was venerated, and he was credited with much of the success of the school. This administrator was considered a brilliant philosopher who also had a strong educational background. The staff thought of him as encouraging and supportive. Furthermore, he was remembered as a strict disciplinarian who set very high

standards for both academic achievement and behaviour, and he was perceived as having had a great impact on the school.

#### Norms (Processes)

Generally, student assemblies were held four or five times annually. Although they were used to recognize student accomplishments, assemblies usually assumed a theme approach. For instance, the Student Council ordinarily held one or two on a particular student-centred topic, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) usually conducted traffic safety assemblies, and a school environmental group also organized assemblies which involved students' active participation.

There was a screening process associated with staff recruitment. Apart from the usual expectations for subject expertise, the administration stressed the importance of extracurricular qualifications or competence, and also, they considered how the individual's personality would blend with the community and the school character. It was thought that community-minded, open candidates with experience living in relatively remote areas would best fit into the small rural school system.

Teachers spent a great deal of their time checking or marking homework and providing feedback to students on

their work. Generally, homework was reviewed by the teacher daily. Marks were awarded for completion of homework and for the amount of work that was accomplished correctly. If homework was incomplete, the student was usually given extra time to finish it, otherwise detentions were meted out. Teachers regularly took in student assignments and offered critical feedback (either orally or in writing) on their work. Owing to the small student numbers, teachers were able to provide comprehensive information to students on their progress. Furthermore, apart from the formal means of communicating student progress through interim reports and report cards, teachers were able to make telephone contact with the home whenever necessary. In addition to providing regular, comprehensive feedback, students were taught self-discipline and developed their skills in note taking, summarizing, and studying. Once again, the small class sizes permitted teachers to deliver more individualized instruction and extra assistance when it was needed.

In the few instances when student misbehaviour called for suspension, the school generally preferred to use in-school suspensions. In such cases, parents were notified of the action taken, the students were required to come to the school on time, and they were confined for the entire day in the counsellor's office. Suspended

students were required to bring their lunch to school and were not permitted to leave the school grounds, either at lunch or at break times.

There was no clear differentiation of duties between the principal and vice-principal, and written job descriptions for each position were nonexistent. Generally, duties were shared. In matters of student discipline, both administrators dealt with students of all grade levels. Usually, the vice-principal played the role of the "lightweight", or the person to whom misbehaving students were first referred, while the principal was considered the "heavyweight", or the person that was called upon as a last resort to resolve recurring student behaviour problems. Although the vice-principal had traditionally served as the school counsellor, the principal had begun to assume some of the student counselling responsibilities.

Supervision of students outside of classroom and extracurricular situations did not involve the teaching staff. Instead, two individuals, one for elementary and one for secondary, were hired to supervise the lunch rooms during the noon break. The two administrators shared supervision duties before and after school and at recess time.

All of the secondary teachers taught seven blocks out of the eight in a four-day rotating cycle. This

system allowed staff three or four blocks of preparation time each week. In addition, the administrators tried to occasionally relieve staff from their classroom duties to give teachers time for other school-related activities.

Professional staff worked together to help students get the most out of their school experience. Teachers conferred about individual student difficulties, their modes of learning, and the teaching strategies that seemed to be most successful with them. However, there was a perception that few opportunities existed for staff to assist each other professionally. Most subjects were taught by a single teacher; therefore, generally, staff did not have other subject specialists from whom they could seek advice on subject-related matters. A notable exception where there was professional cooperation was in the area of computers. Staff members conversant with the technology assisted others who did not share the same facility. Since this study, the principal has implemented a peer supervision program, to deal with the concern about professional cooperation.

Because teachers were typically responsible for instruction at all grade levels from 8 to 12 in a given subject, they routinely carried heavy course preparation loads of five or six different courses of study.

Like all public schools in B.C., the rural school observed five professional days during the school year.

Being an isolated school, teachers were encouraged to participate in professional development functions outside the area. To facilitate this policy, a set sum of money was established by the local teachers' association for professional development. For those teachers who used the funding to assist them attend professional conferences, \$500.00 per person was available. During the 1989/90 school year, the association provided everyone an equal share of professional development funds amounting to \$260.00. In addition, there was a school-based fund of \$2,700 which was used to support cooperative learning, peer supervision, and global awareness in-services. Usually, one of the five professional days was devoted to School District professional development initiatives where all District staff met at a central location to listen to a keynote speaker and attend workshops. A second day was dedicated to zonal professional development. On such days, staffs from all school districts that comprised the zone met at a regional centre to participate in professional development activities. Generally, near year end, one professional day was used at the school level to discuss the positive and negative aspects of the year that was ending and to focus on the goals for the next school year.

One of the great difficulties for a small school is its inability to provide a broad, balanced range of academic and nonacademic courses. The rural school had focused traditionally on its academic program and the tradition continued; however, the demands from the students and the community and recommendations from high school accreditations called for increased course offerings in the nonacademic area. As a result, the principal had made efforts (although limited) to expand the nonacademic program. New courses included Drafting 11 and 12, Computer Studies 11 and 12, Journalism 12, and Technology 11 and 12. At the Grade 8, 9, and 10 levels, a semester system had been established for elective courses to provide students with a broader range of course options.

The public was encouraged to make use of school facilities. For instance, the Recreation Commission and local community groups regularly held functions in the school's gymnasium and classrooms. Individuals or groups wishing to use school facilities were required to complete a "school use form" which was reviewed before permission was granted. School computers were also made available to the public for short-term projects. Before permission was granted, applicants were required to have a staff sponsor, be computer literate, and provide their

own software. A fee of \$5.00 per hour was levied to assist with equipment upkeep.

Fees (ranging from \$6.00 to \$15.00) were charged for certain courses (such as accounting, art, construction, foods, and industrial education) in which consumable materials were used. Students were loaned textbooks for use during the school year, and they were responsible for returning them in good order at the end of the year. Students were required to pay for lost or damaged texts or library resources. In addition, it was necessary for students to purchase specific materials for certain classes. For instance, they were required to supply computer diskettes for each class where computers were used. Students were also charged extra fees for special projects as they arose.

Specialized student services such as speech assessment and therapy, psychological testing, learning assistance testing, The Children's Development Centre, Public Health Services, and other social services were offered at the school. Specialized services were usually contracted by out-of-District personnel. It was generally conceded that the school required help in this area. There was a perception that assistance was not always available when needed, and that there was a lack of follow-up. To some extent, this situation resulted in school personnel trying to solve problems at the school

level. As a result, the principal felt that a false sense of competence in some special needs areas may have developed.

The school generally employed a collegial approach to decision making. In very few cases did the administration make decisions unilaterally. Usually, the administrators brought an idea forward and then asked those who would be affected by a decision how they felt about it. Most decisions affecting the school were made at staff meetings. Typically, the administration raised issues at the meetings, discussion occurred, and then decisions were made by the whole staff. An example of decision making by consensus was the development of guidelines or rules for the school. Although occasionally issues were dealt with in small committees, this was rarely necessary due to the small staff numbers. Occasionally, staff were invited to vote on issues such as the proposal to adopt peer coaching as a professional development activity. Collegial decision making was the norm for the administration and staff, although some teachers felt that sometimes discussion was extended until the administration's preferred alternative was adopted.

Students' opinions were considered on matters that affected them as well. They were given opportunities to discuss issues and make their views known through such

media as the Student Council and the student newspaper (the administration had adopted a policy of not vetoing any topics the students wished to include in the newspaper). Occasionally, students were allowed to vote on issues. For instance, they were usually surveyed in the spring to determine what their course preferences were, so course offerings could be planned for the fall.

Parents, too, felt they had a voice in school affairs. Informal communications were encouraged among parents, students, teachers, and administrators. Generally, parents felt that if they had concerns, the teachers and the administration were accessible to them. In addition, formal lines of communication were established to enhance the informal contact. For example, there was a Community School Association (CSA) which was used as a forum for parents to communicate concerns to the school. The CSA met on the second Monday of each month during the school year. Apart from the CSA, there were other formal means for parents to interact with the school. Parent-teacher conferences were held twice per year following report cards, meetings for parents of special education students were held two or three times annually, and a general gathering of all parents of secondary children was typically held at the beginning of the school year.

### Norms (Expectations)

There was a perception among interview subjects that rules were few, but there were high expectations of all those associated with the rural school.

Generally, students were expected to attend school, to arrive at classes on time, be attentive, and be prepared to apply themselves. They were expected to strive to reach their potential. Those who were disinterested in learning were expected not to distract or in any way disrupt the learning of others.

Students were expected to do their assigned work. In fact, there was an expectation they would spend a specific amount of time on homework each day, depending upon the grade level. For instance, students in Grades 7 through 10 were expected to do a minimum of one hour of homework per day, while students in Grades 11 and 12 were expected to complete at least two hours of school work at home daily.

Students were expected to accomplish their work in a timely, accurate fashion. In most classes, they were expected to write neatly in full and correct sentences. Because of the small numbers of students, teachers were able to check spelling and grammar continuously. There was a conscious effort on the part of the whole school to help students become prepared for the world of work.

School was viewed as the students' job, and they were expected to treat it as such.

In addition to the expectations for their work ethic, students were expected to be good school citizens. They were to demonstrate a good standard of behaviour and act maturely and responsibly, respect others' rights, be sensitive to and tolerant of other people's opinions, work together cooperatively, and be willing to participate in a variety of activities to become well-rounded individuals.

Parents were expected to contact the school if they noticed their children not doing sufficient homework. In addition, parents were expected to ensure there was an appropriate time and place in the home for the completion of homework.

A significant proportion of the community (approximately 35 %) were former "back-to-the-landers" who had professional educations and professional values, that is, they placed a premium on education. The perception was that some of those values had "rubbed off" on the farming, logging, and mining members of the community, and the result was that educational expectations were elevated in the entire community. There was a community-wide expectation that upon graduation, students would continue on to higher

education. Approximately 90 % of graduating students pursued post-secondary studies.

Teachers were expected to be knowledgeable about the subject content they were teaching, competent in teaching methodology, capable of delivering a sound education to their charges, and they were expected to possess good classroom management skills. They were to ensure students were aware of the high expectations the school held of them. Similarly, teachers were to keep parents apprised of the expectations held of their children, and they were expected to maintain regular, frequent contact with parents.

There was an expectation that at the beginning of a unit of study, teachers would provide students with outlines of the course content, timelines, and details concerning how their work would be evaluated and graded. They were expected to check or mark all of the students' homework.

The teaching staff were expected to serve as role models for the children. Consequently, they were expected to be flexible, willing to try new things, consistent, and fair. Moreover, they were to possess a sense of humour, be community-minded, be responsive to parent and student concerns and problems, and earn the respect of their students.

Members of the school also held a variety of expectations of their administrators. They were expected to be:

- familiar with curricula;
- accessible and approachable;
- good communicators;
- open, honest, and courageous;
- flexible, fair, and consistent; and
- well-rounded, emphasizing academic and nonacademic pursuits.

Furthermore, the school administrators were expected to:

- maintain quality control;
- deal directly and swiftly with problems;
- foster a positive tone in the school;
- communicate the school's expectations and vision to all organization members and ensure everyone conform to them;
- consult with staff, students, parents, and the wider community on issues that affected them;
- refrain from being influenced by special interest groups;
- make intelligent decisions and adhere to them;
- maintain visibility in the school; and
- serve as role models for teachers and students alike.

#### Attitudes

Members of the organization were of the opinion that the school rules were not unlike those of other schools;

however, they perceived and wished the number of rules to be few. They believed the greater the number of rules and regulations, the greater the likelihood that students would deviate from them, thereby increasing the number of problems. There was a need expressed to keep rules relatively simple and consistently applied. Generally, organizational members felt the rules were enforced.

Although no one described student behaviour as excellent, there was a perception that there were few serious behavioural problems in the school. The principal reported that approximately two students were given detentions in a typical week, and about five out of the total secondary school population of 83 students were detained during a given term.

Students were viewed as attentive, on-task, and studious. The general attitude was that they were committed to their studies and appreciated the opportunities that completion of their schoolwork would bring. There was a perception, too, that the older students were generally concerned about the welfare of the younger ones. The school's atmosphere was one of a caring "family" or "community". Most of the students were characterized as pleasant and reasonable, and there was virtually no vandalism of school property. Furthermore, there was an organization-wide perception that a great deal of mutual respect existed among all

members of the school. The students' attitude was that both the teachers and administrators had confidence and trust in them, and they considered the school a comfortable, secure place.

Most members of the organization were confident they could disagree and confront others to resolve issues; however, dissension was not always articulated. It was suggested that some members, due to their inherent nature, shared their views openly, while others naturally tended to withhold their opinions. One staff member expressed a desire that secret ballots be held on certain sensitive issues because it was thought that some staff were intimidated by the administration.

It was widely perceived that organizational members affected by decisions had input into the school's decision-making process. On certain issues (such as course selections and the students' wish to hold a "dry" graduation) it was thought that students' opinions were carefully considered, while on other matters (such as the smoking policy and the layout of the new building) the general view was that students' opinions were solicited, but not taken too seriously. Teachers, for the most part, felt they were consulted in decision making. There was a minority view, however, that decisions were sometimes made authoritatively.

Generally, the organization's members were of the opinion that the knowledge and expertise of the teaching staff and administrators, concerning teaching strategies and modes of student learning, were not unlike most secondary educators in the province. The majority of individuals were considered well-qualified and experienced (several had been with the school for many years), while a few were regarded as less expert. Nevertheless, the staff were perceived as serious about their professional development and availed themselves of self-development opportunities as they arose. There was a perception, generally, that the school administrators had confidence and trust in their teaching staff.

Teachers reported they enjoyed their work, and they considered it important and valuable. They were widely perceived as hardworking, enthusiastic, and dedicated to the well-being of the children in their care. The general attitude was that staff contacted the home promptly whenever student learning problems arose, provided extra attention to students who needed it, and endeavored to motivate the children and encouraged them to succeed. Moreover, the teachers were viewed as open and accessible by the students and their parents alike, and many considered the teachers their friends.

The organization's members reported that the two school administrators worked well together. The teaching

staff generally considered the administrators to be open, willing to listen, and consultative, and expressed the opinion that they included the staff in decision making to build consensus. Students found the principal and vice-principal friendly, helpful, and accessible.

There were those among the teaching staff, though, whose attitude was that the administrators should communicate more with them. Some school members expressed a concern that the principal emphasized nonacademic pursuits (such as athletics and the ukulele) more so than academics. This was viewed as a reversal from the focus of the previous principal. Some teachers expressed the opinion that the principal did not visit the classroom as frequently as his predecessor, but he was considered to be committed to and involved with the students, particularly in sports.

The principal stated that his vision for the school was to continue the academic focus and create a more collegial atmosphere in the whole school. Organizational members cited the new school building and maintenance of the high academic standard as their visions for the school, but they were unaware of any particular planned and articulated vision for the school's future.

Although one staff member was widely regarded a master teacher, no one in the school was generally recognized as the educational leader. Furthermore, the

absence of educational leadership was not considered problematic. The staff felt it was more important to have a school administration who trusted them, who were supportive, and who allowed teachers sufficient freedom to do the job they were hired to do.

From the staff and administration point of view, parents were perceived as responsive when contacted for home support in getting their children on task; however, few parents attended school meetings. This was a conundrum for the administrators who were unsure whether parents were disinterested, felt their input was not valued, or simply had confidence in the school's ability to educate their children, and believed their input was not required. Having heard few parental concerns about the school, it was the researcher's opinion that the last reason was most likely. Parents expressed the view that their children were receiving a sound, basic education.

Although parents wanted the best for their children and were interested in their education, the general perception was that they were, as one administrator put it, "laid-back". They wanted to be kept informed, they wished to be contacted in the event of any problems with their children's learning, but there was no undue pressure placed on students to achieve.

There was an opinion expressed that whereas at one time students could leave the high school to take up

lucrative employment in local resource industries, such opportunities were few at the time of the study. Consequently, the importance of attaining a solid education (which was synonymous with academic achievement) had become a community-wide belief.

In addition to obtaining a good, basic education, positive, more personal relationships among staff and students were also considered important. The attitudes of respondents implied that the organization was committed to assisting all children to attempt to reach their potential, and an important goal was to develop caring, well-rounded citizens of good character.

Members of the organization shared the opinion that the relatively small numbers of students permitted staff to know the children and their needs well and allowed them to provide students more individualized attention. In fact, the principal, in reference to class size, stated, "This is probably the closest thing to a private school in the public school system." The relatively low pupil-teacher ratio was considered to be a positive influence on students' learning and was an important advantage of being associated with the rural school.

Another discernible attitude was that because the school was small it was able to offer few nonacademic courses; consequently, everyone concentrated on academic achievement -- the basics were emphasized. Although

pleased with the school's academic record, people generally expressed the desire for a greater range of course offerings including drama, music, technical, and vocational classes.

There was a widespread attitude that completing sufficient amounts of meaningful homework improved student achievement. Similarly, there was an attitude that to succeed, students must be willing to apply themselves to their work.

The school's members had adopted in-school suspensions because they believed suspensions out-of-school were considered holidays by misbehaving students. By keeping suspended students in school, the staff felt they were encouraging academic progress, rather than having such students fall further behind and ensuring failure.

Although there was an interest in having students learn information, the staff also reported that they taught them how to learn and attempted to develop in them a desire for learning for its own sake.

Members of the organization expressed the view that although school was an important and serious aspect of students' life, it should also be pleasurable. Work, it was thought, should be an agreeable, fulfilling experience.

A feeling of pride was shared by members of the school. For several years, the students had scored well on provincial examinations and assessments, and students, continuing on to colleges, universities, and vocational institutes, had also performed well. The school and community were proud of their scholastic accomplishments.

Even though so many stakeholders were proud of the students' achievements, academic competition among students was deemphasized. Instead, students were encouraged to compete with themselves and achieve to the best of their abilities.

Members of the school and the local community appreciated the area's physical beauty, serenity, and relatively slow pace. Generally, the community was environmentally conscious and cherished its quality of life.

### Values

The cultural values, listed alphabetically in Table 3, were derived from an analysis of the norms and attitudes shared by members of the rural school, as well as respondents' value statements.

Table 3

The Rural School's Values

Value Name	Paradigm Type				Value Name	Paradigm Type			
	1	2A	2B	3		1	2A	2B	3
Accessibility		X	X		Equity	X		X	
Achievement		X	X	X	Flexibility		X	X	
Altruism	X	X	X		Friendliness		X	X	X
Collegiality		X	X		Happiness		X	X	X
Commitment		X	X		Industriousness		X	X	
Communication		X	X		Integrity		X	X	
Community		X	X	X	Openmindedness		X	X	
Competition		X	X	X	Orderliness		X	X	
Confidence			X		Perseverance		X	X	
Conformity		X	X		Pride		X	X	X
Consideration		X	X		Professionalism		X	X	
Cooperation		X	X		Recognition		X	X	X
Courage		X	X		Respect		X	X	
Courtesy		X	X		Responsibility		X	X	
Curiosity		X	X		Self-confidence		X	X	
Discipline		X	X		Self-esteem		X	X	
Education		X	X		Trust			X	
Elitism		X	X	X					

*Accessibility* and *communication* were held as values by school members. They expressed the importance of the ability to make contact with other members of the organization as the need arose, and both formal and informal lines of communication were perceived as enhancing accessibility among members. To the extent that accessibility and communication were considered important because they served a purpose, and were therefore founded upon rational utilitarianism and pragmatism, they were classified as Type 2A values. Furthermore, it was apparent that accessibility and communications were the source of group expectations within the organization; therefore, they were also classified Type 2B.

*Achievement* of good grades was considered important for the development of self-esteem, the pride of the school, and entry into post-secondary institutions. Achievement was viewed as the key to a successful future; therefore, because of the rational, pragmatic underpinnings of achievement as a value, it was typed 2A. Because achievement was interpreted as the source of a group norm of expectancy in the organization, it was further classified a Type 2B value. In addition, to the extent that achievement brought personal satisfaction to school members, it was also placed in the Type 3 category.

*Altruism:* Organizational members believed it was important that the school assist with the development of good, socially conscious citizens. The importance of considering the welfare of others was demonstrated by events such as the community cleanup and expectations that the older students would see to the well-being of the younger ones and serve as role models for them. Altruism, therefore, was interpreted as a Type 1 value based on a moral principle, but it was also termed a Type 2B and a Type 2A value of the rural school. Altruism appeared to be the source of a norm of expectancy within the organization, and furthermore, there were rational, pragmatic grounds for considering altruism important.

*Collegiality:* School members believed it was important that they have opportunities to be involved in discussion and debate on issues affecting them. Furthermore, it was generally perceived that organizational members participated in a collegial decision-making process. There was a rational, pragmatic view that decisions arrived at collegially resulted in better decisions and decisions which found greater acceptance among school members. In addition, the researcher concluded that the notion of the importance of collegiality was also the source of a norm of expectancy among group members. Consequently, collegiality was

interpreted as both a Type 2A and a Type 2B value in the rural school.

*Commitment:* Students were generally committed to their work, and they applied themselves. This was evidenced by their on-task behaviour in the school, their completion of the required amounts of homework, and their provincial test results. Teachers were committed to provide students with a sound education, and this they demonstrated by regularly checking and marking homework, providing comprehensive feedback to students, and devoting extra time to help them whenever necessary. The fact that many staff were long-serving members of the school also suggested commitment to the organization. Commitment was considered important because of the perceived positive outcomes that would accrue to all members; hence, it was classified as a Type 2A value. To the extent that commitment was also the source of a group norm of expectancy, it was further categorized as a Type 2B value.

Because of the small size of both the school and the local towns, and the nature of the residents, there was a sense of *community* or family which was considered important to members of the organization. Everyone in the community knew everyone else well. Most families had resided in the valley for years, and in many cases, generations. Many parents were closely associated with

the school, having attended themselves, and often their parents before them. Some parents assisted at school functions, community groups used the school premises, and students, parents, and school staff interacted both in and outside of regular school hours. Members of the school and wider community were in each other's company continuously. The sense of community or family was considered important on three levels. It was thought that students should feel happy, secure, and comfortable while learning, and it was believed that education should be a pleasant experience. A common rationale expressed by respondents was that by fostering a sense of school community or family, a positive tone would be created, resulting in an improved learning environment and better opportunities for achievement. To the extent that the sense of community had a pragmatic rationale, it was considered a Type 2A value. Because of the consensual nature of its importance, community was also termed a Type 2B value. Furthermore, in consideration of evidence that group members simply preferred a sense of community and derived satisfaction from it, this value was also placed in the Type 3 category.

While *competition* among students was expected in sports, in school-related work only self-competition was encouraged. Students were expected to continually strive to improve and to do their best. Academic competition

among students was discouraged because of the possibility that unreasonable expectations could be made of less able students, resulting in a loss of their self-esteem. Competition, then, in the context of the rural school, was categorized as a Type 2A value, since it had rational, pragmatic grounds. To the extent that the importance of self-competition was the source of a norm of expectancy among group members, it was also classified as a Type 2B value. In addition, since many respondents expressed satisfaction and pride in the students' performance, competition was also interpreted as a Type 3 value in this instance.

Members of the rural school considered *confidence* and *trust* to be important to them. Students felt teachers and administrators had confidence and trust in them, and in general, the staff believed they were trusted by the administration. These values were designated as Type 2B values because the researcher interpreted them as being the source of group norms of expectancy within the organization.

*Conformity* and *discipline* were interpreted as values because students were expected to adhere to a set of rules and expectations for attitudes, behaviour, and work ethic. Generally, students appeared to live up to the expectations held of them. Disciplining one's self and conforming to specific behavioural standards were viewed

as important because they were rationally used to create a positive learning atmosphere and develop individuals with attributes that would help them be successful with their education and in later life; therefore, conformity and discipline were designated Type 2A values. To the extent that these values were the source of a norm of expectancy, or were consensual among members of the organization, they were also interpreted as Type 2B values.

There appeared to be a great deal of mutual support and communication among school members to assist students to succeed; therefore, cooperation was interpreted as a school-wide value. With its foundation in rationalism and pragmatism, it was considered a Type 2A value. Furthermore, because cooperation was the source of a group norm of expectancy, it was also categorized as a Type 2B rural school value.

*Education, Courage, and Curiosity:* An important objective of the school was to develop in its students the courage to try new things and a desire to learn for the sake of learning itself. It was not enough that students learned facts to perform well on examinations; rather, it was considered desirable that they develop a sense of curiosity about things and become interested in pursuing education for the inherent value of the activity. In addition, there was a widespread belief, in

the school and in the community, in the value of education in general. The researcher concluded that the values of education, courage, and curiosity were considered important primarily for rational and pragmatic reasons; hence, they were termed Type 2A values. They were further designated Type 2B values because they appeared to be a consensus of the group, or the source of a norm of expectancy.

*Elitism:* Members of the school expressed the opinion that for reasons such as the relatively low pupil-teacher ratio, they were able to offer students a better basic education than other larger schools. A form of elitism, admixed with self-satisfaction, was interpreted from the expressed level of contentment and pride of belonging to what they perceived as a unique, and in some ways superior, community or family school. Elitism, in this context, was interpreted as Type 3 (hedonic) and Type 2A because its foundation was the rationally perceived conveniences and benefits of this type of school system. Type 2B values were also suggested by indications that elitism was largely a matter of social programming. The perceived uniqueness and advantages associated with the school did not appear to be considered often, but rather, there seemed to be a common understanding or consensus among the group.

*Equity* was also interpreted as an organizational value because the school did not cater only to a select group of healthy, relatively high-achieving students. It served all secondary school students in the area, regardless of physical or mental ability. Those students with physical, learning, or other disabilities were provided specialized services within the school so they could attend. *Equity*, in this case, was categorized as a Type 1 value because it was based on the moral principle that all children should be provided equal opportunity to learn within their own community. Furthermore, because equity was considered a "given" of the organization (or the source of a norm of expectancy), it was classified as a Type 2B value as well.

*Flexibility* was another organizational value. Students were expected to participate in a variety of activities to become well-rounded. Teachers were expected to be flexible enough to instruct in different subjects and at a variety of grade levels. Because of the small size of the school, members were called upon to assume various roles and responsibilities as the need arose. *Flexibility*, then, was pragmatically based, and was considered a Type 2A value. To the extent that flexibility was also interpreted as the source of a norm of expectancy, it was further classified as a Type 2B value.

Related to the sense of community were the values of *friendliness* and *happiness*. There was a widespread view that although school should be taken seriously, it should also be a pleasant (some even said exciting) experience for students. The community itself was characterized as friendly, and friendliness was considered a virtue among school members. Friendliness and happiness contributed to a positive school tone, and so a rational basis existed for these values. In addition, because of the preferential (hedonic) and consensual nature of these values among group members, friendliness and happiness were classified as Type 2A, Type 2B, and Type 3 values in the rural school.

*Industriousness* was a value closely related to commitment. Everyone in the school was expected to be on-task and hardworking. School was considered the students' job, and they knew they had to work diligently to be successful. Most students completed their daily homework. Staff, too, devoted substantial amounts of time and energy to prepare for classes and assist students. Industriousness, as a rational, pragmatic value, was categorized as Type 2A. It was also classified as a Type 2B value because it was interpreted as being the source of a group norm of expectancy.

*Integrity* and *openmindedness* were interpreted as Type 2A and Type 2B values in the rural school. They

were rationally based because they were perceived as necessary components of a positive school atmosphere. Furthermore, they were the source of group norms of expectancy, or were consensual in nature.

*Orderliness:* School members believed that their rules and expectations were not unlike those in other B.C. secondary schools. They felt, however, that the rules and expectations were observed and enforced, and they perceived their school as having better order and fewer problems than many others as a result. The rational nature of the importance of orderliness led to its designation as a Type 2A value in the rural school. Moreover, orderliness was the source of a group norm of expectancy, and therefore, this value was further categorized Type 2B.

It was thought that students required *perseverance*, *self-confidence*, and *self-esteem* to successfully make their way in the world. By teaching students specific learning and life skills, and by assisting them to realize success, it was thought students' self-confidence and self-esteem would be enhanced. Since these values were rational and pragmatic, they were considered to be Type 2A values. However, at the same time, the importance of perseverance, self-confidence, and self-esteem and the linkages among them appeared to be commonly understood, or a generally unspoken consensus of

the group. Consequently, these values were also given the Type 2B designation.

*Pride:* Members of the organization were proud of the school's achievement on provincial testing programs, the high proportion of students which graduated from the school, and the successes graduates enjoyed at post-secondary institutions and in their careers. Pride was viewed, in this instance, as a Type 2A, a Type 2B, and a Type 3 value. The value had become the source of a norm of expectancy (or was consensual), it had an hedonic aspect, and furthermore, it was rationally fostered to continue the record of academic achievement.

*Professionalism:* Teachers were expected to be knowledgeable in their subject areas and in modes of teaching and student learning. Both the teaching staff and the administrative team were acknowledged as being highly professional, hardworking, committed, and good role models for students. Students were expected to perceive schooling as their job, and they were to take their work seriously. In general, students were seen as relatively studious and committed to their schoolwork, and they recognized the opportunities that would accrue to them from hard work; they were perceived and treated as young professionals. Professionalism, therefore, was interpreted as an organizational value, and since it was considered important on rational grounds, it was

considered a Type 2A value. In addition, professionalism was consensual in nature and was therefore placed in the Type 2B category as well.

Based on the variety of formal and informal rewards associated with the school, recognition was interpreted as an organizational value. Since the purpose of the reward system was to motivate, and the decision to implement such a system was taken rationally, recognition was considered a Type 2A value. At the same time, the existence of and need for a reward system was virtually taken for granted (or was consensual), and recognition was the source of personal satisfaction for many of the organization's members. Thus, this value was also categorized as Type 2B and Type 3.

*Respect, consideration, and courtesy* were interpreted as both Type 2A and Type 2B values of the rural school. Important rules and expectations called for members to be considerate, courteous, and respectful of the rights of others. For example, students were not to disrupt others' learning, they were to respect others' property, and responsible, mature behaviour was demanded. Students generally lived up to these rules and expectations. *Respect, consideration, and courtesy*, in this case, were school values grounded in the rational, pragmatic need for a positive school climate, conducive to learning. These values were also the source of norms

of expectancy in the organization; they were part of the social fabric of the school.

Finally, *responsibility* was construed as a cultural value of the organization. Students were expected to attend school, be punctual, and complete their tasks. Older students were given the responsibility of looking after and acting as role models for the younger children. The development of responsibility in the students was rationally and pragmatically considered important for success at school and in later life; therefore, it was termed a Type 2A value. On the other hand, to the extent that group members were expected to attend to each other's well-being, responsibility was interpreted as the source of a group norm of expectancy (a Type 2B value) as well.

Various organizational values have been identified and classified. In the following section of the discussion of values, school-based decisions are analyzed and categorized by value type.

During the year prior to the study, the decision was made to construct a new secondary school building. This decision was influenced by serious hazards identified in building inspections. Either costly modifications were to be made to the existing, aged buildings, or a new structure was required. The existence of hazards, in combination with a need for more space, gave rise to the

decision to proceed with construction. This example clearly demonstrated rational, pragmatic, utilitarian decision making, or Type 2A values.

Prior to the decision to construct the new secondary school, another decision was made concerning whether or not a school should be maintained in the community at all. Certainly, there were pragmatic and utilitarian considerations related to issues such as student transportation, but the public rallied primarily around the principle that the students should receive their education in their home community. The researcher interpreted this view of what ought to be as indicative of Type 1 values.

The decisions to forbid the throwing of snowballs and smoking within a block of school were also based on pragmatic Type 2A grounds. The safety of the children and the consequences of accidents were the primary considerations in the snowball issue. Regarding the smoking rule, the students had, at one time, been allowed to smoke on the school property. However, this privilege had been abused by some and the area had become an untidy eyesore. In the interest of maintaining a positive school image in the community, and to ensure the older students were perceived as positive role models by the younger children, the rational decision was taken to remove smoking from view of the school grounds.

During the year prior to the study, the administrators had proposed that every class be extended by one minute. This change would have provided extra time so that once a month, on a Friday afternoon, the students could be dismissed early, and the time could be used by teachers for professional development activities. Eventually, the idea was rejected because the staff believed poor school-community relations would result. There was a concern that, even though the children would receive the identical amount of class time, the community would perceive the teachers as taking additional time away from the classroom. Both the original proposal and the ultimate decision were rationally and pragmatically reached, therefore, they indicated Type 2A values.

In consideration of the values identified, as well as the bases for decision making, it was concluded that the rural school was characterized by Type 1, Type 2A, Type 2B, and Type 3 values. Furthermore, since most of the cultural values of the organization were interpreted as being rational, pragmatic, and consensual in nature, it was concluded that Type 2A and Type 2B values predominated.

#### Cultural Strength

Cultural strength was described by three elements:  
(1) the relative proportion of members who appeared to hold similar perceptions of the organization's culture;

(2) the existence of informal rules to guide group members' behaviour, and the degree of understanding among members regarding behavioural norms; and (3) the value orientation with reference to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm.

The analysis of interview transcripts suggested there was a relatively high level of agreement in the cultural perceptions of organizational members. Both written and informal rules and expectations for behaviour were well understood by all of the organization's members. Furthermore, the analysis of values also suggested the school was characterized by a relatively high-order or strong value system. In consideration of these three elements, it was inferred that the school was characterized by a relatively strong organizational culture.

#### Strength of Cultural Perception and Time

Following analysis of interview subjects' transcripts, the researcher evaluated the relative strength of respondents' cultural perceptions, or their level of awareness of the cultural norms, attitudes, and values associated with the school. The strength of respondents' cultural perceptions (rated on a five-point scale) and the number of years the individuals had been associated with the school are presented in Table 4. The data suggested a positive relationship between time

and strength of cultural perception. Interview subjects who had been associated longer with the school possessed stronger perceptions of the organizational culture than did newer members. Generally, after two years at the school, members had developed relatively strong impressions related to the organization's culture.

Table 4

The Degree to Which the Perception of Culture Varied With the Length of Time the Individual Had Been Associated With the Rural School

		Strength of Cultural Perception				
		Weak		Strong		
		1	2	3	4	5
	5+			SP	PPT	TTTA
	4			SP		RSC
Years at School	3		S		T	A
	2		S			
	1-	S				

Note. S = Student  
 T = Teacher  
 P = Parent  
 A = Administrator  
 SC = Secretary/Custodian

Summary

The rural school was characterized by a relatively strong organizational culture, from the point of view of

the level of conformity in members' cultural perceptions, and the value orientation of the organization.

The school was a closely knit society. It was considered a friendly, happy place where rules were few and where confidence and trust existed among members. Familiarity among students, parents, teachers, and administrators was also characteristic of the school. Commonly used metaphors: family, extended family, community, tribe, and happy group supported the researcher's impression of organizational cohesiveness and a positive atmosphere. The school offered a relatively relaxed, congenial learning environment, but was sufficiently structured to provide students a sound, basic education.

Finally, it was also noted that many of the features of clans (Ouchi & Price, 1978) were associated with the rural school:

- There was a relatively high level of congruence concerning the organizational norms, and the members shared many common objectives and values.
- Although cultural norms, attitudes, and values were conveyed to members by means of rules, they were also transmitted, to a significant extent, through unwritten expectations.
- Typically, there was a low membership turnover.

- Members displayed high levels of commitment to the organization.
- There was a relatively high degree of cultural homogeneity.

## CHAPTER 6

## Research Results

The Urban School

The large urban comprehensive secondary school, offering Grades 8-12, was located in the Lower Mainland of B.C.. Constructed in 1956, it was situated in a relatively affluent middle- to upper-middle-class residential area. The school occupied a 16.2 acre site and comprised a three-story main building which contained 62 classrooms, an auditorium, and two gymnasiums. In addition, there were two portable classrooms, three playing fields, a track, and six tennis courts. Although not part of the main school complex, two off-site programs offered educational opportunities to approximately 135 special-needs students.

Demand for enrolment in the school was high due to its strong academic reputation and its designation as the centre for some high-profile School District programs. For instance, French Immersion, International Baccalaureate, and English Second Language Programs comprised approximately one-quarter of the school's student population. The school offered academic, vocational, fine arts, and business courses; however, the focus was on academics. The majority of the teaching staff taught only academic subjects, and more than 80 % of Grade 12 students chose to continue with academic post-secondary studies.

In September, 1989, there were 89.56 full-time equivalent staff to accommodate 1662 students. The school's administrative team consisted of a principal (who had been with the school for six years) and two vice-principals (who had been associated with the school for one and three years respectively).

A turnover of up to 21 staff members had occurred in any given year. At the end of the 1988/89 school year, 11 staff left the school due to retirement, new assignments, or leaves of absence.

Approximately 45 % of the school population were out-of-area students. To ensure that students within the school's catchment area could attend the school, steps were taken in the 1989/90 school year to limit outside enrolment. Registration in some programs was "capped", out-of-District students were asked to attend schools in their own municipalities, and student transfers from other schools within the School District were not permitted unless the reason for the transfer was to attend a specific District program which was located in the school (however, younger siblings were allowed to attend the school regardless of their residential location).

The school was characterized by a diverse ethnic population. Approximately 57 % of the population was of Oriental ancestry, while about 43 % were Caucasian. Although Oriental communities have been part of the Lower

Mainland's social fabric for generations, in recent years, immigration has been increasing from Pacific Rim countries such as the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, Japan, India, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan. This fact was evidenced at the urban school where special classes were provided for the 10 % of the population who were new arrivals and students in transition to regular classes. To further illustrate the significance of recent immigration and its impact on the school, among Grade 10 students, 51 % were learning English as a second language, and of those students, 35 % did not speak English at home.

Owing to the high level of congruence among the respondents' perceptions of the organization's culture, a single summary of the organizational culture was provided for the urban school.

#### Norms (Rules)

The number of formal rules were few, in fact, most respondents were unable to enumerate them. Instead, most emphasized the existence of unwritten expectations for conduct, attitudes, and work habits. For example, respondents felt school members were expected to be courteous and considerate, and respect the rights of others. Many believed an important expectation was that everyone in the school was to do their best. Some specific rules were, however, listed in an information booklet termed a student agenda. Smoking was prohibited on school grounds, and

fighting was also not tolerated. Students using, possessing, or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, either on school premises or while participating in school-sponsored activities, were subject to the following mandatory procedure: the principal informed the parents of the infraction, and then the student was either suspended from the school for a specified time period, or was transferred to another school in the District.

As in most schools, there were some administrative rules (for example, people were not to walk down the driveway to the parking lot, but rather use the pathway) which were based primarily on health, safety, and common sense. The general view was that the school rules were not unlike those in most schools. Respondents felt, however, that the rules and expectations were observed and acted upon, and that this was a more orderly place than many other schools.

#### Norms (Rewards)

The urban school was characterized by a wide range of formal and informal student rewards. The school's awards system recognized student accomplishments in areas such as academics, service, and fine arts. The system was based on points attained from academic standing on the honour roll and points obtained from hours of service in fine arts and extracurricular activities. For example, an "A" average on year-end marks was considered first-class honours, and ten

points were awarded to the student toward a merit pin or bar. Second-class honours was for students who attained a "B" average, and five points were also awarded. In addition, students received one point for each hour of community service they provided. For instance, the Fine Arts Department awarded from 50 to 100 points to students who participated in extracurricular productions. To receive a merit pin or bar, a minimum number of points was required depending upon the manner in which points were obtained.

Traditionally, the major awards ceremony was held in October to recognize students' accomplishments from the previous year. This custom was viewed as one way of beginning the school year on a positive note.

A graduation ceremony was held at the end of the school year, at which time scholarships were awarded to the top all-round graduating student (on the basis of academic standing, extracurricular involvement, and contribution to the school); the two top scholars in the Grade 12 class; the best students in subjects such as English, French Immersion, and languages; and those students whose combination of scholarship, community, and school service made them deserving.

In addition to the awards ceremonies at the beginning and the end of the school year, there were assemblies held at the end of each term to recognize team and individual achievements during the particular term or season.

At the end of each reporting period, the school honour roll was posted. To have their names appear on the roll, students were required to have a minimum 3.5 grade point average on their best five courses.

Students also had the opportunity to receive awards on the basis of participation on school teams. Once again, a point system was used to identify recipients who were awarded pins or trophies. At the conclusion of each season, the most valuable player was selected in each sport, and at year end, male and female athletes of the year were chosen from each age group.

Graduating students and those receiving scholarships and other awards were recognized in the school newsletter, distributed to students and parents five or six times annually. Participants in school activities were also recognized for their efforts (whether they won or not) by means of the daily announcements which were broadcast throughout the school.

Grades, themselves, and the personal satisfaction derived from having performed well were considered rewards by students. Having the reputation of a high achiever was important to many of the school's young people. A large proportion of the students were from affluent families, and therefore, they did not require the support of scholarships to attend post-secondary institutions. However, the fact

that the scholarships represented high achievement was considered an important reward worth competing for.

The satisfaction of parents was also perceived as a student reward. It was reported that for some parents (for example, in the Oriental community) student achievement was a source of family pride and honour, and that in some cases competition existed among families. It was also reported that some students received significant monetary or other material rewards from their parents for high achievement.

The staff, too, perceived some rewards of being members of the urban school. In general, the love of their profession and the opportunity to work with young people were considered rewards in themselves. Educating highly motivated students, seeing those students achieve well at school, and then continue on to successful post-secondary education and careers was seen as another reward from the staff's point of view. The school had a reputation, both locally and internationally, for being academically successful. Everyone, including the staff, was proud of this recognition and prestige, and many people expressed the feeling that it was rewarding for them to be part of "a winning team". Although there was a wide range of formal and informal student rewards in the urban school, the researcher concluded that pomp was not an important aspect of the school's organizational culture.

Norms (Events and Traditions)

The school's multicultural character was celebrated throughout the school year. Special days, commonly recognized in Canada, and major celebrations of the largest cultural groups represented in the school, were observed. For example, the Student Council held dances to celebrate Saint Valentine's Day and Christmas, everyone wore green on Saint Patrick's Day, and a school assembly was held annually to observe Remembrance Day. In addition, since there was a large Chinese population, Chinese New Year was celebrated. At Chinese New Year, the Chinese students traditionally presented their teachers with small gift packets (which included greeting cards and a penny), and a ceremonial dragon performed at the entrance of the school. The whole school (but particularly the library) was decorated in celebration of the various cultural events. Traditional activities such as the nickel drive, the milk run, and rose-a-grams were also organized by the Student Council.

Other student-oriented events and traditions included:

- an invitational basketball tournament and a spring track-and-field meet;
- awards assemblies held in the early fall, at the end of each term or season, and at the end of the school year;
- and

- the graduation ceremonies, dinner and dance, and graduation breakfast (staff prepared breakfast for the graduating students).

From the staff point of view, social functions were traditionally arranged during the school year. For instance, there were usually social activities of various kinds at the beginning of the year, there was a Christmas get-together at a staff member's home, at least once during the school year a staff luncheon was organized, and at the end of the year there were a variety of functions including a staff golf tournament. Apart from the whole-group activities, separate men's and ladies' staff luncheons and weekend retreats were also traditional events associated with the school.

#### Norms (Heroes and Legends)

There were few people associated with the school, either past or present, who were perceived as heroes or legends. Furthermore, there was no reference made to the history of the school. There were, however, administrators and teachers who were admired or respected for particular reasons. For example, the current principal was perceived as someone who had a high energy level and assumed extra responsibilities, was aware of everything that was happening in the school, paid attention to detail, allowed people to take responsibility and have opportunities for personal and professional growth, kept the school moving in a direction

consistent with its goals, and was a positive role model. Former administrators were remembered for their gentle firmness, caring nature, dynamic personalities, and ability to be both liked and respected by the staff and students.

Memorable teachers were appreciated for their enthusiasm, positive attitudes, professional expertise, and concern for the well-being of the students. In general, they were perceived as friendly, caring, considerate, and hardworking people who were able to establish a rapport with the students.

#### Norms (Processes)

Only students from within the catchment area and those students attending specific School District programs such as the French Immersion and International Baccalaureate Programs were permitted to enrol at the urban school. Although these were the only formal enrolment guidelines, it was suggested that informal self-screening processes were in operation. For example, it was reported that some parents, concerned about their children's ability to cope with the pressures of the urban school, looked at alternative schools, even if they lived in the school's catchment area. It was also revealed that some Oriental parents considered sending their children to other schools where the proportion of Asians was lower. The concern was that their children might tend to associate with students of their own backgrounds, and hence, not develop their English language

skills. No one knew the extent to which self-selection or self-screening occurred, but most parents felt that it existed.

A school fee of \$35.00 was charged for each student. The fee covered costs associated with the school yearbook, some activities sponsored by the Student Council, awards and scholarships, mailing of interim reports, and some extracurricular activities. In addition, Grade 12 students were required to pay a graduation fee of \$28.00 which contributed to graduation expenses. For some elective courses such as art, business education, home economics, and industrial education nominal fees were levied to assist with material and field trip costs. Textbooks were loaned at no cost to students, but fees were charged for lost or damaged books.

Near the end of September each year, the Parent Walkabout was held. The purpose of this function was to acquaint the parents and teachers and to raise parent awareness of the courses their children would be taught. Following their children's class schedule, parents moved from class to class meeting teachers and receiving brief presentations on their courses.

Every student was issued a student agenda, a booklet which provided information such as the school philosophy and objectives, school rules and expectations, procedures, student services, awards, and school activities.

Except for the cafeteria which was supervised at lunch hour, conduct in the hallways was the responsibility of the students themselves. Students were subject to suspension, transfer, or expulsion for inappropriate behaviour related to drugs and alcohol, vandalism, chronic unexplained absenteeism, fighting, and blatant disrespect or insubordination.

When students returned to school following absences, they were required to present notes of explanation, signed by a parent or guardian, to all teachers whose classes had been missed. Parent notes were also required if students wished early dismissal from school. Authorization forms also had to be completed and signed by parents before their children could participate in school-sponsored field trips.

Students played a role in communicating information to the student body. For example, the Student Council president addressed grade assemblies alongside staff and administrators, and students made all public address announcements in the school.

Formal guidance classes were attended by all students in Grades 8 to 10. Guidance counsellors communicated behaviour expectations to students, assisted them with course planning, and dealt with students on social and personal matters. The administrators also visited guidance classes to address the students. Although students were assigned to specific counsellors and guidance classes, they

were free to seek advice or assistance from any of the counselling staff outside of formal class time.

The final period of each Wednesday (termed "X" block) was free time in which students were able to seek remedial help from teachers, or make up missed school work. Those students not actively engaged in some school-related activity during this block were encouraged to leave the school premises.

A fifteen or twenty-minute (depending on the day) silent reading period during the second period class was part of the daily school routine. Students and teachers were expected to bring a novel or some type of light, recreational reading to the class and participate in the program. Students were neither allowed to do homework during this period nor read textbooks. The main purpose of the silent reading period was to provide a time of relaxation. The school had perceived it had a unique problem. The students were generally viewed as high achievers who placed tremendous pressure on themselves to perform well. As a result, the school decided that some time would be put aside each day to help the students unwind. A further attempt to encourage the students to do something other than study was the establishment of a recess period at the end of period one. The intent was to provide the students an opportunity to have something to eat and relax, but many still used the break as study time.

Homework was not to be assigned over the Christmas holiday period to allow students to relax. Furthermore, tests were not to be scheduled on the day following school dances to encourage students to participate in such social events and, once again, to take time out from studying.

A Lighten-Up Committee was established with the realization that sometimes the staff took themselves and their work too seriously. To develop esprit among staff, each department was asked to organize some social activity such as a luncheon or some recess or after-school event.

To encourage non-English-speaking students to develop their English language skills, and to promote the French Immersion Program an "English please, francais s'il vous plait" policy had been introduced in the school.

Each administrator had specific roles and responsibilities. For example, in dealing with students, one vice-principal was responsible for the Grade 9s, 11s, and one-half of the Grade 12s, while the other vice-principal was involved primarily with the Grade 8s, 10s and the remaining half of the Grade 12s. One vice-principal was responsible for administrative functions including the enrolment of all incoming students, management of the computerized student records system, correspondence with the Ministry of Education, liaison with the French Immersion Program and the off-site programs offered to special-needs students, and providing assistance (such as dealing with

correspondence and organizing workshops and field trips) to the International Baccalaureate Program. The second vice-principal was responsible for timetabling, coordination of graduation activities, and providing assistance to some programs with special needs such as Technical Education. The principal's primary responsibilities were to: meet with department heads and staff and set the direction and tone for the school, establish school policy, engage in community relations, communicate with the School District's central office personnel, and conduct staff selection. Regardless of the distribution of roles, the principal was ultimately responsible for all aspects of the school's operation. The administrative team held a formal weekly planning meeting, and throughout the week, the administrators were in continual contact with each other on an informal basis.

Regarding hiring practices, the School District conducted the initial screening, and then usually three candidates for each available position were interviewed by the principal (and sometimes a vice-principal) and the appropriate department head. In general, the school sought staff who were competent in their subject area, who had positive attitudes about working in a cooperative, collegial team situation, and who demonstrated a good work ethic.

Most staff members sponsored student clubs (such as the Annual, Jazz Dance, Debating, Library, Service, and Driver's Training Clubs), or were involved with the wide range of

other school activities (such as drama productions, graduation coordination, graphics, academic contests, and athletic activities).

Parent-teacher interviews were conducted after each reporting period and the distribution of student report cards. At the mid point of each term, interim report cards were distributed to students and parents to acknowledge student successes and to identify areas where there was a need for improvement.

Daily student bulletins were distributed to both staff and students. The bulletins provided information about such things as fund-raising activities, sporting events, club announcements, and contests. Bulletins were also distributed to staff on a daily basis, and contained information such as the names of teachers who were on call during their spare blocks, supervision duties, staff committee meetings, sports events, and other general announcements.

A regular school newsletter was distributed five or six times a year to staff, students, and parents. Typically, the newsletter contained information on: changes occurring in the school, up-coming events, procedures (such as for school opening, fees, textbooks, and cafeteria service), committee activities, student services, testing programs, school rules and expectations, fund-raising events, extracurricular activities or productions, graduation,

scholarship and other award recipients, staff and student news, courses, parent-teacher interviews, and other items of interest.

Every fall, the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) was written by Grade 11 students on a volunteer basis. The test was a measure of the extent to which students had developed the verbal and mathematical skills required for successful university studies. Although the test was not required for entrance to Canadian universities, it was considered good practice for the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) which Grade 12 students were given the option of writing and which was a requirement for university entrance in the United States. Numerous Grade 11 students availed themselves of the opportunity to write the PSAT.

Like all B.C. secondary schools, the urban school had five noninstructional days during the school year. Usually, one day was kept for District-wide professional development initiatives; the four remaining days were used for school-based activities. Some school-based professional development days were devoted to issues with a school-wide focus, while others were given over to department issues. Although there was no stated policy regarding the number of professional workshops or conferences a staff member could attend annually, there was a sense that staff were encouraged to become involved in such activities, and that

permission would be granted provided classroom continuity would not be compromised.

Most school-based decision making was the product of a collegial committee system. An elected Staff Advisory Council (which had representation from all departments and the administration) served as the school's "legislature". There were several elected standing committees such as Computer, Scholarship, Finance, Timetable, and Professional Development Committees, as well as ad hoc committees which studied areas of special interest or concern (such as pressures on students). The number and type of committees varied as school needs changed. Approximately 70 % of staff participated on a committee of some type. Committees reported their findings and recommendations to the Staff Advisory Council for its consideration. The Staff Advisory Council then generated final recommendations which were submitted to the whole staff for discussion and were voted upon. In keeping with the School Act, the administration made specific decisions within its jurisdiction such as staffing and budgets. Generally, however, the administrators served as advisors and facilitators of the collegial decision-making process. The administrative team was responsible for implementing policies collectively developed by the staff. Very seldom did the administration overrule staff decisions. It was the administrators' view that if issues were permitted to proceed through the

committee structure, then the administration should be prepared to accept the decisions which resulted. During his six years with the school, the principal had only vetoed one staff decision.

The Staff Advisory Council met on the first Monday, a department head meeting was held on the first Wednesday, and a general staff meeting was held on the second Tuesday of each month. This schedule allowed the Staff Council and department heads to meet and prepare reports or issues for presentation at staff meetings.

The Student Council planned and organized student events and activities (such as school dances and theme days) and was a mechanism whereby student opinions on issues could be made known to the staff and administration. Staff representatives attended Student Council meetings and regularly reported back to the whole staff.

Profits from fund-raising events sponsored by the Student Council were used to support the activities of student clubs and other events. The Student Council executive was elected each spring for the following school year. Among the executive, the president was traditionally a Grade 12 student, while other positions such as first and second vice-president, secretary, and treasurer were assumed by Grade 11 or Grade 12 students. In September, two representatives, one male and one female, were elected from each grade.

Apart from their input to decision making through the Student Council, students were also polled on occasion. For instance, after the silent reading period had been implemented for some time, students voted on whether they wanted the program to continue.

The School Consultative Committee (SCC) was a parents' association which was one means parents had to keep current with events in the school, and was a vehicle for providing input on school-related issues. Parents were invited, through bulletins mailed to their homes, to attend general meetings which were held approximately every other month.

#### Norms (Expectations)

The school operated more by unwritten expectations than by formal rules and regulations. For example, the most widely held expectation was that everyone would be treated with courtesy and respect; this expectation extended to personal and school property.

Not only were there high expectations for student behaviour, attitudes, and work ethic, but much was expected of everyone in the school. Parents expected a great deal from their children and the teachers, the students held high expectations of their teachers, as did the administration, and teachers expected the full support of their administrative team.

Student expectations of themselves were high, and their families' expectations of them were high also. Moreover,

there was a perception among members that because the school had a strong academic reputation, the community, in general, held high expectations of the school. Parents certainly expected the school to provide their children with an environment conducive to achievement. The administrators and parents expected that all staff would work towards maximizing each student's potential. Furthermore, parents held expectations that the teaching staff and administrators would have expertise in their fields, be able to work cooperatively and collegially, have a good work ethic, motivate students, discipline fairly, exhibit good classroom management skills, and serve as positive role models.

The administration and teaching staff communicated certain expectations to students at the beginning of the school year, and they were reminded of them as the year progressed. Some of these expectations were as follows:

- Students were expected to take a certain amount of responsibility for their conduct and their own learning.
- Students were expected to maintain a standard of dress and grooming which conformed to accepted community standards (the rationale for this was that extreme styles could be distracting and could detract from teaching and learning).
- Students were to keep hallways clean and tidy at lunchtime.

- Students were to be in class and not wandering in hallways between or during class time.
- Students were to return home during "X" block unless they had an appointment with a staff member or were engaged in some extracurricular activity.
- There was an expectation that students would become involved in a variety of school activities, academic and otherwise.
- Regular attendance and punctuality were expected.
- Students were to take learning seriously.
- Homework was to be completed.
- There was an expectation that students would perform at the level at which they were capable, and that they would strive for their personal best, not just academically, but in all pursuits.

### Attitudes

Although it was recognized that some students' behaviour, attitudes, and work ethic did not conform to the norm, respondents agreed that, for the most part, the high expectations held of students were realized. They were perceived as academically involved, hardworking, well-disciplined, highly motivated to learn, and dedicated to their work. This commitment to their studies was demonstrated by statistics from the *School Profile* which reported that the amount of time students spent on homework

was significantly greater than both the School District and provincial averages.

The young people were considered to be reasonably courteous, and they were perceived to be extremely busy; many were involved in numerous school activities. Although some students skipped classes, it was not generally regarded as a problem in the school. Students saw the school as a place of learning, they were encouraged to take pride in their work, and there appeared to be an understanding among students that it was acceptable and desirable to work hard, to strive for one's personal best, and to excel. Grades were considered important to the students. In fact, many interviewees expressed the opinion that students placed too much emphasis on their marks and how their academic performance compared with that of their peers. Some parents, students, and teachers expressed the view that the reward structure (in which the students considered grades to be of primary importance) was a bit of a "hollow show".

Most students were of the opinion that the staff and administrators had confidence and trust in them, and they also reported that their teachers held great expectations of them and encouraged them to work diligently and to achieve high levels of performance. Although there were some students whose attitudes implied that they were under no particular stress, there was a widespread perception among the organization's members that students were under

pressure, both from home and at school, to achieve. The perceived need for measures such as the silent reading period and recess to allow students to unwind was further evidence of the pressures and stresses they experienced, and of the school's wish to dampen the all-consuming concern with grades. A few students even stated that they would rather be in a different school because they felt the amount of work expected was too great, as were the pressures to achieve. Regardless of any stress they may have experienced, there was a common perception that the students were happy. Almost without exception students reported that school was fun because they had opportunities to socialize with friends, meet challenges, and learn new ideas.

The general impression held by most of those associated with the school was that the teachers and administrators reflected the high professional standards exhibited by most school staffs in the province. The teachers were perceived as being competent in their fields, committed to high standards, organized and well-prepared, interested in the well-being of their students, and committed to assisting them to achieve to the best of their ability.

The staff members were seen to devote a tremendous amount of effort to their work, not just in terms of their subject classes, but in their committee work and their extracurricular involvement with students. There was no stated policy that teachers were to sponsor extracurricular

activities; however, teachers felt they were expected to volunteer their services so that students could be offered such programs. Many staff members recognized benefits from such involvement with students. They appreciated the health advantages for the young people, and furthermore, it was suggested that the students would gain a greater appreciation of their teachers if they saw them in a context outside of the classroom. Extracurricular involvement with students was therefore seen as a positive force for school and classroom atmosphere.

A good relationship was perceived to exist between the teaching staff and the student body. Students indicated that their teachers tried to make their subjects interesting and their courses fun. As reported by students, some of the methods teachers used to accomplish this were by using humour and a variety of instructional strategies. There was an attitude among the staff that they attempted to draw the greatest amount of effort as possible from students without overstressing them. No one person in the school was identified as the educational leader.

Although no one among the professional staff specifically expressed a need or a desire for updating in pedagogy, the general view among organizational members was that the staff was extremely interested in professional development. The administration perceived the teaching staff as being highly professional, and both the teachers

and the support staff said they had been well-supported by the administrators and felt that the administration had confidence and trust in them.

School members expressed the opinion that within disciplines the professional staff assisted one another and worked cooperatively. Everyone intimated that the staff got along well together, but even though social events were organized throughout the year, many were of the opinion the staff did not socialize enough and lamented what was perceived to be a lack of a sense of staff identity or community. The large staff size was generally viewed as a negative influence in this regard.

The staff, like their students, felt they were under pressure to perform, not just in the sense of being well-prepared to interact with highly motivated, bright students, but to the extent that they were heavily involved with the myriad of school-related activities. Nevertheless, the staff reported that they enjoyed the urban school as a place to work, and they felt it was challenging, rewarding, and fun to teach at the school.

The administrative team was perceived as open, friendly, and very supportive. Everyone thought they related well with students, parents, and staff. The principal was seen as being sensitive to the problems encountered by school members, and committed to finding ways to solve problems. Furthermore, the prevailing view was

that he contributed to and maintained a positive working environment in the school. Although the principal was well-liked, well-respected, approachable, and was perceived as very capable administratively, some staff expressed the opinion that he did not have or take the time to be in the halls and interact with the students.

There was a general impression among respondents that the school was well-run and was characterized by a sense of orderliness and a demand for high quality and achievement. A common perception was that attending school to derive a sound education was a high priority for most students. Education was seen as a means of achieving status, earning money, or an important activity for its own sake. But regardless of the rationale, members of the school were perceived as holding the common attitude that education was extremely important.

Organizational members thought there was general respect for the institution, and that although the school was not problem-free, there were fewer problems than in most schools. For instance, the magnitude of any discipline problems was considered to be low compared to other secondary schools.

The urban school was seen as very busy. Staff and students alike were involved in the wide variety of activities including their classes, committees, clubs, and athletics. Generally, though, the school was perceived as

standing for academic achievement and a good reputation. Everyone was proud that the school was recognized for its high performance, particularly in academics, athletics, and music.

It was the respondents' opinion that the school's expectations of students were greater than was the case in most other schools. There was a perception, too, that the school was a serious, professional place where everyone worked very hard. A common attitude among the school's members was that everyone associated with the school was treated humanely and with respect, and a good working relationship was seen to exist among staff and students. Another common point of view was that one can concurrently learn and have a good time.

In addition to the school's high expectations and standards, many respondents expressed the opinion that family and cultural background were related to positive student attitudes toward education and high levels of achievement. The school, since its construction, had maintained a reputation for excellent scholastic achievement. Many respondents shared the opinion that the background of the people in the catchment area had much to do with the success of the school. It was suggested that during the early years of the school (the 1950s and 60s) there was a large Jewish population in the area, and that this group placed a high value on education. Over the

years, as the Jewish people gradually moved to other parts of the city, they were replaced by the Oriental community which also placed a high premium on education. The fact that the area had always been populated with professional, middle- to upper-middle-class people was seen as an important factor underlying the successes of the school.

Many interviewees considered the Oriental community as a catalyst for high achievement. There was a widespread opinion that the Oriental community's concentration on academic achievement influenced other students to strive or compete for higher levels of performance. Respondents, particularly in the Oriental community, stated that the best interest of their children came first in their lives. Many parents had made sacrifices to secure a good education for their children. For example, some parents had left lucrative employment in their native lands and had come to Canada with no immediate employment prospects, primarily to ensure their children a brighter future. Many Oriental parents reported that while abroad, they had heard (through word-of-mouth from other members of their cultural group) of the school's reputation for academic achievement, and had purchased homes within the catchment area so their children would be able to attend this particular school.

The school's expectations and standards and family background were not perceived as the only factors associated with high achievement levels in the school. There were many

who believed that success breeds success, and that positive feelings from achievement in some areas led to successes in other areas as well.

Academics had always been a high priority in the school. The community expected high achievement; it was a tradition. The general view was that the school offered students a variety of courses and opportunities for well-rounded intellectual, social, and physical growth. But in spite of such opportunities, many shared the opinion that the students (particularly in the Oriental population) overconcentrated on the mathematics and science course offerings. It was suggested that many of the newer immigrants had originated in countries where verbal participation in school was less of a priority than is commonly the case in Canadian schools. Furthermore, it was thought that because English language skills were emphasized less in mathematics and science classes, these students tended to concentrate on such subjects and excelled in them.

The emphasis on academics was considered problematic by some staff. The school had a large Choir Program and a symphony orchestra, but to get all students to attend rehearsals and participate in trips was difficult. Because of the perceived need on the part of students to attend their classes and to study for academic tests, they often failed to take advantage of opportunities outside their academic studies.

Students competed for scholarships and participated in national and international academic contests. Although inter-student competition within the school was deemphasized and not particularly encouraged, it remained a fact of school life. There was a general understanding that competition existed at four levels: personal (self-competition), inter-student, inter-school, and international.

Although there were students whose attitudes implied they were under little pressure to achieve, the widespread view was that most students were under considerable pressure both at school and at home. This attitude was particularly true for the Oriental population within which everyone thought there was a high value placed on doing one's best.

The Student Council organized school-wide activities, and pride in the school's accomplishments was, to some extent, a unifying force, but even so, some respondents perceived a lack of school spirit. Sports were important in the school as a symbol that it was not solely an academic institution; however, it was explained that only a few students and parents attended sporting events. The fact that many students lived in other municipalities and returned home immediately after school was suggested as one reason for what was viewed by some as a lack of school spirit. Furthermore, there was a general impression that the school had, at one time, been a somewhat happier place,

and that, to some extent, that atmosphere had diminished due to the pressures and demands for achievement that everyone felt. Many respondents expressed the sentiment that the school was attempting to find a balance between the emphasis on achievement and school tone, but that that balance used to be better.

Many respondents held the opinion that attending a culturally diversified school was beneficial for the students and helped them to learn tolerance. Students from the various cultural groups appeared to interact, particularly in sports. However, it was reported that many of the French Immersion students tended to associate with others of their own group, and similarly, many new arrivals to the country who were non-English-speaking appeared to gravitate to their support network of students of the same background. In spite of the "English please, francais s'il vous plait" policy, many Oriental students spoke languages such as Chinese among themselves, and this was strikingly evident in the hallways. Furthermore, it was revealed that many Caucasian students felt as though they were attending school in a foreign country because of the widespread use of languages other than French or English. It was also reported that, to some degree, Caucasian students felt alienated and disenfranchised in elections for the Student Council. There was an attitude that block voting sometimes occurred, and that if one was from a particular cultural

group, one could count on that group's vote. There was a perception, therefore, that candidates were sometimes elected because of their cultural background, rather than their ability.

A common attitude held by members was that the school was an open place where everyone could discuss and debate to resolve issues. Students, parents, and staff perceived that they had input into decision making in the school, and they considered the process very democratic. Generally, school members reported that issues never reached a point of great confrontation. It was thought that the Student Council and the committee structure permitted sufficient opportunities for discussion and debate, and therefore, issues were not allowed to ferment until they became insurmountable problems.

Many Oriental parents (particularly relatively recent arrivals to Canada) had little contact with the school, and therefore, knew relatively little about the workings of the institution. It was explained that the lack of parent involvement often occurred out of respect. Such parents viewed the operation of the school as the domain of the professionals, the experts, and trusted them to act in the best interest of their children. Few parents in the Oriental community attended parent meetings and parent-teacher interviews. One reason suggested for this phenomenon was that parents who did not speak English well

may have felt uncomfortable at public meetings. It was also revealed that there was an understanding (particularly among parents from Hong Kong) that one attended parent-teacher conferences during the first year of the child's attendance at the school, and thereafter, it was unnecessary unless there was a particular problem to address, or one wished to seek advice from the staff. The reason given for this attitude was that the process was considered to be just a repeat of the previous year; therefore, parent-teacher interviews were considered to be of limited value.

Most respondents were of the opinion that improvements were needed in the school. The building was perceived as being overcrowded, many members thought it required some upgrading (particularly in areas such as the science laboratories and the library), and most people took the position that the aesthetics of the school needed improvement. Most saw the school as spartan and sombre; not particularly attractive.

The viewpoint expressed by many respondents was that the school offered a range of academic and nonacademic courses and generally served the students well. The prevailing attitude, however, was that the school was academically oriented and that there was a need to become less academic and more diversified in program offerings. Some parents and staff expressed the opinion that not enough was being done to meet the needs of the less-able student.

It was suggested that individual teachers did what they could to work with such children, but that, apart from special programs in English and mathematics related to English as a second language, there were few remedial opportunities for students. A common attitude was that the school was good for the academically oriented student but that it might not be suitable for all students. When parents were asked whether the school had been a positive experience for their children, and when staff were asked if they would like to have their own children attend the school, most expressed mixed feelings. Although they expressed the opinion that the school was demanding and offered a good academic education, some felt the school was somewhat intimidating for students because of the pressures and the emphasis on high achievement.

Generally, school members speculated that the school's vision was to continue to offer a sound education and to maintain high levels of achievement. Most respondents, however, reported that they were unaware of a specific, widely recognized and accepted vision for the school's future.

Although some problems were identified, the opinion of virtually everyone was that this was a good school in which to work or be educated.

Values

The alphabetically arranged list of organizational values, presented in Table 5, were interpreted from the descriptions of the norms and attitudes associated with the urban school, as well as the value statements of respondents.

Table 5

The Urban School's Values

Value Name	Paradigm Type				Value Name	Paradigm Type			
	1	2A	2B	3		1	2A	2B	3
Accessibility		X	X		Elitism		X	X	X
Achievement		X	X	X	Flexibility		X	X	
Altruism	X	X	X		Friendliness		X	X	X
Collegiality		X	X		Happiness		X	X	X
Commitment		X	X		Integrity		X	X	
Communication		X	X		Openmindedness		X	X	
Competition		X	X	X	Orderliness		X	X	
Confidence			X		Pride		X	X	X
Conformity		X	X		Professionalism		X	X	
Consideration		X	X		Recognition		X	X	X
Courtesy		X	X		Reputation		X	X	X
Dedication		X	X		Respect		X	X	
Diligence		X	X		Responsibility		X	X	
Discipline		X	X		Tradition		X	X	
Education		X	X		Trust			X	

*Accessibility and Communication:* Organizational members perceived the administrative team and teaching staff to be approachable and accessible, and accessibility was linked with the ability to communicate effectively. These

attributes were considered extremely important to everyone associated with the institution. Because accessibility and communication were viewed as important on rational, pragmatic grounds, they were classified as Type 2A values. Concurrently, these values were termed Type 2B because they were interpreted as the source of group norms of expectancy within the school.

*Achievement* was considered to be a school value because students were encouraged, both at home and at school, to perform to the best of their ability. To the extent that high achievement had become a school tradition, and as such was recognized and accepted as the source of a group norm of expectancy, it was interpreted as a Type 2B value. At the same time, achievement was considered the key to a bright future. Such a rational, pragmatic consideration suggested achievement could also be termed a Type 2A value. To the extent that achievement was the source of satisfaction for organizational members, it was also classified as a Type 3 value.

*Altruism:* Community service was considered an important contribution that students could make to society, and to encourage participation, students were awarded points on the awards system for each hour of community service. Like the other two schools, altruism was considered an important principle, it was understood as serving important purposes, and it was also the source of a group norm of

expectancy. As a result, altruism was categorized as a Type 1, a Type 2A, and a Type 2B cultural value of the urban school.

*Collegiality and Responsibility:* Not only were staff delegated the responsibility to formulate many school-based decisions, but also students were expected to take some responsibility for their conduct, work ethic, and education in general. To some degree, responsibility was the source of a shared norm of expectancy (a Type 2B value), but it was also the researcher's interpretation that responsibility was a Type 2A value on rational, pragmatic, and utilitarian grounds. By not pampering and overassisting students, it was thought they were being better prepared for university studies and the challenges of later life. By involving staff in decision making, it was thought there would be more open discussion and debate and less friction and confrontation; thereby, fostering a more positive school tone. On the basis of the heavy reliance on a collegial committee process for decision making within the school, collegiality was also interpreted as a Type 2A and a Type 2B value which was closely linked to responsibility in the urban school.

*Commitment, diligence, discipline, and dedication* were also interpreted as values in the urban school. Not only were staff and students expected to be hardworking and involved in a wide range of school-related activities, but

they were also perceived as dedicated to their work. The primary basis for these values was rational pragmatism. By participating in a variety of activities, it was felt students would become well-rounded. Discipline and diligence were understood as fundamental to achievement and success. The rational foundation for these values suggested they be classified as Type 2A. Because these values were also interpreted as being the source of group norms of expectancy, they were placed in the Type 2B category as well.

*Competition* was interpreted as another value of the organization in consideration of the various levels at which it existed. Competition was an integral, recognized component of school life, and therefore, was the source of a norm of expectancy. To the extent that students competed for various rewards including grades, scholarships, and university placement, competition had rational, pragmatic underpinnings as well. The researcher also concluded that there was an hedonic aspect to competition; many members seemed to derive satisfaction from competing. This value, therefore, was interpreted as Type 2A, Type 2B, and Type 3.

There was a widespread view that *confidence* and *trust* were characteristic of the school. The students felt both the staff and administrators trusted them, and similarly, the staff perceived the administration had confidence in their abilities. Confidence and trust were demonstrated in

the delegation of responsibilities among school members, and in general, parents confidently relied on the integrity of the professional staff to act in the best interest of their children. Because confidence and trust were interpreted to be the sources of norms of expectancy in the organization, they were classified as Type 2B values.

Conformity was certainly an organizational value. Students were expected to adhere to written and understood codes of conduct. The value was the source of a norm of expectancy, or a Type 2B value, but it was also termed a Type 2A value since it was rationally and pragmatically considered a positive influence on the working environment and ultimately student achievement.

There was an expectation that all school members be treated with *courtesy, consideration, and respect*, and it was generally felt this expectation was realized. *Courtesy, consideration, and respect* were interpreted as both Type 2A and 2B values because on the one hand they were considered to be the source of group norms of expectancy, while on the other hand there was a rational realization that an institution without regard for these values would be less conducive to a positive working environment and would be more difficult to administer.

Members of the organization expressed a common belief in the importance of *education*. A variety of rationales were provided for the perceived importance of education.

Some saw it as a means of attaining status and prestige or financial security; others considered the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake to be an important concept. Regardless of the rationale given, members of the organization recognized the importance of education. Not only were there rational, pragmatic grounds for this value, but also, it was interpreted by the researcher to be the source of a norm of expectancy, or was consensual among the group; therefore, it was classified as both a Type 2A and a Type 2B value.

Organizational members perceived themselves as belonging to a select, unique group, and this suggested that *elitism* was a school value. Most respondents recognized that the school was characterized by special, high-profile District programs, relatively bright students, and high achievement records. Everyone expressed pride in the school's accomplishments, and although there were some perceived changes needed, members recognized benefits from their association with the school and wished its unique nature and tradition of achievement to continue. It was the researcher's interpretation that this value was rational in nature, it was a shared group consensus or understanding, and it also had an hedonic aspect; hence, *elitism* was categorized as a Type 2A, a Type 2B, and a Type 3 value in this instance.

*Flexibility, Integrity, and Openmindedness:* The organization's members felt it was important that everyone associated with the school be open and honest with one another and that people be openminded and flexible enough to listen to and understand others' viewpoints on issues. The extensive processes to involve members in discussion and decision making, and the perception that few issues ever reached a point of confrontation among members, underscored the importance placed upon these values and the success the school had enjoyed in realizing these ideals. Flexibility, integrity, and openmindedness were interpreted as both Type 2A and Type 2B values because of the rational foundations for their perceived importance, as well as the researcher's interpretation that they were also the source of group norms of expectancy within the urban school.

Responses of members of the organization implied that *friendliness* and *happiness*, coupled with caring and concern for the well-being of students, were school values which the researcher classified as Type 3, Type 2A, and Type 2B. The desire for a happy, friendly atmosphere was interpreted as simply the personal preference of some respondents. On the other hand, such values could also be seen as promoting an atmosphere conducive to learning, which suggests rationality and pragmatism. The researcher also concluded that these values were the source of a group norm of expectancy for a pleasant, amicable atmosphere.

*Orderliness* was interpreted as an organizational value because respondents expressed the view that the rules and expectations were generally observed, that it was a more orderly place than many other schools, and was well-run. Furthermore, these perceptions appeared to be important to members of the school. The impression given was that orderliness was seen as important to the development of a working environment conducive to learning. The rational nature of this value suggested it be classified as Type 2A. The researcher also concluded that the importance of orderliness was consensual among the organization's members; consequently, it was placed in the Type 2B category as well.

*Professionalism*: Teachers were expected to be highly professional. They were seen to have expertise in their respective disciplines, they were interested and involved in professional development activities, and were given the responsibility, as professionals, to be heavily involved in school decision making. Students were expected to treat their school work seriously as though it was their employment, and generally, they lived up to expectations. Professionalism, therefore, was interpreted as an organization value. To the extent that it was the source of system-wide norms of expectancy, it could be considered a Type 2B value. In addition, since there appeared to be rational grounds for professionalism, related to performance and success, it was interpreted as a Type 2A value as well.

*Recognition:* A broad system of formal and informal rewards had developed in the school, and it was the researcher's conclusion that rewards were considered a motivational device. The rational, pragmatic, and utilitarian nature of the reward system suggested that recognition could be categorized as a Type 2A value; its consensual nature indicated it could be classified as a Type 2B value; and the expressed satisfaction derived from recognition suggested it could also be termed a Type 3 value in the urban school.

*Reputation and pride* were interpreted as school values as well. It was important to members that the school's name as a high performance institution be maintained, and everyone was proud of the school's accomplishments and their association with a "winning team". There were rational, pragmatic reasons for wishing to foster reputation and pride, but also, it appeared these values were part of the institution's social programming; they were the source of norms of expectancy in the school. Furthermore, the school's members expressed feelings of satisfaction and pride in belonging to what they perceived to be a successful organization. Consequently, reputation and pride were interpreted as Type 2A, Type 2B, and Type 3 values in the urban school.

*Tradition* was also considered an organizational value. The school had been characterized by high levels of

achievement since its founding, and the community had come to expect that tradition to continue. Doubtless, the tradition of high achievement brought benefits in terms of reputation and prestige which attracted students and new programs; thereby, ensuring a bright future for the school. The rational nature of the desire to continue the tradition of achievement suggested Type 2A values. Furthermore, the researcher concluded that the tradition of achievement was the source of a school norm of expectancy, indicating that tradition could be considered a Type 2B value as well.

Most decision making in the school was based on rational, pragmatic, or utilitarian grounds. For example, the size of the staff room and the uses to which it was put was one issue of concern to the staff. By all accounts, the staff room was too small considering the number of staff. Some teachers wanted the room reserved as a quiet place where one could unwind between classes; others wished to use the space as a work area, in contradiction of the view that a staff room should have a relaxing atmosphere. The Staff Advisory Council, by rationally and pragmatically weighing teacher needs and considering available space, recommended another room in the school be divided to provide a staff work room.

Another rational decision related to student stress. A teacher committee was struck to study and make recommendations on the issue. As a result of the

committee's work, it was determined that students were experiencing significant pressure, and consequently, a pragmatic decision was taken by staff to establish silent reading and recess periods to allow students opportunities for breaks from studying.

The length of time provided for the lunch break was another issue which required a staff decision. Some members wished to have the lunch period extended from forty-five minutes to one hour; others thought three-quarters of an hour was adequate. The issue was raised at the Staff Advisory Council, and considerations on both sides of the issue included: the desire for a longer relaxation period, the difficulty of accomplishing out-of-school tasks in a relatively short noon break, the problems associated with supervising students for a longer period of time, and the need to extend the length of the school day to accommodate a longer lunch break. The decision to retain the forty-five minute lunchtime period, therefore, was taken on pragmatic and rational grounds.

Another example of rational decision making related to the provision of an additional spare period to a teacher. One staff member had been devoting a substantial amount of his own time to help establish a new computer system in the school. The administration proposed giving this person an extra spare block. The staff was not against the proposal in principle, but they disagreed with the notion that the

extra spare period would be part of the total school teaching load; in other words, the average teacher work load would increase. The decision was taken to provide the staff member with an additional spare; both sides of the debate relied on logical, rational bases for their positions.

The decision concerning how best to use financial resources for computers was also reached through rational means. A subcommittee researched the issue and made recommendations to the Staff Advisory Council. Final recommendations from the Staff Council were presented to the full staff for their approval. The pragmatic decision-making process included considerations such as the departments' perceived computer needs, the kinds of support mechanisms required for the various proposed locations, and the ability of the proposed computer locations to enhance service to students and staff.

The above examples suggested that rational decision making was the norm in the urban school, and this was indicative of Type 2A values. The researcher did not uncover any examples of decision making grounded in principle (Type 1 values) or preference (Type 3 values).

#### Cultural Strength

In consideration of: (1) the degree of similarity of members' perceptions of the organizational culture; (2) the existence of informal behavioural rules to guide behaviour, and the degree of understanding among group members

concerning behavioural norms; and (3) the value orientation interpreted for the institution (with reference to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm), the urban school's organizational culture was described as relatively strong. The analysis of interview transcripts indicated a relatively high level of conformity among the cultural perceptions of respondents, group members were well aware of the formal rules and unwritten expectations held of them, and the analysis of organizational values suggested the school was primarily characterized by value Types 2A and 2B. The evidence indicated a relatively strong and homogeneous system of values which were mainly rational, pragmatic, utilitarian, and consensual in nature.

#### Strength of Cultural Perception and Time

Following the analysis of each interview transcript, the researcher interpreted the relative strength of the respondent's perception or awareness of the school's culture, including consideration of school-wide norms, attitudes, and values. Both the strength of cultural perception (interpreted on a five-point scale) and the number of years of association with the school were recorded for each interviewee. Table 6 illustrates these data for all urban school respondents. This information suggested a positive relationship between the length of time the respondents had been associated with the organization and the relative strength of their cultural perceptions.

Moreover, it indicated that after two years in the school, organizational members had generally developed relatively strong perceptions of the school's culture.

Table 6

The Degree to Which the Perception of Culture Varied With the Length of Time the Individual Had Been Associated With the Urban School

		Strength of Cultural Perception				
		Weak		Strong		
		1	2	3	4	5
	5+			S	SCPPS	TTTTTA
	4			SSP	PT	T
Years	3		PP	TSSP		A
at						
School	2		PS	S	P	
	1-	SS	P	TT	A	

Note. S = Student  
 T = Teacher  
 P = Parent  
 A = Administrator  
 SC = Secretary/Custodian

### Summary

Taking into account both the degree of congruence among organizational members' cultural perceptions and the value orientation of the school with reference to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm, it was inferred that the organization was characterized by a relatively strong culture.

Throughout the interview transcripts there were numerous recurring themes. The urban school was considered to be a relatively open place where, encouraged by the committee structure, there was a great deal of dialogue, information sharing, and collegial decision making which occurred among members; consequently, seldom were issues or problems incapable of being overcome.

It is interesting to note the metaphors used to describe the school: machine, factory, and stress joint. The school was considered orderly and well-run; members were described as cogs running in the machine; the school was compared to an auto plant concerned with high production; and the organization was perceived as a busy, active place where hard work, competition, and pressure were the norm. Interestingly, in spite of the serious, high achievement orientation of the school, it was often depicted as a friendly, comfortable, and pleasant place where staff and students met exciting challenges. Virtually all respondents reported that the school had been a positive experience for them.

Finally, some of the characteristics of clans identified by Ouchi and Price (1978) were identified in the urban school:

- There was a relatively high level of cultural homogeneity or agreement about the organizational norms, values, and objectives.
- Organizational norms, attitudes, and values were transmitted to members not only through written rules, but also by unwritten expectations.
- Although there was no formal student screening process to ensure new members held values similar to the organization, students were screened, to some extent, due to the location of some District programs in the urban school. In addition, there was some evidence of self-screening.
- In some respects, members displayed high levels of commitment to the school.

## CHAPTER 7

## Conclusions and Discussion

Research Purposes

The purposes of this research were to:

1. contribute to the clarification of the concept of organizational culture;
2. describe the organizational cultures of three high performance B.C. secondary schools, and identify similarities and differences among the schools' organizational cultures;
3. seek answers to a series of specific research questions related to the schools' organizational cultures; and
4. evaluate the research technique for discovering and describing the organizational cultures of schools.

In this section of the dissertation, conclusions are organized according to the above purposes, and they are followed by a general discussion of the significance of the work and the potential for further research.

1. Concept of Organizational Culture

This research has demonstrated a practical methodology for discovering and describing organizational cultures. The process involved four elements: (1) identifying a defensible literature-based conceptual framework for organizational culture, (2) breaking down the concept of organizational culture into its components, (3) using a semi-naturalistic research approach to gather insights into the cultural

components, and (4) reconstructing the data on the cultural components to derive a description of the organizational culture as a whole.

It is possible to conclude from this research that the specific cultural elements selected for study are valid cultural components. This does not in any way exclude the possibility that greater refinement of the concept of organizational culture can be accomplished; without question, further research is needed in this area.

The researcher found merit in Tagiuri's (1968) taxonomy of climate-related terms which viewed ecology (physical and material aspects of an organization), milieu (characteristics of the organization's members), social system (pattern of relationships among people and groups), and culture (reflecting the norms, beliefs, values, and meaning of people) as the dimensions of climate, or the overall environmental quality. This taxonomy was adopted as part of the conceptual framework for this research with one modification. Whereas Tagiuri referred to climate, for the purposes of this research, organizational culture was viewed as one of four components of a school's internal environment. Climate, on the other hand, was considered to be subsumed under organizational culture.

Following a review of the literature related to culture and organizational culture, three aspects of organizational culture: values, attitudes, and norms were identified as

salient and their meanings were established. Values were defined as implicit or explicit concepts of that which is good, right, or preferred; they are distinctive to individuals or groups; and can influence decision making. Hodgkinson's (1978) Value Paradigm was used to conceptualize values as Type 1 (transrational), grounded in principle; Type 2A (rational), based on consequences; Type 2B (consensus), founded upon social programming or the virtual unspoken understanding of the group; and Type 3 (subrational), based on personal preference.

Attitudes were generally held to be: ways of thinking, acting, or feeling; one's predisposition to act. For the purposes of this dissertation, attitudes subsumed predispositions, preferences, beliefs, opinions, sentiments, impressions, or positions held by individuals or groups. They were considered to be specific manifestations of underlying values. It should be noted, however, that although attitudes are intermediate between values and behaviour, they do not necessarily entail consistency between these two aspects of organizational culture; they are tendencies only.

Norms were generally considered to be shared standards or expectations of behaviour that members of a group regard as socially acceptable. Based on the literature review of definitions and the classifications used in previous studies, this research referred to norms as group members'

shared understandings about the organization's rules, rewards, events and traditions, heroes and legends, processes, and expectations. Furthermore, they were considered to be social attitudinal expectations based on underlying values, with a definitive behavioural aspect.

Hodgkinson's (1978) scheme of value-related terms provided a useful theoretical framework for the relationships between values, attitudes, and norms. In the author's view, there are non-deterministic but correlated cause-and-effect linkages between value orientations, attitudes, and observed behaviours. Furthermore, it was Hodgkinson's contention that there are greater numbers of observed behaviours than attitudes, and more numerous attitudes than values. The present study adopted a similar framework. It was suggested there would be fewer numbers of underlying values at the heart of the organizations' cultures. Linked to the cultural values would be somewhat greater numbers of identifiable attitudes. Connected to the values and attitudes would be more numerous organizational norms. The evidence from the cultural summaries, described in Chapters 4-6, suggests this theoretical framework is defensible.

## 2. Cultural Descriptions, Similarities and Differences

Detailed descriptions of the individual schools' organizational cultures are provided in Chapters 4-6. In this part of Chapter 7, similarities and differences among

the cultures of the three high performance secondary schools are summarized. Like the cultural summaries of Chapters 4-6, this discussion is organized around the various norms, attitudes, and values reported earlier.

#### Norms (Rules)

In all three schools, formal, written rules were deemphasized and were few in number. The perception of virtually all respondents was that these were largely rule-free schools. Where regulations did exist, they were generally related to health, safety, and maximization of learning. Instead of written rules, the schools operated more by expectations for behaviour, attitudes, and work habits. Expectations commonly held to be most important in all three schools were that school members respect the rights of others at the individual, school, and community levels, and that everyone strive to realize their potential in all endeavors. Students were continually reminded of the schools' normative expectations through assemblies, announcements, newsletters, bulletins, and modelling of appropriate behaviour by staff and students alike. In general, respondents were of the opinion that the schools' rules and expectations were not unlike those in other institutions, but they thought that perhaps their schools were distinctive because the rules and expectations were authentically enforced or acted upon.

Norms (Rewards)

Rewards were considered important motivational devices in all three high performance schools, and although some were unique to individual organizations, there were rewards which were common to the study's schools. All of the schools were characterized by a wide-ranging system of rewards, and though most formal rewards were directed toward students, staff members also perceived significant rewards deriving from their association with the schools.

In all schools, grades were perceived as important student rewards; good marks were considered to be fundamental to future success. The personal satisfaction derived from one's own strong performance, and the positive feedback from parents, peers, the school, the community, and the province (in the form of provincial scholarships) were all viewed as powerful motivational forces. There were several common means of recognizing students. School assemblies and ceremonies, newsletters or newspapers, and school-wide awards systems recognized and reinforced positive behaviour and achievement. Although each school had developed formal awards systems, their form varied from school to school. For instance, the independent school had adopted blue (commendation) slips and the traditional British "house system", the rural school employed an honour roll, and the urban school's awards system was based on an

honour roll in conjunction with community service, fine arts, and involvement in extracurricular activities.

The staffs of the three schools perceived common rewards such as working in positive learning environments where there were few behavioural problems, educating highly motivated students, and observing their students perform well and then continue on to post-secondary successes. Staff members expressed satisfaction with being associated with what were perceived to be successful organizations.

Although some rewards were common to the staffs of the three high performance secondary schools, there were others which were unique to specific institutions. For example, in the independent school, the staff considered student fee discounts, extra-long holidays, the relatively low student-teacher ratio, and the friendly, family atmosphere as perquisites of their association with the school. The rural school staff, like the staff of the independent school, appreciated the low student-teacher ratio and the congenial, community atmosphere. In addition, the administration recognized individual staff members through the use of personal notes of thanks or praise for their contributions to the school. The healthy lifestyle associated with living in the rural community was also considered a reward by many staff members.

### Norms (Events and Traditions)

All three schools regularly observed certain events which could be considered traditional, and in the case of at least two of the schools it appeared that some values had been inherited from the past. For instance, the schools customarily held functions such as parent evenings and graduation events; they observed special cultural, holy, and memorial days; they staged music and theatrical performances; and they held sporting events, club and fund-raising activities, and staff and student functions. Although a relatively recent phenomenon in the rural school, it could be said that in the independent and urban schools, expectations for achievement or success had been passed down from previous generations. There was evidence of the building and perpetuation of an historical tradition of high levels of academic performance.

Of the three schools, however, there were more vestiges of history and tradition associated with the independent school. The existence of an alumni association, the British "house system", the sports traditions, and the long-standing social and fund-raising events were examples of traditional links with the school's past.

### Norms (Heroes and Legends)

Members of the independent school were aware of its history, and the founders and many of the past administrators were legendary figures who were venerated.

Links with the school's history were maintained through various means: its traditions; periodic visits to the campus by former students, staff, and administrators who became visible links with the past; and also, stories about people and events in the school which had been passed down to succeeding generations.

In the urban and rural schools, however, there was no expressed awareness of the schools' history. Respondents were unable to provide information about the institutions' founders or early administrators and teaching staffs. Former members considered legendary (or at least noteworthy) were relatively recent teachers and administrators. Numerous common characteristics of memorable teachers and administrators were provided by study respondents from all three schools. Teachers were remembered for being strict and demanding; they held high expectations of their charges. They were energetic and enthusiastic, they devoted a great deal of time to and enjoyed working with young people, and they were interested in the students' well-being. Their sense of humour, consideration, and caring nature were also remembered, as was their ability to establish a rapport with all members of the school. Memorable administrators were firm disciplinarians, but they were appreciated for their ability to be consultative or collegial. Furthermore, they were remembered for their approachability, supportiveness, caring nature, energy, honesty and sincerity, and their

ability to be both liked and respected by members of the organization.

Norms (Processes)

*Screening:* Screening of new organizational members was more a characteristic of the independent school than of either the urban or rural schools. Student screening involved a registration fee, an entrance examination, and an expressed commitment to the school on the part of the student. The staff recruitment process in all three schools involved the usual screening process whereby prospective staff were interviewed, their backgrounds were scrutinized, and the most suitable candidates were selected. However, the independent school carried the process one step further. An important part of the staff screening process required short-listed teachers to demonstrate their teaching skills and their ability to establish a rapport with students. Candidates were either observed while teaching in their own classrooms, or they were invited to demonstrate their instructional ability at the independent school.

There was no formal student screening process at either the urban or rural schools. In general, all students who lived within the schools' catchment area were permitted to attend. However, the fact that the urban school housed some District-wide programs such as the French Immersion and International Baccalaureate Programs meant that some students (mostly high achievers) attended the school even

though they lived outside the catchment area. It was also reported that, to some extent, informal self-screening processes were in operation.

*Communication:* Communication of information within the school and between the home and the school was considered important in all three schools. In the urban, rural, and independent schools, students were issued a handbook which provided information such as the school philosophy and objectives, a calendar of events, the school rules and expectations, procedures, and awards. However, the urban and rural students were less familiar with their handbooks than their independent school counterparts. Whereas, in the urban and rural schools, the students did not appear to refer often to their handbooks, the independent school students used their handbooks (termed agendas) daily to note homework, projects, and tests.

Special handbooks, enumerating policies and guidelines, were also distributed to teachers and parents of the independent school. During the fall, interim report cards were sent home to parents, and parent-teacher interviews were conducted; at the end of each term, parents received written reports of their children's progress; and regularly published newsletters kept all school members up-to-date with school-related information. In addition, regular, frequent contact was encouraged between teachers (and administrators whenever necessary) and parents.

In the urban school, information bulletins were distributed daily to both staff and students. A school newsletter, published five or six times annually, kept staff, students, and parents abreast of school news and information. Interim reports were distributed midway through each term, and parent-teacher interviews were held after every reporting period.

Formal means of communicating student progress in the rural school was by means of interim reports, report cards, and parent-teacher conferences which were held twice per year following report cards. Furthermore, due to the relatively small number of students, teachers were able to make telephone contact with the home whenever necessary. A regularly published student newspaper provided the young people opportunities to openly discuss issues and make their views known to the staff and administration.

At the beginning of the school year, a function was organized at all three schools to acquaint parents and teachers and to raise parents' awareness about aspects of the school and their children's courses of study.

Parent associations, which met every month (in the case of the independent and rural schools), or every second month (in the case of the urban school), served as forums for parents to share their concerns with the school. The meetings were also used as a means of providing information to parents, and a way of seeking their input on some issues.

Student assemblies were used to disseminate information, reinforce expectations, and provide recognition. Although assemblies were a common feature of the schools, their nature and frequency varied. For example, the rural school held grade-wide student assemblies four or five times annually, and they were usually oriented to a specific student-centred theme. Due to its size, the urban school held assemblies by grade and only near the beginning of the school year. In contrast, the independent school held school-wide assemblies twice weekly on Mondays and Fridays, special assemblies were occasionally organized on Wednesdays, regular grade meetings were held once a month for grades 8 to 10 and once a week for grades 11 and 12, and students were also brought together in their home rooms daily. It was thought that the regular and frequent meetings enhanced the feeling of group identity and school spirit.

In all three schools, the Student Council was a vehicle by which information was shared with the student body, and students' concerns and opinions were communicated to the staff and administration. Students were also polled on occasion to elicit their views on specific issues.

Regular staff meetings were features of all three schools, and generally, the staffs met once a month. These gatherings provided a forum for regular discussion. Except for the rural school where usually only one or two persons

taught a given subject, the schools also conducted department head and department meetings approximately once a month. In addition to the monthly staff meeting, the independent school also held brief weekly staff meetings which the administration felt were helpful in defusing issues before they became problematic. Furthermore, on a weekly basis, the administrators met with the Student Council and the head boy and head girl to listen to student concerns.

Members of all three schools reported they had easy access to each other, and felt they were welcome to raise issues or concerns as the need arose. Generally, the schools were perceived as fairly open places where members felt they could voice their opinions, and they were not apprehensive about doing so.

*Decision making:* Decision making in the schools was generally accomplished under consultative or collegial approaches. Like all schools, there were certain decision-making areas which were the domain of the administration. For instance, in the independent school, decisions such as the school constitution, the fee structure, teachers' salaries, and property acquisition were the jurisdiction of the Board of Governors. In all three schools, decisions such as staffing and budgets were the domain of the principal and headmaster. Decisions related to the day-to-day operation of the schools, and for which input was

invited from staff and students, were dealt with quite differently in the independent and public schools.

The independent school employed a consultative approach, and the Board of Governors and the headmaster controlled decision making. The staff were invited to provide their opinions on issues at staff meetings, but seldom were decisions made at that time. Instead, with reference to what had been heard at the meetings, and in consultation with the assistant headmasters, the head made the final decisions. Whenever votes were taken on issues, the headmaster usually reviewed the alternatives and selected the most appropriate ones from which students or staff could then choose.

Both public secondary schools generally employed a collegial approach to decision making. In the case of the urban school, an elaborate committee structure was in place for collegial decision making. Numerous staff standing and ad hoc committees first studied issues and reported their findings and recommendations to a Staff Advisory Council. The Council generated final recommendations which were then submitted to staff for discussion and decision by vote. Owing to the small staff size in the rural school, there was little need for staff committees to address issues. Instead, typically, the administration raised issues at staff meetings, and following discussion, decisions were made by the whole staff.

*Student supervision:* In the urban school, apart from noon-hour supervision in the cafeteria, responsibility for conduct in hallways and grounds was left to the students themselves. By contrast, there was a formal process in both the rural and independent schools to supervise students in the halls, cafeteria, and grounds. In the independent school, the teaching staff and assistant headmasters provided supervision on a rotating basis before and after school, and at recess and lunchtime. In the rural school, teachers did not supervise. Rather, one person was hired specifically to supervise the lunch room at noon, and the two administrators took turns supervising before and after school and at recess.

*Rule violations:* The manner in which rule violations were handled varied across the three schools. In the independent school, forms called "yellow slips" were completed which identified relatively minor misdemeanors. Students were required to sign the form to indicate they were aware of the infraction and the formal record, and then the "yellow slip" was placed in the student's permanent file. For relatively serious misdemeanors, warning letters were sent to the home. Continued misbehaviour resulted in in-school suspensions. Chronic behavioural problems resulted in dismissal from the school.

In the rural school, detentions were used for relatively minor behavioural infractions such as incomplete

homework. For more serious offences, calling for suspension, in-school suspension was employed. In both the independent and rural schools, in-school suspensions were considered preferable because students would not lose valuable time away from school.

If the urban students were in breach of the school rules, they were referred to their counsellor or the appropriate vice-principal. Students were subject to out-of-school suspension, transfer, or expulsion for inappropriate behaviour related to drugs and alcohol, vandalism, chronic unexplained absenteeism, fighting, and blatant disrespect or insubordination.

*Fees:* Fees for special activities were handled differently in each school. In the independent school, fees for such things as the school annual and planned activities were built into the enrolment fee. A school fee of \$35.00, to cover the cost of the yearbook, some extracurricular activities, awards, and report mailing, was levied on each student of the urban school. In addition, Grade 12 students were obliged to pay a graduation fee of \$28.00 which was their contribution to graduation expenses. For some elective courses in both the urban and rural schools, students were required to pay nominal fees to cover the cost of materials and field trips.

*Professional development:* Staff professional development was dealt with quite differently in the

independent and public schools. In the independent school, one day per year was officially designated a professional day. Limited funding was available to assist staff members to attend at least one professional workshop or conference annually. Most staff members were away from the school on professionally related activities for two or three days per year.

Like all public schools in B.C., the rural and urban schools observed five professional days during the school year. Generally, in the rural school, two of the five days were devoted to zone and District professional development activities, while one day was reserved for school-based initiatives. A fixed, modest sum of money was made available to each staff member to support attendance at professional conferences. In addition, some funding was available to support school-based professional development initiatives.

Within the urban school, one day was used for School District professional development, and four days were reserved for school-wide and department-based activities. Although there was no stated policy regarding the number of days a staff member could be away from the school on professional development, the school supported such initiatives and routinely granted teacher requests for leave provided classroom continuity was not compromised. Funds were particularly limited in the independent school;

however, all three schools recognized the importance of professional development and provided support for such activity within their means.

*Administrators' roles:* Although there was a clear differentiation of duties between the principal (or headmaster) and vice-principals (or assistant headmasters) in the urban and independent schools, the reverse was true in the small rural school. In the urban and independent school, the chief administrator assumed responsibilities such as working with all school members to set the direction and tone for the school, establishing school policy, engaging in public relations, liaising with School District central office personnel or Board of Governors, establishing and monitoring budgets, and conducting staff selection. The vice-principals (or assistant headmasters) had specific roles. For example, the urban school vice-principals were responsible for dealing with students of specific grade levels, and each was delegated specific administrative duties. The two assistant headmasters of the independent school were assigned roles pertaining to: discipline, student affairs, and day-to-day operations; and graduation, university entrance, and curriculum, respectively. By contrast, no clear differentiation of roles existed for the principal and vice-principal of the rural school; in most cases, duties were shared.

*Homework:* Students of all three schools spent a great deal of their after-school time doing homework. For instance, the rural students were expected to accomplish a minimum of one or two hours of homework depending upon whether they were in Grades 7 to 10, or Grades 11 and 12. The fact that the urban school's students did significant amounts of homework was demonstrated by statistics which indicated that the percentage of Grade 10 students that did more than two hours of homework per night was nearly triple the provincial average. And although statistics were unavailable for the independent school, respondents reported that students spent a great deal of their free time doing homework.

Students were responsible for ensuring their homework was completed, and teachers spent a great deal of time checking students' work and providing them feedback, either orally or in writing, on their progress. Because of the relatively small numbers of students in the rural and independent school classes, teachers felt they were able to provide students more individualized attention and comprehensive information regarding their progress.

*Professional cooperation:* In general, the professional staffs worked together to assist students to get the most out of their school experience. Teachers conferred about individual student difficulties and how these could be overcome. However, the degree of professional cooperation,

related to subject-specific concerns, varied across the three secondary schools. Because of the relatively large subject departments associated with the urban school, there was considerable interaction among department members to share information and provide professional support.

Although the sizes of departments within the independent school were significantly smaller, department members shared equipment, resources, and ideas. By contrast, most subjects in the rural school were taught by either one or two individuals, and consequently, there was little opportunity for professional support within subject areas.

*Program:* All three high performance secondary schools were characterized by programs which emphasized the academic dimension of the curriculum. The urban school offered the widest range of courses among the three institutions. Doubtless, this was, to some extent, a function of its relative size. In addition to the academic program, courses in business and practical and fine arts were also offered. The independent school provided art and music programs (with some pretension to an arts emphasis), while the rural school offered a limited number of practical arts courses in addition to the academic program.

*Community involvement:* Public use of school facilities was a feature of both the rural and urban public schools. In the case of the rural school, the Recreation Commission and local community groups held functions in the school's

gymnasium and classrooms. Computers were also available for public use, subject to certain conditions. In the case of the urban school, there was reciprocal sharing of facilities with the community. For example, the school used Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and local college facilities, while the community was able to use the school's gymnasium, playgrounds, tennis courts, and track.

*Specialized student services:* A wider range of specialized student services was available to students of the rural school than either the urban or independent schools. In addition to the usual counselling and course and career guidance, other services available through the rural school included speech assessment and therapy, psychological testing, learning assistance testing, a Children's Development Centre, public health, and other social services. The independent and urban schools provided personal, course, and career counselling, and in addition, the urban school conducted English second language and transitional classes for students whose English language skills were below the level required to succeed in regular classes.

*Attendance monitoring:* Although the specific system for monitoring student absences varied somewhat among the schools, in each case, there was a process in place and it was strictly adhered to. Parents of rural students were required to telephone or send notes to the school explaining

all absences upon their children's return to school. The urban students were required to present notes of explanation from their parents to all teachers whose classes had been missed. Except for lunchtime, students of the independent school were not permitted to be absent from the school premises without filing a parent letter of permission and explanation in advance with the school secretary.

*Staff involvement:* There was a high level of staff involvement in sponsoring extracurricular programs. Staff members of all schools either sponsored clubs, or were involved in a range of activities which included publication of the yearbook, operation of the library, organizing graduation, and offering sports activities.

*Unique features:* All three high performance schools provided students with counselling and guidance; however, the urban school students in Grades 8 to 10 were obliged to attend formal guidance classes.

"X" block, a period scheduled at the end of each Wednesday, was time that urban students could use to seek remedial help from their teachers, or make up missed work.

Due to the perceived stresses experienced by members of the urban school, special measures were adopted to provide periods of relaxation and relief from the pressures of constant work. Examples of such measures were the establishment of silent reading and recess periods, the bans on homework over the Christmas holiday and tests on days

following school dances, and the Lighten-Up Committee which organized entertaining activities to help staff unwind.

The "English please, francais s'il vous plait" policy of the urban school was introduced to encourage non-English-speaking students to develop their English language skills, and to promote the French Immersion Program.

In the fall, urban Grade 11 students were given the opportunity to volunteer to write the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). The test, which was a measure of students' verbal and mathematical skills, was considered good practice for the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) which Grade 12 students were given the opportunity to write.

The "buddy system", which involved older students helping new ones become acclimatized to their surroundings, was a process unique to the independent school.

#### Norms (Expectations)

All the schools studied were guided more by expectations of group members than by written rules and regulations. A common feature was the high expectations of all organizational members. For the most part, expectations of students, parents, staff, and administration were similar in all three institutions.

Students were expected to:

- attend and be punctual;
- maintain an appropriate standard of dress and grooming;
- be well-behaved, courteous, and respectful;

- develop a sensitivity to and tolerance for others;
- develop a sense of responsibility;
- be self-disciplined and hardworking;
- try new things, and participate in a variety of activities;
- become good group members; and
- be committed to the school's objectives.

Parents were expected to be supportive of their children's education by becoming involved, either at home or at school, whenever necessary. The rural school enumerated specific expectations of parents. They were to:

- ensure there was an appropriate time and place at home for the completion of homework, and
- contact the school if their children were not spending sufficient amounts of time doing homework (according to the mandated minimum number of hours by grade level).

Teachers were expected to:

- be competent professionals;
- communicate expectations to students and their parents;
- maintain regular communication with students, parents, and other educators concerning students' progress;
- be responsive;
- be enthusiastic about their subjects, and pass that enthusiasm along to their students;
- relate well with the students;
- be positive role models for the students;

- be flexible, fair, and consistent;
- earn the respect of the students; and
- become involved in extracurricular activities.

The school administrators were expected to:

- establish the school policies and vision;
- ensure members conformed to the policies and vision;
- set the academic and moral tone;
- be good communicators, and be adept at public relations;
- be accessible and open to suggestions;
- consult with members on issues that affected them;
- be flexible, fair, and consistent;
- be cognizant of everything occurring in the school, and be visible;
- be problem-solvers, and be decisive; and
- maintain a rapport with all of the organization's members.

Apart from the expectations held of the various organizational members, there were other commonly held expectations. For instance, parents expected the school to provide their children with a learning environment conducive to achievement and success, and they expected the entire school staff to assist their children to maximize their potential. There was certainly an expectation that students would derive more from their experience in the study schools than would have been the case in an "ordinary" school. In

all three organizations, members held expectations that upon graduation students would continue on to higher education.

### Attitudes

The similarities and differences among urban, rural, and independent school organizational attitudes are arranged under specific themes.

*Goals:* In general, the broad goals of all three organizations were identical: to assist students to strive toward reaching their potential, and to develop well-rounded, socially conscious citizens of good character.

*Program:* The academic component of curriculum was given a high priority in all three institutions, and although members were pleased with the schools' academic record, there was a common attitude that program offerings needed to be more diversified.

Many parents and teachers associated with the urban school expressed the opinion that more was required to meet the needs of less-able or non-academically inclined children. It was commonly acknowledged the school was particularly good for the academically oriented student, but that it might have been somewhat intimidating and difficult for others to be successful. Not just academics, but mathematics and science courses in particular were the subjects of choice among urban school students. It was suggested that many new immigrants (particularly of Oriental background) had limited English capability, and they had

come from countries where mathematics and science were emphasized, and where verbal participation in school was less common than in Canadian schools. It was thought that since verbal and other English language skills were typically stressed less in mathematics and science classes, many students tended to concentrate on and excel in these subjects.

The emphasis on academics was considered problematic by some staff of the urban school. Respondents reported that it was often difficult to persuade students to attend music rehearsals and participate in field trips if it meant missing academic classes or sacrificing study time for tests.

*Professionalism:* There was a common belief that students should be treated as young professionals; they were expected to consider school as their job. Consequently, assumptions were made that when assignments were given, the students would be responsible enough to complete high-quality work. Furthermore, the attitude existed in all three schools that students ought to learn self-reliance, and they should assume some of the responsibility for their own learning. Although teachers provided assistance whenever necessary, students were not pampered; rather, they were encouraged, to some extent, to learn for themselves.

Most members of the independent school held common attitudes about the importance of appropriate attire. It

was generally believed that people tend to be perceived and treated according to their manner of dress. Furthermore, it was thought that one should "dress up" for important occasions, and one's education was viewed as such. These attitudes were fundamental to the insistence on the school uniform which was perceived as conveying a professional image. Although many students understood the significance of the uniform and wore it with pride, there were those who desired a more flexible dress code.

In general, the members of the three organizations were of the opinion that the professional knowledge and expertise of the staff and administration were similar to those found in the majority of secondary schools in the province. Most of the educators were perceived as well-qualified and experienced. The general attitude was that teachers considered their work important, and they were perceived as: hardworking, enthusiastic, fair and consistent, dedicated to providing a quality education to the children in their care, and committed to their own professional development. Although the teaching staffs were perceived as representative of B.C. secondary teachers at large, there was a common view that the three study schools maintained higher expectations and standards than many others in the province.

Staff commitment was generally understood to be instrumental to the success of the schools. Teachers and

administrators in all three organizations were perceived to be exceedingly generous with their time and energy. They were heavily involved with students outside normal school hours, offering assistance with schoolwork and providing extracurricular programs. Some teachers, most notably in the independent and urban schools, felt they were under a great deal of pressure due to the demands of their work and the effort they put into it. Although there was no formal policy mandating teacher sponsorship of extracurricular activities, the staff of all three schools thought they were expected to volunteer their services. Nevertheless, staff members recognized numerous benefits from extracurricular involvement with students.

The schools' administrative teams were seen to work well together, and they were considered to be competent in their respective positions. The administrators were highly regarded for their caring attitude, approachability, willingness to listen, and supportiveness. However, some urban and rural respondents expressed the opinion that the principals either did not visit classrooms enough, or did not take sufficient time to be in the halls and interact with the students.

In the rural school, a staff member was regarded as a master teacher, and in the independent, an administrator was identified as responsible for curriculum. However, no one in the study schools was generally recognized as the

educational leader, or the designated person who provided information, advice, or inservice assistance concerning teaching methods and modes of student learning. It was also interesting to note that the absence of formalized educational leadership was not considered problematic within the organizations.

*Parental support:* It was generally thought that family or cultural background and attendant values were related to positive student attitudes toward education and high levels of achievement. Education was considered important and was taken seriously by the parent body of all three schools; in fact, many parents had made sacrifices to secure a sound education for their children. It was reported that generally, parents monitored the progress of their children, and many students felt they were under pressure from home to achieve. When contacted by staff to elicit home support, parents were perceived as very responsive. Moreover, in the independent and urban schools in particular, parents were seen as strongly supportive because of their willingness to volunteer to assist with school-related activities or participate in parent associations. There were, however, some exceptions. For instance, few parents attended rural school meetings, and most new Oriental-Canadian parents had little contact with the urban school. Lack of contact, however, did not mean lack of interest. In both cases, parents felt the school was the domain of the professionals

and that parent involvement was not required. In fact, it was reported that the lack of contact on the part of many in the Oriental community was actually a mark of respect for the institution.

In all schools parents generally perceived a positive, supportive learning environment, and the administrators and teaching staffs were seen as accessible and available. The parents' attitude was that the schools were doing a good job of preparing their children for the challenges they would meet in the future.

*Rules:* Members of the organizations were of the opinion the school rules were similar to those in most secondary schools. There was, however, a conscious effort to keep the number of written regulations relatively small. The students were aware of the organizational rules and the expectations held of them, and they knew what the repercussions would be if they deviated from them. In general, members of the schools studied thought that, unlike many other schools, their rules were enforced and were consistently applied.

*Behaviour:* Students of the schools in this study were generally considered to be responsible, well-mannered, and studious. On the whole, they were perceived to have the correct attitudes, such as commitment to their studies. They appreciated the opportunities that could result from hard work in their secondary studies, and they applied

themselves to achieve success. Although none of the institutions were considered to be problem-free, there was a perception that there were fewer behavioural problems than in most secondary schools.

Doubtless, all three organizations recognized the advantages of a student's willingness and desire to become a member of a particular school. In the independent school, however, there was an explicit belief that if students were to demonstrate appropriate behaviour and be successful in the school, they must hold positive attitudes, and in order to be positive, students must desire to attend the particular institution. The student interview was meant to ensure that they genuinely wished to become members of the organization.

*Tone:* Members of all three organizations reported that their schools were well-run, orderly, comfortable, secure places. By and large, members' attitudes were that they could dissent without fear of retribution, and that open discussion would be used to resolve issues. Both students and teachers felt the organizations had confidence and trust in them, and there were system-wide attitudes about mutual respect.

Both the independent and rural school members perceived their organizations as caring "communities" or "families". The schools were seen as small, happy, closely knit societies where: members knew each other well, students

considered staff their friends, and to some extent, the older students took responsibility for the well-being of younger ones and served as positive role models for them.

Members of the rural school cherished their quality of life. In particular, they appreciated the physical beauty, peacefulness, relatively slow pace, and clean environment associated with their semi-isolated community.

Although school was considered extremely important and a serious enterprise, members of all three organizations believed that learning must also be fun. Virtually all student respondents said they were happy and enjoyed attending their schools. Furthermore, they reported that their teachers, by using humour and variety in instructional strategies, were able to make their courses both interesting and enjoyable.

There was an explicit attitude among the members of the independent and rural schools that student self-confidence in their own abilities, as well as self-esteem would increase the likelihood of their success at whatever they attempted to accomplish. Consequently, an important objective of the schools was to nurture student self-confidence and self-esteem. One way this was accomplished was by encouraging students to participate in a wide range of activities. Although this attitude did not emerge from the urban school interviews, the staff and students of all schools were seen as involved in a wide variety of school-

related activities. In fact, the members of the urban school emphasized the busyness, the seemingly continuous bustle which was perceived to characterize the organization.

The staff and administration of the study's schools found their work challenging, rewarding, and enjoyable, and they reported that everyone got along well together. However, although social events were organized throughout the year, many urban school respondents felt the staff did not socialize enough and that an esprit de corps and a sense of staff identity were lacking. The consensus was that the large staff size contributed to this condition. Furthermore, even though school-wide activities were organized by the staff and Student Council, respondents felt that, to some extent, the urban school's spirit was flagging, and that this was demonstrated by the relatively poor turnouts at sporting events. The pressures and demands for achievement and the fact that many students lived outside the area and returned home directly after school were offered as possible reasons for the perceived decline in school spirit.

Many urban school respondents believed that attending a culturally diversified school was beneficial to the student, and they felt that students from the various cultural groups interacted fairly well. It was reported, though, that the French Immersion and non-English-speaking students generally

tended to keep to their own groups despite the overt efforts made to the contrary by staff and administration.

Although the urban school had established an "English please, francais s'il vous plait" policy, other languages such as Chinese were commonly heard in hallways. As a result, some Caucasian students reported that they felt as though they were attending school in a foreign country.

Respondents of all three organizations were of the opinion that their school buildings required physical improvements. In all cases, additional equipment and facilities were seen as necessary. For example, the science laboratories were an area of concern in both the independent and urban schools, while a completely new rural school building was under construction at the time of the study.

Members of all three organizations expressed pride in their schools' accomplishments. There was a recognition that the schools had established good reputations, and there was a desire to continue the tradition of high academic performance. Furthermore, there was a common view that each school possessed characteristics which made it unique, and which provided its students advantages they would not have in other institutions.

*Decision making:* Although decision-making approaches varied (from consultative in the independent school to collegial in the urban and rural schools), members of all

three organizations were convinced they had opportunities to provide input into school decisions which affected them.

*Class size:* In both the independent and rural schools, class size was considered an important factor related to their high levels of achievement. Generally, the attitude was that the relatively low student-teacher ratios resulted in fewer behavioural problems, permitted teachers to get to know their students better, and allowed them to provide more individualized attention.

*Homework:* In all schools, completing sufficient amounts of homework was held to be an important achievement factor.

*Pressure:* There was a common attitude that students need to be challenged, and that a certain amount of pressure positively influences student performance. Independent and rural school respondents expressed the view that although students were under pressure to achieve (some more than others), there was no undue stress placed upon them. In contrast, the commonly held view in the urban school was that students were under considerable pressure both from the home and at school.

*Competition:* The nature of competitiveness appeared to vary among the three organizations. Although proud of its achievement record, and interested in its standing relative to other schools, the rural school seemed to focus on personal competition. Students were encouraged to compete

with themselves. With the exception of the competition with another local school for clientele, the independent school, too, emphasized self-competition. In contrast, competition on several levels was perceived to be part of the urban school's character. Certainly, personal competition was encouraged, but in addition, inter-student, inter-school, and international competition were held to be important parts of school life.

Students considered grades to be extremely important; however, the vast majority of urban school respondents were of the opinion that, in general, the students overemphasized their marks.

*Vision:* The principals and headmaster of the high performance schools held and expressed visions for the future of their schools. It was interesting to note, however, that for all other organizational members these visions were either unknown or unclear.

#### Common Values

This part of Chapter 7 identifies those values which were interpreted to be similar across the three study organizations.

*Accessibility:* The members of all three organizations subscribed to the importance of the ability to make contact with other members whenever necessary and to use both formal and informal lines of communication. Accessibility could be interpreted as a Type 2B value because it generated a norm

of expectancy among group members. Moreover, the value was associated with a concept of good communications which was considered essential to efficient and effective school operation. The rational, pragmatic and utilitarian grounds for accessibility, as a value, allow its interpretation as a Type 2A value as well.

*Achievement* or success at the secondary level was considered important because it was recognized as instrumental to a successful future. Such a rational, pragmatic consideration suggested the value be interpreted as Type 2A. However, in addition, high levels of student performance had been traditions of both the urban and independent schools, and consequently, achievement or success was virtually taken for granted. In the rural school, the importance of the achievement of good grades to foster self-esteem, pride, and future success was also a virtual given. Therefore, to the extent that this value led to a group norm of expectancy, it was also classified as a Type 2B value. Furthermore, because organizational members expressed personal satisfaction and pride in their schools' accomplishments, achievement was further categorized as a Type 3 value.

*Altruism* was interpreted as an organizational value common to the three schools studied. To the extent that pragmatic rationales were given for the importance of this value, it was classified, in part, as a Type 2A value of the

independent school. In all three organizations, however, altruism was also categorized as both a Type 1 and a Type 2B value. The welfare of others was considered an important principle, and furthermore, the importance of altruism appeared to be consensual among members of the organizations.

*Commitment* (dedication), *diligence* (industriousness), *discipline*, and *perseverance* were a set of interrelated values which characterized the three high performance schools. Everyone was expected to be committed or dedicated to the goals of the organization and to their work; and to be well-disciplined, on-task, and hardworking. These values were understood to be fundamental to achievement and success, and therefore, because of the rational, pragmatic nature of their perceived importance, they were categorized as Type 2A values. To the extent that these values were the source of a norm of expectancy among organizational members they were also classified as Type 2B values.

*Communication* was interpreted as a common value of the study schools. Easy access of organizational members to each other, and mechanisms to permit an exchange of information and open discussion of ideas and issues were considered important in all three cases. To some extent, communication was a common expectation; something that was taken for granted. It was therefore categorized as a Type 2B value because of this consensual aspect. Moreover,

members understood that communication enhanced the effective and efficient operation of the schools. The rational, pragmatic and utilitarian nature of communication suggested it also be termed a Type 2A value.

Regardless of whether it was meant to encourage self-improvement, establish a reputation, or obtain other rewards, *competition* was a value common to the three organizations. In any situation where grades are awarded, competition will exist almost unconsciously as part of the organization's social programming. However, in the three high performance schools, there were rational, pragmatic grounds for competition. Although doubtless, there were elements of Type 2B values associated with competition, it was the researcher's opinion that the value could also be termed Type 2A. Furthermore, competition was a Type 3 preferential, hedonic value amongst the students and other members of the schools.

Students, staff, and administrators alike reported that *confidence* and *trust* were important to them, and they believed that other members of the organizations had confidence and trust in them. Since these values appeared to be largely unspoken understandings, and the source of norms of expectancy within the schools, they were interpreted as Type 2B values.

*Conformity* was classified as both a Type 2B and a Type 2A value. In all three schools, it was considered important

that the members (particularly the students) adhered to a set of rules and expectations for attitudes, behaviour, and work ethic. In each organization, there were elements of conformity which were generally accepted as givens, and the source of norms of expectancy. On the other hand, conformity was rationally and pragmatically used to create positive working environments to support student and organizational success.

*Consideration, Cooperation, and Courtesy:* It was considered important that organizational members treat each other with consideration and courtesy (politeness), and work cooperatively. There was a rational understanding that in order for the students and the school to be successful, members should be considerate and courteous toward one another, and they must work together. Furthermore, there was a rational realization that institutions without regard for these values would likely possess less-conducive working environments. At the same time, these values led to expected norms of the group as well. As a result, consideration, cooperation, and courtesy were interpreted as both Type 2A and Type 2B values.

The members of the high performance schools expressed a common value in the importance of *education* (referring to its enlightening function as distinct from achievement). School documents enumerated organizational goals related to concepts such as developing well-rounded students prepared

to meet the challenges of life, and pursuing knowledge for its own sake. Education appeared to be less at the forefront of conscious consideration than did achievement, and although there were clearly rational reasons for fostering education, this value was also interpreted as being consensual among members of the organizations. Consequently, education was classified as a Type 2A and a Type 2B value.

*Elitism:* Organizational members perceived themselves as belonging to unique, select groups, and there was a common view that each school possessed certain characteristics that provided students with advantages they would not find in other institutions. Elitism contained elements of Type 3, Type 2A, and Type 2B values. In some cases, upon consideration of alternative institutions, the decision to enroll a student in the independent and urban schools was based upon personal preference, indicating Type 3 values. In all three organizations, elitism was interpreted as a Type 2A value because members rationally and pragmatically recognized conveniences, benefits, or advantages of the particular school system. Type 2B values were also indicated since elitism seemed to be a matter of social programming. The perceived conveniences or advantages associated with the school did not appear to be considered often, but instead, they were more commonly a shared group consensus or understanding.

*Flexibility, integrity, and openmindedness* were interpreted as both Type 2A and Type 2B organizational values. In each of the study's schools, these values had rational, pragmatic grounds for their perceived importance. Members were encouraged to be open and honest with each other, and they were also expected to be flexible and receptive to the ideas and opinions of others. The promotion of these values was rationally intended to develop tolerant individuals and divergent thinkers. Furthermore, among the rural school staff, flexibility was considered highly desirable due to the expectation that they would serve in a variety of roles and assume varied responsibilities. At the same time, these values appeared to generate group norms of expectancy among members of the organizations.

*Friendliness and happiness* were values common to all three schools, and they were classified as value Types 2A, 2B, and 3. The realization that friendliness and happiness contributed to a positive school atmosphere, conducive to learning, was a rational consideration. These values also led to norms of expectancy within the organizations. Furthermore, the researcher learned that members of the organizations considered these attributes to be preferential; group members derived satisfaction from a friendly, happy school environment.

*Orderliness:* Members of all three organizations expressed the opinion that the rules and expectations were widely observed, and that the schools were generally more orderly than many other secondary schools in the province. Orderliness was considered important to the creation of a positive learning environment, and therefore, the rational nature of this value suggested it be categorized Type 2A. This value was also classified Type 2B because it appeared to be consensual among group members.

*Pride* was interpreted as a Type 2A, a Type 2B, and a Type 3 organizational value. This value was pragmatically fostered to perpetuate the schools' record of achievement. In addition, the long-standing tradition of strong student performance, particularly associated with the independent and urban schools, meant that pride had become the source of a group norm of expectancy within the organizations. Members' expressions of satisfaction with the students' accomplishments demonstrated the hedonic nature of pride as an organizational value.

*Professionalism*, on the part of the students and school staff alike, was considered important to members of all three organizations. The rational, pragmatic consideration that the various elements of professionalism were fundamental to success suggested the designation of a Type 2A value. On the other hand, professionalism gave rise to a norm of expectancy within the organizations and was

consensual in nature, and therefore, it was also classified as a Type 2B value.

*Recognition:* Each school had established a variety of formal and informal rewards which were primarily student-oriented. Recognition, therefore, was interpreted as a Type 2A value, since the purpose of such reward systems was to motivate, and the decision to establish such systems was taken rationally. At the same time, the reward systems and their importance were virtually taken for granted (or were consensual), and recognition was also a source of personal satisfaction for many members; therefore, recognition was classified as a Type 2B and a Type 3 value as well.

*Respect* was interpreted as both a Type 2A and a Type 2B value in each of the study's schools. It was rationally and pragmatically thought that by fostering respect in a variety of ways, the learning environment would be enhanced, students would learn valuable social skills, and administration of the organizations would be facilitated. At the same time, respect was also interpreted as the source of a group norm of expectancy.

Like many other organizational values common to the three high performance schools, *responsibility* was interpreted as both a Type 2A and a Type 2B value. Not only were there rational, pragmatic or utilitarian reasons for fostering responsibility, but to some extent, it led to a shared group norm of expectancy.

### Specific Values

Although all of the study's organizations may have, to some extent, held the following values, they were made explicit and hence more specific through the interview transcripts from particular schools.

*Collegiality* [urban/rural]: Although the specific decision-making processes differed between the urban and rural schools, collegiality was considered important in both organizations, and it was therefore interpreted as an organizational value. Group members expected, as a matter of course, to be involved in decision making. As the source of a norm of expectancy, collegiality was considered a Type 2B value. In addition, collegiality was rationally viewed by organizational members as the most acceptable and effective means of deriving decisions which would affect the group. Consequently, collegiality was interpreted as a Type 2A value as well.

*Community and Family* [independent/rural]: A community or family spirit was perceived as an important element of both the independent and rural schools. Members believed that the sense of community or family, which existed in the small, closely knit organizations, produced an environment conducive to learning, and hence, these were interpreted as rational Type 2A values. Due to the consensual nature of their importance in the schools, community and family were also termed Type 2B values. Furthermore, these values were

interpreted as Type 3 because of their preferential nature and the satisfaction members derived from them.

*Courage, Curiosity, Self-confidence, and Self-esteem* [independent/rural]: Courage, curiosity, self-confidence, and self-esteem were closely linked values in both the independent and rural schools. Students were encouraged to develop their curiosity, and to find the courage to diversify their interests. It was thought that by trying new things, and through their accomplishments, students would gain self-confidence, and their self-esteem would be enhanced. The rationally based nature of these values suggested they be classified Type 2A. Moreover, like many other organizational values, courage, curiosity, self-confidence, and self-esteem were classified Type 2B as well, because they appeared to be consensual among group members.

*Equity* [rural]: Equity was interpreted as a value particularly characteristic of the rural school. Unlike the independent and urban schools which in varying degrees mainly catered to healthy, relatively high-achieving students, the rural school served all students in the area regardless of their physical or mental condition. Equity, as a moral principle, was classified a Type 1 value, but since it was the source of a norm of expectancy within the school and the larger community, and was virtually taken for granted, it was also interpreted as a Type 2B value.

*Reputation* [independent/urban]: At the time of the study, the reputation of the rural school had only just begun to surface, and its record of high performance was a relatively recent phenomenon. Furthermore, members conceded that achievement levels were likely to fluctuate in a small community. Consequently, although interested in their performance in relation to the rest of the province, the members of the rural school were not as concerned about reputation as members of the independent and urban schools where there were long-standing traditions of high performance. In both independent and urban schools, there were perceived important rational, pragmatic reasons for fostering reputation. It was also the researcher's conclusion that this value originated a norm of expectancy and was part of the organizations' social programming. Therefore, although a Type 2A value, reputation was also interpreted as Type 2B. In addition, because reputation was a source of pride and satisfaction for many organizational members, it was further classified as a Type 3 value.

*Tradition* [independent/urban]: Tradition was classified as both a Type 2A and a Type 2B value of the independent and urban schools. Within both organizations, the tradition of achievement was the source of a norm of expectancy. In the independent school, traditions (such as the British "house system") were a matter of social programming; they were simply accepted components of school

life. In the sense that tradition was the source of a norm of expectancy, it was categorized as a Type 2B value. At the same time, the tradition of high performance associated with both schools, and many of the traditions passed down through the generations in the independent school either brought perceived benefits to the schools, or were perpetuated for a reason. This rational, pragmatic aspect of tradition also suggested it be termed a Type 2A value.

#### Summary

All three high performance secondary schools were characterized by relatively strong organizational cultures, from the point of view of: (1) their value orientation with reference to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm; (2) the existence of informal rules to guide members' behaviour, and their degree of understanding of the behavioural norms; and (3) the degree of congruence among organizational members' cultural perceptions.

The schools were perceived as comfortable, yet demanding. They were viewed as professional places where high expectations were held of everyone, where the rules and expectations were observed and enforced, and where, for the most part, those expectations were realized. Dedication and cooperation were the norm, and everyone devoted a great deal of time and energy to ensure the success of both the students and the schools. The organizations were seen as relatively open places where people felt free to make their

opinions known, where issues were primarily resolved through discussion and debate, and where decisions were made either collegially or consultatively. Furthermore, they were also considered to be friendly, happy places where confidence and trust existed among members.

Due in large part to their relatively small size, the independent and rural schools were closely knit societies where familiarity among members was commonplace. These schools provided a relatively relaxed learning environment, but within a structure which was perceived as affording students a sound education. Metaphors, such as United Nations, community, family, tribe, and team, used by members in reference to their schools, underlined the social cohesion which characterized both the independent and rural schools.

By contrast, and certainly due in part to its relatively large size, the urban school was perceived as more impersonal than either of the other study schools. Like the other two organizations, the urban school was viewed as orderly, well-run, and busy; however, there was a perception that competition and pressure were most characteristic of the urban school. Machine and factory were metaphors used by members to describe their school, members were described as cogs running in the machine, and the school was compared to an auto plant concerned with high

production. Such metaphors underscored the large size and relatively impersonal nature of the urban school.

In consideration of the broad cultural characteristics of the institutions, the researcher coined the terms "familial-professional" and "mechanistic-professional" to describe the organizational cultures of the independent and rural schools, and the urban school, respectively.

### 3. Research Questions

In this section, conclusions are drawn concerning the specific research questions enumerated in Chapter 3.

#### Research Question 1

*Do common cultural values exist among the high performance schools?*

#### Conclusion

The preceding discussion suggests that with only a few exceptions, at the foundation of the organizations' culture, the values held by the study's secondary schools were highly congruent. Furthermore, although there were instances where values were classified as Type 1 or Type 3, in the vast majority of cases, the values associated with the three high performance schools were interpreted as Type 2A and/or Type 2B with reference to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm; they were founded upon rational pragmatism or utilitarianism, and/or they were the source of norms of expectancy within the organizations. Furthermore, the grounds for decision

making, elaborated in Chapters 4-6, suggested most decisions were rationally based, indicating a Type 2A orientation.

The values which appeared to be similar across the three organizations are listed below in alphabetical order:

Accessibility	Elitism
Achievement	Flexibility
Altruism	Friendliness
Commitment	Happiness
Communication	Integrity
Competition	Openmindedness
Confidence	Orderliness
Conformity	Perseverance
Consideration	Pride
Cooperation	Professionalism
Courtesy	Recognition
Diligence	Respect
Discipline	Responsibility
Education	Trust

#### Research Question 2

*Do common cultural attitudes exist among the high performance schools?*

#### Conclusion

Although many attitudes were unique to specific schools, the majority were common to the study's three high

performance secondary schools, and they are summarized below:

- Academic performance was considered a high priority.
- There was a perceived need for program diversification.
- Students were regarded as young professionals who were to consider school as their job.
- Students were to learn self-reliance, and they were to assume responsibility; they were not to be pampered.
- Educators were perceived as well-qualified and experienced.
- Teachers were perceived as hardworking, enthusiastic, fair and consistent, dedicated to providing quality education, and committed to professional development.
- Staff commitment (in terms of time and energy) was understood to be instrumental to student and school success.
- Administrators were highly regarded for their caring attitude, approachability, willingness to listen, and supportiveness.
- No one was recognized as the educational leader.
- The absence of formalized educational leadership was not considered problematic.
- The schools in the study were perceived as maintaining higher expectations and standards than other schools.
- It was thought that family or cultural background and attendant values were related to positive student

attitudes toward education and high levels of student achievement.

- Parents considered education important, and they were supportive of their children and the schools.
- Parents perceived the schools as positive, supportive learning environments, and administrators and teachers were seen as accessible and available.
- School rules were considered to be similar to those of other institutions, but they were perceived to be enforced and consistently applied.
- Rewards were considered important motivational devices.
- Students were perceived as responsible, well-mannered, and studious, and they appreciated the opportunities that could be derived from hard work at school.
- Although no one considered the study schools to be problem-free, there was a perception that there were fewer behavioural problems than in other schools.
- Members reported that their schools were well-run, orderly, comfortable, secure places.
- Members believed they could dissent without fear of retribution, and open discussion was used to resolve issues.
- Students and teachers believed that the organization had confidence and trust in them.
- There was a perception that mutual respect existed in the study schools.

- Members believed that although learning was serious, it could also be fun.
- Students reported that their teachers made their courses interesting and enjoyable by using humour and a variety of instructional strategies.
- Staff and administrators found their work challenging, rewarding, and enjoyable.
- Physical improvements were perceived as needed, particularly in the areas of equipment and facilities.
- Members were proud of their schools' accomplishments, and they recognized unique organizational characteristics which provided students with perceived advantages.
- Members believed they had opportunities to provide input into school decision making.
- There was a conviction that completing sufficient amounts of homework contributed to achievement.
- There was a belief that students need to be challenged, and that a certain amount of pressure positively influences student performance.
- Although the nature of competitiveness appeared to vary among the schools, competition was considered an important component of each organization.
- Students understood that it was acceptable to be studious, and they considered grades to be extremely important.
- Administrators maintained that they held visions for the

schools' future; however, all other organizational members reported that, for them, the visions were either unknown or unclear.

### Research Question 3

*Do common cultural norms exist among the high performance schools?*

### Conclusion

Apart from normative expectations which were highly congruent among the three study schools, a great deal more variability was found with respect to organizational norms than for attitudes and values. Only in the broadest sense were there similarities among most categories of organizational norms, and they are enumerated below:

- Written rules were few; schools were guided more by organizational expectations for behaviour, attitudes, and work ethic.
- A wide-ranging system of rewards existed in the schools.
- All three schools regularly observed certain events or traditions, but these varied among the organizations.
- The organizations recognized former members who were considered either legendary or noteworthy; however, the type of person remembered and the reason for their being remembered or venerated differed among the schools.
- Communication, within the school and between the home and school, was considered important, and although some elements of communication were common among the

organizations, there was significant variability in the specific processes.

- Members were given input to decision making when decisions affected them; nevertheless, the approach and specific processes varied considerably among the schools.
- Processes for student supervision, attendance monitoring, rule violations, and fees existed in each organization, but the processes were variable.
- Professional development was a feature of all three schools, but again, specific processes varied.
- Students of all study schools spent a great deal of their after-school time doing homework.
- Teachers spent significant amounts of time monitoring students' work and providing them feedback on their progress; however, the amount and type of individualized attention varied in each of the schools.
- Educators worked cooperatively to assist students to get the most out of their school experience; however, the degree of subject-specific professional cooperation varied with the school.
- The academic program was emphasized in all three schools, but the range of course offerings varied widely among the schools.
- Specialized services were available to students

of all schools, but the range of on-site services varied with the school.

- There was a high level of staff involvement in sponsoring extracurricular activities.
- There were great expectations of all organizational members, and a high degree of similarity in the types of expectations was identified among the study's schools.

#### Research Question 4

*Do student, teacher, administrator, parent, and secretary/custodian perceptions of the school's organizational culture vary?*

#### Conclusion

An examination of the respondents' transcripts revealed that within each organization, the cultural perceptions of interview subjects were highly congruent.

#### Research Question 5

*Is there less divergence among student, teacher, administrator, parent, and secretary/custodian perceptions of the school's organizational culture in the independent as compared with the public schools?*

#### Conclusion

A comparison of interview transcripts revealed that the cultural perceptions of the independent school members were more highly congruent than those associated with the public schools.

#### Research Question 6

*Is the independent school characterized by a stronger organizational culture than the public schools?*

#### Conclusion

The independent, rural, and urban schools were all characterized by relatively strong organizational cultures in view of: (1) their value orientation with reference to Hodgkinson's Value Paradigm; (2) the existence of informal rules to guide members' behaviour, and their degree of understanding of the behavioural norms; and (3) the level of congruence among members' cultural perceptions. However, considering that the amount of divergence among members' cultural perceptions was less overall in the independent school as compared with its public counterparts, it was concluded that the independent school's organizational culture was somewhat stronger than that of the rural and urban schools.

#### Research Question 7

*Is the rural school characterized by a stronger organizational culture than the urban public school?*

#### Conclusion

In view of the three criteria for cultural strength, it was concluded that there was no appreciable difference in the strength of the rural and urban schools' organizational cultures.

### Research Question 8

*Does the perception of organizational culture vary with the length of time the individual has been associated with the school?*

### Conclusion

By subjectively interpreting the relative strengths of interviewees' cultural perceptions, by plotting them on a five-point scale together with the length of time the individuals had been associated with the school (refer to Tables 2, 4, and 6), and by comparing the trends in all three organizations, a positive relationship appeared to exist between the two variables. Respondents who had been associated with the school for relatively longer periods of time seemed to display a stronger awareness of the school culture than newer members. Furthermore, it was suggested that generally, after one or two years in the independent and public schools, respectively, members had become acculturated.

### 4. Evaluation of the Research Technique

The semi-naturalistic approach, employed for the purposes of this research, was successful in allowing the researcher to uncover and describe the system-wide organizational cultures of the three high performance B.C. secondary schools. In particular, the use of semi-structured interviews allowed the pursuit of interesting and potentially important themes which led to a deeper

appreciation of each organization's culture. Furthermore, the prepared questions provided a structure which ensured a comparability of data collected. The examination of school documents and informal observations were invaluable in confirming the validity of impressions derived through interviewing.

The length of interviews (thirty minutes to one hour) appeared to be optimal. Although the interview sustained the interest of respondents for up to an hour, it was clear that prolonged sessions would not have been acceptable to many interviewees. Most interviews of students, staff, and administrators were completed during single fifty-minute to one-hour blocks of school time. In most cases, school members were given the opportunity to select the time period for their interviews, and therefore, disruption within the school was limited.

When the methodology for the study was designed, it was the researcher's opinion that the number of respondents required from the urban school needed to be approximately double that of the other two schools because of its relatively large size. However, halfway through interviewing in the urban school, it became obvious that an increased number of respondents would be methodologically redundant. After having completed about twenty interviews, virtually no new information was forthcoming. Provided respondents are randomly selected, it appears that fifteen

to twenty in-depth interviews per school site is adequate for this type of research.

#### Significance and Further Research

Ultimately, the purpose<sup>s</sup> of conducting research on the organizational culture of schools is to assist educational theorists and practitioners to seek changes that will improve school effectiveness. Research evidence suggests that: high performance schools are characterized by strong, positive organizational cultures, strong cultures can be created (although some authors such as Morgan maintain that organizational culture cannot be simply manipulated), and schools can become more effective if they enact and achieve the right kind of culture.

Research, therefore, needs to be conducted in five areas:

1. refining the concept of organizational culture,
2. identifying the cultural characteristics of successful schools,
3. studying the organizational cultures of unsuccessful schools,
4. designing convenient methods to inventory, categorize, and describe organizational culture, and
5. developing strategies to implement cultural change (bearing in mind the views about cultural manipulation expressed by authors such as Morgan).

Although the present study has contributed to the clarification of the general concept of organizational culture, it has concentrated primarily upon the second research issue. Three outwardly quite different high performance B.C. secondary schools participated in the study, and although many characteristics of the schools differed, particularly in the area of organizational norms, there was a significant amount of overlap in organizational values and attitudes. This finding suggests that perhaps most important to the success of an organization are the underlying values and attendant attitudes. The ways in which the values and attitudes manifest themselves in observable behaviours or norms may be diverse.

Although recently, much attention has been given the topic of organizational culture, a great deal more research is needed (refer to Chapter 2). It seems logical that before easy-to-use inventories are designed, and before change strategies are developed, it is necessary to understand well the components of strong, positive school organizational cultures. On the strength of the findings of this research, it is suggested that future investigations concentrate more heavily on identifying organizational values and attitudes of successful schools as expressed by constituent organizational members and stakeholders. Replication of the present study would be useful to confirm the existence of similar cultural values and attitudes in

other academically successful schools. It would also be of interest to conduct research on the cultures of schools considered to be successful in important areas other than the purely academic such as fine arts, technical/vocational, and social development.

The present study has demonstrated to the researcher the importance of the concept of organizational culture and the potential it carries for school improvement. If organizational members are aware of the underlying elements of effective school cultures, if they are able to understand the cultures of their own schools, and if they have the knowledge and the will necessary to explore this concept, then the interests of our students and society at large may be advanced. From the standpoint of the body of knowledge it is also clear that much more empirical research is desirable within the general domain of organizational values, climate, and culture.

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## APPENDIX A

## Interview Protocols

Students

1. How long have you been a student at this school?
2. What do you think it takes to be a successful student in this school? (values, attitudes)
3. Do you think your school has rules which differ from other schools? (norms)
4. What do you think are the most important school rules? (norms)
5. How would you complete this sentence?  
The people in my school believe in the importance of \_\_\_\_\_. (values, attitudes, norms)
6. What are the types of events and traditions that are recognized or celebrated in the school? (norms)
7. What does the school expect from you in terms of behaviour? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)
8. How would you describe general student behaviour? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)
9. Do you think students' opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school? (values, attitudes, norms)
10. Can you think of some important decisions, issues, or problems that have been addressed in the school? How were

the decisions made? What was considered? (values, attitudes, norms)

11. How are students rewarded in the school? (norms)

12. What would you tell new students about the school to help them adjust more easily? (values, attitudes, norms)

13. What do you think it takes to be a successful teacher in this school? (values, attitudes)

14. Do you think your teachers have some common characteristics? (values, attitudes, norms)

15. Do you think that your teachers, and the principal and vice-principal have confidence in you and trust you? (values, attitudes, norms)

16. Do you think the teachers in the school are interested in the well-being of their students? (values, attitudes, norms)

17. What have you learned from your teachers that has helped you personally or educationally? (values, attitudes, norms)

18. Do you think you have a good principal and vice-principal? (values, attitudes, norms)

19. Are there any teachers, principals, or vice-principals of this school, present or past, who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)

20. What do you think your school stands for? (values)

21. Do you think that your school has a particular idea of how it would like to be in the future? (values)

22. If so, how do you think it would like to be, and from whom have you learned about it? (values)
23. Your school has a reputation for being academically successful. Why do you think this is the case? (values, attitudes, norms)
24. If you have children one day, would you like them to come to this school? (values, attitudes, norms)
25. If you could change certain things in the school, what would they be? (values, attitudes, norms)
26. What are some of the images that immediately come to mind when you think about your school? (values, attitudes, norms)

#### Teachers

1. How long have you been a teacher at this school?
2. Please describe your work day, both in and outside of regular school hours. For example, on what types of school-related activities do you spend your time? (values, attitudes, norms)
3. Do you think your school has rules which differ from other schools? (norms)
4. What do you think are the most important school rules? (norms)
5. Do you think your school has values which differ from other schools? (values)

6. Do you think your school's members hold a common set of attitudes which differ from those of other schools?  
(attitudes)
7. What are the types of events and the traditions that are recognized or celebrated in the school? (norms)
8. What does the school expect from students in terms of behaviour? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)
9. How would you describe general student behaviour in the school? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)
10. How are students rewarded in the school? (norms)
11. Do you think students' opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school?  
(values, attitudes, norms)
12. Remembering students you have admired, respected, or enjoyed, what characteristics do these students have in common? (values, attitudes, norms)
13. Given the assumption that most people forget a great deal of what they learn in school, what do you hope your students will remember from you? (values, attitudes, norms)
14. What does it take to be a successful teacher in this school? (values, attitudes)
15. How are teachers rewarded in the school? (norms)
16. Do you think teachers are knowledgeable about current teaching strategies and modes of learning? (norms)
17. Do professional staff assist one another? (norms)

18. Are teachers' opinions taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school? (values, attitudes, norms)
19. Can you think of some important decisions, issues, or problems that have been addressed in the school? How were the decisions made? What was considered? (values, attitudes, norms)
20. Are there any teachers, either present or past, who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)
21. What advice would you give to new teachers in order for them to adjust successfully to the school? (values, attitudes, norms)
22. In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good principal and vice-principal? (values, attitudes, norms)
23. What might a new principal do that would suggest to you that he/she was not going to be successful? (values, attitudes, norms)
24. Does the principal provide support, for example, in terms of time and resources, to improve instruction? (norms)
25. Do you think the school administrators are knowledgeable about current teaching strategies and modes of learning? (norms)
26. What types of inservice or professional development activities are made available to teachers? (norms)
27. Do you think the school administrators have confidence in and trust you? (values, attitudes, norms)

28. Are there any administrators, either present or past, who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)
29. Do you think you have a good principal and vice-principal? (values, attitudes, norms)
30. Do people feel they can openly disagree, confront, and discuss to resolve issues? (norms)
31. What do you think your school stands for? (values)
32. Do you think the school has a particular vision for the future? (values)
33. If so, what do you think that vision is, and from whom have you learned about the school's vision? (values)
34. Your school has a reputation for being academically successful. Why do you think this is the case? (values, attitudes, norms)
35. If you had children, would you like them to attend this school? (values, attitudes, norms)
36. If you could change certain things in the school, what would they be? (values, attitudes, norms)
37. What are some of the images that immediately come to mind when you think about your school? (values, attitudes, norms)

#### Administrators

1. How long have you been associated with this school?
2. Please describe your work day, both in and outside of regular school hours. For example, on what types of school-

related activities do you spend your time? (values, attitudes, norms)

3. Do you think your school has rules which differ from other schools? (norms)

4. What do you think are the most important school rules? (norms)

5. Do you think your school has values which differ from other schools? (values)

6. Do you think your school's members hold a common set of attitudes which differ from those of other schools? (attitudes)

7. What are the types of events and the traditions that are recognized or celebrated in the school? (norms)

8. What does the school expect from students in terms of behaviour? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)

9. How would you describe general student behaviour? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)

10. How are students rewarded in the school? (norms)

11. Are students' opinions taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school? (values, attitudes, norms)

12. Remembering students you have admired, respected, or enjoyed, what characteristics do these students have in common? (values, attitudes, norms)

13. Given the assumption that most people forget a great deal of what they learn in school, what do you hope the

students in the school remember from you? (values, attitudes, norms)

14. What does it take to be a successful teacher in this school? (values, attitudes)

15. How are teachers rewarded in the school? (norms)

16. Do you think teachers in the school are knowledgeable about current teaching strategies and modes of learning? (norms)

17. Do professional staff assist one another? (norms)

18. Are teachers' opinions taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school? (values, attitudes, norms)

19. Can you think of some important decisions, issues, or problems that have been addressed in the school? How were the decisions made? What was considered? (values, attitudes, norms)

20. Are there any teachers, either present or past, who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)

21. What advice do you give to new teachers in order for them to adjust successfully to the school? (values, attitudes, norms)

22. When recruiting new teachers for your school, what qualities do you look for? (values, attitudes, norms)

23. In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good principal and vice-principal? (values, attitudes, norms)

24. Do you provide support, for example in terms of time and resources, to improve instruction? (norms)

25. How knowledgeable would you say you are about current teaching strategies and modes of learning? (norms)
26. What types of inservice or professional development activities are made available to staff? (norms)
27. How much confidence and trust do you have in the teaching staff? (norms)
28. Are there any past administrators who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)
29. What do you think are your strongest administrative attributes? (values, attitudes, norms)
30. Do you think people feel they can openly disagree, confront, and discuss to resolve issues? (norms)
31. What do you think your school stands for? (values)
32. Do you think the school has a particular vision for the future? (values)
33. If so, what do you think the vision is, and who communicates the vision to the staff, students, parents, and community? (values)
34. Your school has a reputation for being academically successful. Why do you think this is the case? (values, attitudes, norms)
35. If you had children, would you like them to attend this school? (values, attitudes, norms)
36. If you could change certain things in the school, what would they be? (values, attitudes, norms)

37. What are some of the images that immediately come to mind when you think about your school? (values, attitudes, norms)

Parents

1. How long have you had children in the school?
2. Did you select this school for your child(ren)? (values, attitudes, norms)
3. Do you think the school has rules which differ from other schools? (norms)
4. What do you think are the most important school rules? (norms)
5. Do you think the school has values which differ from other schools? (values)
6. Do you think that the members of the school have a common set of attitudes which differ from those of other schools? (attitudes)
7. What are the types of events and the traditions that are recognized or celebrated in the school? (norms)
8. What does the school expect from students in terms of behaviour? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)
9. How would you describe general student behaviour? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)
10. How are students rewarded in the school? (norms)

11. Do you think students' opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school?  
(values, attitudes, norms)
12. What benefits do you think your child(ren) will have from having attended this school? (values, attitudes, norms)
13. How would you describe your child(ren)'s overall experience in the school? (values, attitudes, norms)
14. As a parent, what are your expectations of teachers and school administrators? (values, attitudes, norms)
15. When teachers are recruited for the school, what qualities do you think are important? (values, attitudes, norms)
16. How do you think teachers are rewarded in the school?  
(norms)
17. How knowledgeable would you say the school's teachers and administrators are about current teaching strategies and modes of learning? (norms)
18. Do you think teachers' opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school?  
(values, attitudes, norms)
19. Can you think of some important decisions, issues, or problems that have been addressed in the school? How were the decisions made? What was considered? (values, attitudes, norms)
20. Are there any teachers, either present or past, who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)

21. Are parents included in the school's decision-making processes? (values, attitudes, norms)
22. When a new principal or vice-principal is recruited for the school, what qualities do you think are the most important? (values, attitudes, norms)
23. What might a new administrator do that would suggest to you that he/she was not going to be successful? (values, attitudes, norms)
24. Do you think the school administrators provide support, for example, in terms of time and resources, to improve instruction? (norms)
25. Are you aware of any inservice or professional development activities that are made available to the staff? (norms)
26. Do you think the administrators have confidence in and trust all of the teaching staff? (values, attitudes, norms)
27. Do you think you have a good principal and vice-principal in this school? (values, attitudes, norms)
28. Are there any past administrators who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)
29. Do you think people feel they can openly disagree, confront, and discuss to resolve issues? (norms)
30. What do you think the school stands for? (values)
31. Do you think the school has a particular vision for the future? (values)

32. If so, what is that vision, and who communicates the vision to the students, staff, parents, and the community? (values)

33. The school has a reputation for being academically successful. Why do you think this is the case? (values, attitudes, norms)

34. If you had other children, would you like them to attend this school? (values, attitudes, norms)

35. If you could change certain things in the school, what would they be? (values, attitudes, norms)

36. What is your overall opinion of the school? For example, do you think your child(ren) is receiving the best possible education? (values, attitudes, norms)

37. What are some of the images that immediately come to mind when you think about your child(ren)'s school? (values, attitudes, norms)

#### Secretaries/Custodians

1. How long have you worked at this school?

2. What are your main duties?

3. Do you think the school has rules which differ from other schools? (norms)

4. What do you think are the most important school rules? (norms)

5. Do you think the school has values which differ from other schools? (values)

6. Do you think the school's members hold a common set of attitudes which differ from those of other schools?  
(attitudes)
7. What are the types of events and the traditions that are recognized or celebrated in the school? (norms)
8. What does the school expect from students in terms of behaviour? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)
9. How would you describe general student behaviour in the school? Attitudes? Work habits? (values, attitudes, norms)
10. How are students rewarded in the school? (norms)
11. Do you think students' opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school?  
(values, attitudes, norms)
12. Remembering students you have admired, respected, or enjoyed, what characteristics do these students have in common? (values, attitudes, norms)
13. Given the assumption that most people forget a great deal of what they learn in school, is there anything that you hope the students of this school will remember from you?  
(values, attitudes, norms)
14. What does it take to be a successful teacher in this school? (values, attitudes)
15. How are teachers rewarded in the school? (norms)
16. What rewards do you get from the school? (norms)

17. Do you think teachers are knowledgeable about current teaching strategies and modes of learning? (norms)
18. Do professional staff assist one another? (norms)
19. Are teachers' opinions taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school? (values, attitudes, norms)
20. Are your opinions taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school? (values, attitudes, norms)
21. Can you think of some important decisions, issues, or problems that have been addressed in the school? How were the decisions made? What was considered? (values, attitudes, norms)
22. Are there any teachers, either present or past, who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)
23. What advice would you give to new teachers in order for them to adjust successfully to the school? (values, attitudes, norms)
24. In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good principal and vice-principal? (values, attitudes, norms)
25. What might a new principal do that would suggest to you that he/she was not going to be successful? (values, attitudes, norms)
26. Does the principal provide support, for example, in terms of time and resources, to improve instruction? (norms)
27. Do you think the school administrators are knowledgeable about current teaching strategies and modes of learning? (norms)

28. What types of inservice or professional development activities are made available to teachers? (norms)
29. Do you think the school administrators have confidence in and trust you? (values, attitudes, norms)
30. Are there any administrators, either present or past, who are particularly memorable? (values, attitudes, norms)
31. Do you think the school has a good principal and vice-principal? (values, attitudes, norms)
32. Do people feel they can openly disagree, confront, and discuss to resolve issues? (norms)
33. What do you think the school stands for? (values)
34. Do you think the school has a particular vision for the future? (values)
35. If so, what do you think that vision is, and from whom have you learned about the school's vision? (values)
36. The school has a reputation for being academically successful. Why do you think this is the case? (values, attitudes, norms)
37. If you had children, would you like them to attend this school? (values, attitudes, norms)
38. If you could change certain things in the school, what would they be? (values, attitudes, norms)
39. What are some of the images that immediately come to mind when you think about the school? (values, attitudes, norms)

## APPENDIX B

## Sample Interview Transcripts

Student

- Q- How long have you been a student in this school?
- R- This is my second year.
- Q- What do you think it takes to be a successful student in this school?
- R- It takes hard work on the academic side, especially. You also have to be involved in the extracurricular activities the school offers, whether it be sports, drama, any of the other activities. If you have a more well-rounded look at the school life, you get a lot more out of it and it makes you a better student altogether. Doing solid academics, you get worn out after a while. You need a bit of everything to keep yourself going and get a break from everything else.
- Q- Do you think this school has rules that are different from other schools?
- R- No, I think they are basically the same as other schools have. Their policy on drugs and alcohol, most schools have that. There aren't many rules at this school because students learn to respect the school, and you just don't do things you know aren't expected of you. No, I think it is basically the same as other schools.
- Q- Are there certain rules that stand out as being the most important?
- R- No, I don't think so. They don't really enforce the rules quite as much because we just learn to not do that, and some of us wouldn't think of doing that because we respect the teachers and students as a whole. I suppose the rules are

there, but they don't have to enforce them because we don't go against them.

Q- How would you complete this sentence? The people in this school believe in the importance of\_\_\_\_\_.

R- I guess just community spirit, both in the school and in the community of (city). We all work together as a whole. We are getting bigger, so it is harder to keep the school as more a family school, but there is still that link between all the grades. I guess it's a bit segregated with the junior schools, but from Grade 8-12 we are basically a family.

Q- What are the types of events and traditions that are celebrated or recognized in the school?

R- I have only been here just the one year, so it is hard. I guess the yearbook has a lot of traditions in it. That's the most prominent thing I noticed, because my mother went to this school and I took out the yearbook and I looked through it. Some of the events that happened, the track meet, the swim meet (Splash '89), they just seemed to keep on happening. When the schools amalgamated, they kept traditions from both schools. The way the prefects are elected, and the teachers don't decide, the school does. I've only been here one year, so I don't know many of the traditions yet.

Q- What does the school expect from you in terms of behaviour, attitudes, and work habits?

R- I think they have quite high expectations because our parents do pay a lot of money to come to this school because it is a private school, so they probably do expect more than most public schools do in the way we have to work in our class and our

general attitude towards school life. They do expect us to do extracurricular activities. We have to do two every year in order to pass P.E.... Last year ... force isn't a very nice term, we had to go into the city track meet, which was good, because it sort of stressed more participation than winning because we didn't do very well. Some of us did, but as a general rule we didn't do too well in the city track meet. It gave us an outlook of participation which is important even if you don't win, but we were forced to go into it. I sort of like the participation. They expect a lot of participation in extracurricular activities as well as the academic side.

- Q- You talked a bit about attitudes before, but what about in terms of work habits, the expectations?
- R- They expect you to work hard in class and they do help us in our study habits so that by the time we reach Grade 12 we will have really good study habits. Not only do they expect it, but they also help us in meeting their expectations. Their expectations are really high in the classrooms, but they help us to get there. By the time we get to Grade 12 we are ready for the provincials.
- Q- How do they train you, how to study, how to take notes?
- R- Well, they don't train, they just get us ready for it. They started off the beginning of last year, giving us notes (sheets, questions that would be in our notes) and that really helped to find out what they wanted in the way of notes and what kind of thing they were expecting from us. By the end of the year they stopped that and expected us to write our own questions and develop our own ideas

of what they wanted, which really helped. At the beginning of the year they told what sort of thing they expect from their lesson, what they want us to remember. By the end of the year, we knew from each teacher and each subject which things were important and which weren't. In that way, I suppose they trained us, but more it was basic common sense.

- Q- How would you describe general student behaviour, attitudes, and work habits?
- R- Most students in this school keep to the expectations of the school. Our honour roll lists just go on and on forever. There was a boy last year who didn't really meet up to the expectations and they warned him several times. He was getting really bad grades and that's just not accepted in this school. People after a few warnings will smarten up their act, but most people don't need the warning. They realize, yes, my parents are spending a lot of money on me, so I can't let them down or the school. I think the students really do live up to the expectations.
- Q- Do you really feel like there's a certain amount of pressure on you because your parents are paying fees? Do your parents put a certain amount of pressure on you?
- R- Yes, my parents do. Some parents don't. My parents don't openly put the pressure on, but I know it's there, but that doesn't bother me because I need to learn now that I have to do well. I plan to go on to university and there's not going to be anyone there nagging me to do my homework, to study. So, if I learn now that if I don't study it will hurt my marks, rather than

learn it in university. I have met some people that have learned the lesson the hard way and it's kind of nice to be able to learn it in Grade 9 and 10, rather than learning it in university.

Q- Do you think that students' opinions are taken into consideration when there are important decisions made in this school?

R- Yes, for instance the election of the head girl and head boy and all the prefects. I've been to another private school and it's just mainly decided by the Grade 12 class themselves and the teachers. It's kind of neat that we get to vote on it and the candidates have to make speeches and we get to decide which candidate does the best job. When they were deciding for a summer uniform for us, they were going to have a little fashion show that we would vote on, but that never came round, still, if we had any complaints we would talk to a teacher and they do listen to us. We have a Student Council we can go to and they do listen and have made changes for us.

Q- What kinds of decisions would you say the students are involved in, having some input in, and what kinds of decisions would students not be invited to participate in?

R- Students are allowed to decide what kind of things should go on, like extracurricular, the barbecues and things we have. How it will be organized and what kind of things we will be doing for it, which is kind of nice because it becomes our own little thing. Like the barbecue. The students have a lot of input into that and they organize a lot of it. Things like that we have a lot of flexibility, but other things like the way they

want to run the classes, we have a little bit of input, but just the basic running of the school we don't have a lot of input. The uniform obviously you can't change much. But we almost don't want to change that because if we don't have a good solid grounding and that sort of thing, and we know the teachers will do a better job even though we complain all the time. We don't get much input on the basic running of the school, but on extracurricular we do.

Q- Can you think of an important decision made in the school, and how the issue was resolved?

R- I can't think of anything.

Q- How would you say students are rewarded in the school?

R- The scholarships, the Provincial Passport which you can get, that is a reward for working hard and being in the top of your class. Other than that, there aren't the actual rewards except for the self-satisfaction you get from doing well, and it shows in the teacher when you've done well. They don't give you anything, but it's the satisfaction knowing that they are pleased, your parents are pleased, the school is pleased, and just to know that you have made something in the school. You have made yourself a little better and you know the school has helped you that way. Just the self-satisfaction.

Q- What would you tell a new student coming into the school to help them adjust more easily?

R- Just to be ready to take on whatever the school offers you and to involve yourself as much as possible. I think the more you involve yourself in the school, the more you will get out of it.

Last year, I did field hockey and I had never dreamed of playing sports because I'm not very big on sports. And just the fact the school didn't say, "No, you can't play very well so we won't let you on the team", that didn't matter. It really did a lot for me because I met a lot of people that way and it made me feel better about myself. With the Drama Program, I'm really into drama. I didn't get a part because it was mainly for the two senior grades, but I went out and did lighting for it. Just the involvement in the school. You have a better year if you involve yourself. Just advise them to get involved in what you want.

Q- What do you think it takes to be a successful teacher in this school?

R- You have to be friends with your students. I think students will have a lot more respect for you if you are more on a one-to-one basis and you have to have more respect for the person and not their position. Some teachers really irritate me when they say, "I'm a teacher so you have to respect me." I think teachers should have to earn that respect, especially in the senior grades, 11 and 12. We are going to go out into that big bad world out there, so we are not little children anymore, and I think they should be our friends and earn our respect. They do deserve it, but they should earn it first. The same goes for us. We should earn the respect they have for us. You have to respect your students and you have to earn your own respect.

Q- How do you think teachers earn that respect?

R- I think, to start off with they have to obviously be a good teacher and you have to feel you've

learned something in their class. They also have to take a friendly approach and not just, "This is your lesson for today, go ahead and do it." You learn sometimes that way, sometimes, but in classes, English and social studies, which take a bit more imagination, the teacher has to hear what you say and let you do most of the talking instead of them talking all the time.

Q- What kind of activities take place in the class?

R- We do the basic reading and do the questions, but mostly that is left for us to do as homework. The teacher will usually talk about the lesson that we are learning and then see what we have to say, especially in English and social studies. They let us do a lot of the talking. They want to know what we think because it is us that will have to write the essays about it. We're going to have to answer the questions. We are going to answer according to our own thoughts about the subject, and so they let us do most of the talking and then they give us the background information, and then we have to make up our own ideas about the actual lesson. There is a lot of conversation in class, which I think is kind of nice. Reading a book and doing the exercises is really boring. If it is boring, you are not going to enjoy it, and if you don't enjoy it you aren't going to do well. They really stress talking in class and getting your own opinions out. You differ in opinion to the teacher, but it's not her opinion that counts in the end. They listen to what you have to say, then say, "No you're off track."

Q- Does every student have to take part in debating sometime along the way?

R- Last year, we had debating as part of our English course and we all had to do a debate which I found very difficult because I don't really enjoy public speaking all that much. I'm a pretty shy person. At the beginning of the year it really scared me because I was one of the first people to get up there and debate, and I was new in the school and I was terrified to get up in front of the whole class and do this. I had never debated before in my whole life, but it really helped me because I learned so much and I thought, heh, I'm not that bad at it, and I got a good mark. It really made me feel good that I had done that. It was probably my partner, because she's a really good debater. I really enjoyed it. I was terrified to begin with, but when I got over that feeling, I realized that was fun. Eventually you have to go up somewhere out there and talk in front of a group of people, and so it's great if you can do it now in front of your class. It took my shyness away at the beginning of the year. I was less shy toward people in my class and they really made me feel good about it because they knew I was scared about it. They gave me a lot of encouragement and the teacher gave me a lot of encouragement.

Q- Do you think your teachers have some common characteristics?

R- Yes, they do. They are all very friendly. Some of them are a little different. Most of them really let you take the class and do the work for themselves. Most of the teachers don't pamper you and don't help you through every step of the way, which is good because you are going to have to learn to do it yourself anyway, and you might as

well start now. Our teachers have that in common, they don't do the work for us, we have to do it. I have had teachers who have done the work for me. I didn't learn much and didn't do well when it came to exams.

- Q- Do you have the feeling that the teachers in the school, the headmaster and assistant headmasters have confidence and trust in you?
- R- Yes, they do. They really let the students be who they want to be and they have confidence that we won't do things that are against their expectations. We won't, as a senior, go against the school rules that are the unwritten laws of the school. They do have confidence, even in the younger grades. Because their expectations are high they know that we are going to meet them, so they have confidence that we will meet all their expectations, and will be as good as we can. We'll put our best into the school. So they really do have confidence and we have their confidence.
- Q- To what extent do you think teachers are really interested in the well-being of students?
- R- I think they are really concerned about the students and I remember one girl last year, she was really quite ill, she had mono and all the teachers were worried about her. She didn't believe it herself, she was tired and overstressed. They were really concerned and that's just one minor example. They are really concerned, partly because they aren't just in here during the day teaching us a lesson. Most of them have some sort of grounding in other extracurricular activities, whether it be sports

team or a drama thing, they all have something to do with an extra activity. They see us out of the classroom, and I think they really care, and if we tell them something is wrong they will help us through it, which I think is kind of nice.

Q- What have you learned from your teachers, headmaster, or assistant headmasters that has helped you in a personal way or educationally?

R- They have taught me a lot, and mainly it was just to go out there and be myself. Don't hide away in the corner. Before I came here, I was a pretty shy person and I just kept to myself. If people asked me questions, I would just answer flatly. They have taught me to be open and go for it. One of the teachers, beginning of the year told me, "This year just go for it, anything you want to do, just do it. Put your mind to it, and you can do it. There aren't any restrictions, just go for it." I took her advice and I went for it, and it's made a better person of me, I think. I feel so much more confident.

Q- Do you think you have a good headmaster and assistant headmasters in this school? And what's special about them?

R- I think they are great. The assistant headmaster is my favourite teacher. She teaches me French. She's a really good teacher and she's a nice person. She'll talk to you about any concerns you have. She'll help you through. She's just amazing in the way she'll just go out there and find scholarship tests for people in Grade 12 to take to get to universities. If you have any ideas of wanting to do sciences, and want to go to any university you have ever dreamed of going,

she'll get you all the information and anything you could ever want about that university, and she'll get you scholarship tests for it. She's really good that way and she'll do it for each individual person. It's not just a table of books. You go in and help yourself. I went in, talked to her about what courses I should take, and she really helped me. She talked to me about each one and she didn't make the decision for me, she just helped me through it. The headmaster taught me English last year. He's a hard teacher, but he will sit down and talk to you like a human being not like you're some little kid. He talks to you on the same level, whether it's him lowering himself or whatever. He talks to you like you are one of his friends and it's a kind of nice feeling when teachers talk to you like that.

- Q- Are there any teachers or administrators that you knew of from last year or this year or ones that you have heard of from the past that are particularly memorable or stand out for the students in this school?
- R- My mother told me a lot about this school before I came because she went here and she said it was going to be different. One of the teachers is still here that taught her English. I have her for English this year. All of the teachers are your friend and they are there for you whenever you want to talk to them. You can go to any teacher to talk to. I think they are all nice people. They are not teachers almost. You think of them more in the sense of a person and not a teacher figure.
- Q- What do you think this school stands for?

R- Just to let people do what they want to, to a certain extent, and it's just a school to teach you what the Province wants you to learn, but they also teach you about life. It's a life school. You think about all the public schools that have all those courses, like home ec., the course you can't get in private school because they don't have the funds. I've talked to people at public schools who say, "You don't have the Life Skills Program." In a sense we do. We don't have the classroom course of life, but it is there in every lesson you learn. The school is teaching you about life and getting you ready to go out on your own.

Q- Do you think the school has a particular idea of where it would like to be in the future?

R- I think it wants to make more of a name for itself. Because of the recent amalgamation, people haven't really heard of the school as much, and because we are such a new school, (former boys' school) and (former girls' school) had a name for themselves, but when they amalgamated it was just like a new school. I think it wants to grow and have more of a name for itself. For instance, (another independent school) has a big name for itself, everybody has heard of it. People haven't heard of (school) as much and I think that's what they really want. They want a name. They want people to know that it's around, it's a good school, and it has a lot to offer as an all-round school.

Q- Where have you learned about this?

R- I think it is pretty obvious in the way that we are striving every way to make it better. Our

Drama Program is getting better every year. The year before I came here, I came and saw the school play. It was a good play, but it was still a high school play, and especially for me because I came from a school that had a very good Drama Program and it did amazing plays. In that area it's really building up and last year's play was just amazing. The sports teams are getting better and better every year. I think everybody in the school, students and teachers, everybody is striving towards making (school) better. Nobody wants to go to a school that nobody's heard of, or if they have, they all have just said, "It's a dumb school, I'm going there." Nobody wants to have that label. People want to graduate from a school that sounds good. They want to let people know, "I went to (school) and I'm proud of it." A lot of people worry when they go to a private school. Public school people always put you down because you go to a private school. Rich snob. So they want it to be good, and between the public school and other private schools there is a lot of competition. They want to let them know that private schools aren't just rich snob people, we are people too, and we have a better school than you. There is always that competition between schools, and we just want to let the public school people and other private schools know that we are just as good as you. You don't want to graduate from a school you are not proud of. The pride is there and everybody is just working hard towards making it better.

- Q- Obviously, the school has a reputation for being academically successful. Why do you think this is the case?
- R- The number one factor that shows you that it is a good academic school is the number of provincial scholarships our Grade 12s get. They got scholarships to the good universities in Ontario and the United States. It's got a name for itself, it has pretty good academic standing. In relationship to the other private schools and public schools, it does very well in the academic side. The teaching is really good. From the start, they strive you towards that goal at the end, provincial exams. They don't stress that you have to do good on the provincial exams, or you will fail in life. They help you so you can do well on it. It is a university entrance school, that is the main idea, and people that enter the school usually have university on their mind. They start to teach you early what is going to be expected from you at university and for the provincial exams because everybody in B.C. has to take the provincial exams, so they want us to do better than everybody else. They teach us ways that we can go about doing this and they get us ready for university, because there is a big leap between Grade 12 and university. Between private school and university there is a big leap because of the number of people. They are really trying to gear us towards that. They are giving us help whenever we need it, but they are trying to let us do it ourselves and not give us all that help.
- Q- If you had kids one day, would you like them to come to this school?

R- Yes, I would. Not for their whole life, though. Some people have been going to this school since kindergarten. I don't think that's right. For the last three years, I think it's the most important time. I would want them to experience the different kinds of schools, public school, plus it's cheaper. I haven't been going to private school all my life. I did have the public school background. I think it has helped me because I have learned to deal with lots of people and have learned to deal with that whole different aspect you get from a public school. I would like to send them to a school like this, but just for maybe two or three years at the end. I think graduating from a school like this is really nice. When going to private school you meet a whole different kind of people. It's horrible to say, you do meet more upper-class people because obviously you have to have money to send yourself to this kind of school. You do meet the different people in public school, and people who have not been exposed to that, would find it a big shock for someone who has been going to private school since kindergarten to go out there and have to deal with these people. Eventually, you are going to have to deal with people who have an entirely different background from you, so I think public school gives you that meeting of people from completely different background, completely different life-style from you. It's kind of neat to be able to see they are people. Once you meet them, you take them for what they are. So, I think that it's better to have it more rounded on

either side. Private school for the last three years, for sure.

Q- If you could change certain things in the school, what would you change?

R- I think the main things I would change is, they almost force you to do the extracurricular activities and the inter-city track meet, so you can pass P.E., but I like that because it forces you to do that, and you get a lot more out of the school if you do that. Just the idea that you fail P.E. if you don't do this. I didn't like that attitude and they didn't have that confidence in me at that time. It bothered me, because in the rest of school they have the confidence in you, but suddenly they throw this, "You have to do this or you fail." I felt I had somehow lost their confidence and it bothered me because you don't trust me to do that, you don't trust me to be involved in the school. That hurts. There are people out there who wouldn't be involved in the school if they hadn't done that. I would change that, because they have so much respect for you everywhere else. It shocked me and it was so out of place with everything else I've seen in the school.

Q- If you think about your school, what are some of the images that would come to mind?

R- It's a family. It's your extended family. It's kind of frightening how many Grade 8s are here. Last year I thought there was a lot, but now its .... For our school it's a lot of people, but you still get that family feeling that you can go up to anybody in the school and say, "Hi", and talk to them. They won't think you weird. "Why are

you talking to me? I don't know you!" It's kind of neat. In some schools you can't just go up to anybody and say, "Hi. How are you doing?" I've done that more this year because I'm in Grade 11 and I see some of those scared Grade 8s. It's kind of nice you can do that and people did that to me last year. People that weren't even in my class, and they would just start talking to me. It's just that friendly atmosphere.

Teacher

Q- How long have you been a teacher at this school?

R- This is my fourth year.

Q- Could you describe a typical work day? That is the kinds of school-related activities that you would be involved in, both inside and outside of school hours?

R- A typical day starts about seven thirty, quarter to eight when I get to school, and clear out my box with all the messages that have been left. Pre-school preparation and kids coming to the room to check on homework, sign permission slips, and all sorts of things. The day is filled with actual teaching. Lunchtimes are often short. Lunchtimes and prep. blocks are taken up usually with phoning parents or catching up on phone messages from other things, because I am on (school) committees. I'm also on Ministry committees, and I'm also on the Executive Board of the British Columbia Social Studies Teachers' Association, and so there is a lot to do with that. I leave fairly quickly at 3:30. I live in (another municipality). I take my marking home with me. When I'm home, I do marking, and again, I have work to do with committees that I have to do. Weekends too, I'm often involved with that. A typical day can involve, not just teaching, it can involve meetings, committee meetings within the school at lunchtime, before school. Department meetings. It can also involve meetings after school. Sometimes I even fly to (city) for meetings and back during the day. One day I started with a dentist appointment at 8:00, and I finished at ten o'clock at night. During that

time, I had four meetings within the school, including a District meeting that was meeting here because they wanted to see the students as well.

- Q- I have the sense that the school is also a busy place.
- R- A very busy place. It is also busy because it's very collegially run. I've taught in very many schools, in many parts of the world actually, and this school particularly is a school that is run by committees. Obviously, the administration has the final say, and sometimes (not often) overrules decisions, but all problems or issues are channelled through various committees.
- Q- Would you say that the students would have input into the decision making in the school?
- R- Indeed they do, through the Student Council. The Student Council actively runs the student part of the process. The Student Council actively inputs requests and reactions to decisions. It's from the student body and the teaching body there is a very nice relationship in this school. I think one of mutual respect. There are not the problems that there are in many of the schools. There are others, we are not problemless, but where efficiency of organization occurs, it seems to work. We do listen to the students' concerns, and I think they are intelligent enough that they can accept there are things that we cannot do.
- Q- You are saying that the school is basically run by consensus, to a certain extent.
- R- To a certain extent, yes. And parents too, are very active in this area. I don't say all parents. There are probably a minority of parents. We certainly get a large turnout to

Parents' Night when they interview teachers after the first report card, but for the walk through to meet the teachers, there is certainly a discrepancy in numbers there, for reasons you can ... obviously language problems, etc. etc. But, the parents do have input, and I think most decisions are made reasonably because of this. And if the administration overrules a consensus there is a good reason.

Q- Can you think of a case where that might have happened and maybe what the good reason was?

R- No, I can't. But, often timetabling. For instance, this summer, an exam schedule that was created, the staff pointed out the shortcomings and so on, and the administration changed it because of that. Some principals rule from the top. Here it's up, and like democracies, sometimes it doesn't appear to be very efficient. And also, unfortunately, allows some people to assume powers that they don't actually have, but they are relatively minor problems.

Q- Can you think of a decision that has been made fairly recently? What I'm getting at is, can we identify a decision to figure out what the issues were and how that decision was arrived at?

R- Off the top of my head I can't. But, if you talk to someone who is a member of the Teachers' Advisory Council, which is the old staff council, I'm sure they could perhaps think of something. They deal with these issues. I'm not on that board. I would not have time.

Q- Would you say this school has any rules that would be different from other schools?

R- No. Not really. Not rules. Our problems, I guess, are problems that wouldn't be a school rule. It is in the nature of our clientele and the fact that they are generally overachievers. We often have to demand that they relax and tell them to lighten up. It is a unique problem. It is a problem which ... high achieving schools in other parts of Canada. It's not a school rule per se. You don't have a rule that says you have to lighten up, but you have to be very careful. It would be very easy to load the students with so much work they could not cope. Our main problems all lie within this area.

Q- Would you be able to identify what might be the most important school rules?

R- I don't think we have a set. We have administrative rules like any other school. For instance, today, I caught a student walking down the driveway. That is a rule. You don't walk down the driveway into the parking lot. It's dangerous. There is a pathway and you are supposed to use that. If you have a bicycle, you walk your bicycle down there too. I made the kid go back from the top and start down the appropriate side, but that was just because I was feeling like that this morning when I came in. It does bother me, because I drive up there and it would be very easy in fact for a student to get hurt. We have those sorts of rules.

Q- Where would they be identified, those rules? Are they listed somewhere?

R- I don't really know. I guess they are listed in the students' agenda. I think probably there are unwritten rules, too. You are not supposed to be

in the hallways during class time. The students are reminded of these at the beginning of the year. They often are reminded perhaps during the term and as the year progresses. You are supposed to go home in "X" block unless you have an appointment with a teacher, or a class, or some other extracurricular thing. The kids often just sit in the hall, and if they get too noisy we just go out and pack them off home.

Q- "X" block is at the end of the day all the time?

R- No. "X" block is Wednesday at two. It's a catch-up period for all sorts of things. Very useful. We have those sorts of rules, but if you ask me what the written rules were, I really wouldn't be able to list them.

Q- Those are mostly unwritten kinds of things? Expectations?

R- Yes. They are expectations that have a basis in reality. For instance, the reason why the students have to go home if they don't have a reason for being here is that they make too much noise for those who are still working. That's a sensible rule. Like I said, the reason they have to use the pathway that was built for them is because it's dangerous. Most of the rules are based on safety, and learning requirements, and really there's no problem with them.

Q- Would you say there is a common set of attitudes or values that are held by the members of the school or people associated with the school?

R- There are many different values amongst our students. Even though they may come from the same ethnic group, they do hold different values depending when they came to this country, and the

backgrounds from which they came. I would say, the value they hold, generally speaking, is the value of education. All of them. Now there are exceptions to that. They all have different attitudes towards education. Some see education as a means of achieving status, and some of earning money. But, they have an attitude that they are here to learn, and generally speaking their parents have that attitude too. I would say that is a common value.

Q- Do you have a sense that there is a lot of pressure, a lot of push from home for students to achieve here?

R- For many students there are indeed.

Q- Would that be sort of across the board regardless of cultural background, or would that be a phenomenon of a particular culture group, would you say?

R- I would say, probably it's a particular cultural group, but not exclusively because it happens in other groups too. There is pressure from home. They would tend to be the exception rather than the rule. We have a saying in (school), "You do your personal best", and the kids laugh at it sometimes, meaning that not everyone is equipped equally, but as long as you do your best, that's okay. In many of our families, they don't take that into consideration. Best means an "A", even if you are only capable of "C+", and you are doing brilliantly to get a "C+".

Q- That must put a lot of strain on some kids.

R- It puts a lot of strain on a lot of kids. Especially when often their parents have spent a

great deal of money getting here, in order to get them into this school.

Q- Would you be able to tell me what some of the events or traditions are that are held or recognized in the school?

R- Most of them are related to culture, because we are multicultural. We celebrate everybody's traditions.

Q- How does that work?

R- We just do when it happens. We have the dragon here for Chinese New Year. .... The International Club gave us a little package with a lucky pendant in it and a fortune cookie.

Q- What is the significance of that?

R- Chinese New Year? This is something the Chinese community celebrates, and they all get gifts. It's their Christmas sort of thing. They gave us all a little card with "Happy New Year", and you always get money. Each of the teachers got a penny in this little packet. The dragon came and performed at the entrance. Two of our students are members of the society that do this. We celebrate Valentine's Day. When it is the 17th, we all appear in green to celebrate the Irish. We have Christmas festivities. We are not entirely multicultural across the board because there are celebrations that in fact, although they appear on our calendar, we do not celebrate because first of all we know very little about them and we have only a small group of students. The Chinese celebrations and the Christian celebrations are the biggest group, but that's not to say that's exclusive.

- Q- What would you say that the school expects from students in terms of behaviour, attitudes, and work habits?
- R- I'd say, generally, they expect what every other teacher would expect, only in this school one tends to achieve them more than other schools. You expect courtesy. You expect their homework done. You expect them to take learning seriously. And, in this school out of all the schools I have taught is probably the one that achieves the highest.
- Q- The expectations are pretty much met then?
- R- The students' expectations are high because the family expectations are high. I once had to reprimand a good student that I still have for a relatively minor problem. It was between the student and myself, and I expected it to stay there after I had dealt with it. I got a phone call from father the next morning making sure that his son ... in fact, wanting to know if there was anything the family should do to reprimand the student for this. I had to point out that in fact it had been dealt with. It was between the student and myself, and really it didn't have anything to do with the family. It's not often you get father phoning you to find out should he ground the student for the next two weeks for what was a minor problem, but something you have to deal with right then and there.
- Q- I guess as a family they see it as part of their ...
- R- As a family they saw it as, as I had found it necessary to reprimand a student, or discuss with

a student what he had done, that it was a reflection on the whole family.

Q- How do you think students are rewarded in the school?

R- They think they are rewarded by "A"s.

Q- That's reward enough?

R- That's reward. That's what they think. The honour roll. "A", it's term report cards. I think most of them are paid at home. I have that impression. I have no statistical evidence for you. I have the distinct impression that they, in fact, get money for their marks.

Q- Remembering students that you admired, respected, or particularly enjoyed, what kinds of common characteristics might those students have?

R- Curiosity about the world. The energy to do something about what they believe in. The ability to be content with what they can do and to learn to live with what they can't.

Q- On the assumption that a lot of kids will forget a lot of detail they learn in school, what do you hope children will remember from you?

R- I teach geography, so part of it would be academic and part of it would be character training. From the subject I teach, knowledge of the world. And you said, details. One thing we emphasize is that details change constantly and that principles are more important. Particularly in geography where countries' names change overnight, and history. Well, right now we are living through a very exciting time, and current events of course is important too. Adaptability. Broad-minded rather than narrow-minded. A willingness to accept that people are different, and circumstances are

different, and that others have a right to try their way. And, I guess they are subject-related, but they are also character-related. A tolerance. I hope if anything, a tolerance and making connections. I think one of the greatest thrills in my whole teaching career (and I've been teaching for twenty-eight years) was a student who last year wrote in my yearbook (a very bright young man who represented Canada in an academic competition in Grade 12 outside the country) who said, "I guess this is where it all comes together", speaking, relating to geography particularly. Because he was talented in every field, he has been able to draw everything together. If that's what I can do, I have achieved not only something academically, but also something they can use in life. I think in the end you can tie it by saying a knowledgeable and tolerant person. I think actually those two terms. A knowledgeable person would be a tolerant person. And that is what I feel geography has to offer, but I think too, that is important for life. I think geography is a life skill, and I think it should be a required subject, but then as an academic geographer, I have a particular axe to grind. Unfortunately, in many ways it is a very neglected subject, especially on the Prairies and totally in B.C. It is used as a leftover.

Q- What rewards do you see for teachers in the school?

R- The rewards are seeing the students achieve what they achieve. Not just scholarships. Our students do remarkable things that go unsung. All the city, actually, seems to, in fact, be ... to

zero in on all the scholarships they get. That's the tip of the iceberg. Our kids, their lives are full of the ... especially the IB students that I teach. They have to be because the IB itself, the diploma is so wide and varied. It's what they go on to achieve. Three of my students have just come back from working with Canada World Youth. One was in India, one was in Senegal and was removed with a student from Regina who allegedly killed his family he was staying with, another one was in Costa Rica. They are all doing things, not just for themselves, but for other people. Whereas, many of our students in the rest of the school are very bright and are going to achieve honours in their subject, but it's for themselves. They haven't managed yet to see that they also have a responsibility to humanity.

- Q- What do you think it takes for a teacher to be successful, in this school particularly?
- R- Nonthreatened. This school is very threatening to many teachers. It is academically threatening. Many teachers feel the bright students are going to put them on the spot because they ... know more than they do. That's true. Many of these students are very bright and have stupendous thinking skills. If that is the way in which you are threatened it will be disturbing, and many people do not wish to come here to teach. Also, many people do not wish to come here to teach because the load is tremendous because the kids are so bright. We ... I first came here four years ago. For the first few weeks I never planned enough for my classes. I had spent eleven years in another school and ... with the same kind

of students and with the same ethnic groups. I was used to teaching bright students, but I was finished fifteen minutes early, and I was always thinking, I don't believe this. I have to think of something on the spot for them to do. We cover a tremendous amount of material. You have to know a great deal. You also have to keep up with research. You also have to be able to make students think because that's the nature of the student. There is a pressure on teachers because the work is hard. From my point of view the work is hard. It's hard because it's lengthy and the marking is prodigious because nothing is multiple-choice. Their exam is multiple-choice in the end, simply because the government directs us to examine multiple-choice in the Grade 12 exams. You have to give them practise. In fact, our students are less successful in Grade 12 exams than they are, for instance, in the IB. If you think that you have chosen this particular school because it is within a group in British Columbia ... I'm sure you talked to (principal) about what they think of this school in (city). They have even sent people out to look at us. The students do very well because of that. They are just phenomenal thinkers, but the work is hard because you have to work with them. In fact, it's more of a guidance role. It's teaching not by doing as I say. I don't teach them by telling them. I direct their studies. They do the work, I just ask them questions and direct them where to look for the answers. Yesterday, I had my twenty-two students doing a field study component for the IB Program. They did the work, but I suggested they

look at the cliff and what could they see. They have to do it. I wasn't going to tell them.

- Q- Do you feel that the teachers and administrators in the school are really knowledgeable and up-to-date with regards to teaching strategies and ways in which students learn?
- R- I guess it is not unprofessional to say in general terms, that no, that's not quite true. But, I would also say there are fewer people in this school who would fall into that category than in other schools.
- Q- Is there anybody in the school you could identify as an educational leader in any way, or is it basically individuals are on their own?
- R- There are many people in this school who, in fact, are educational leaders in the fact that they have professional responsibilities outside the school. I guess that would identify them, but you are not talking about one person, you are talking about many.
- Q- Are there any teachers or administrators, currently in the school or from the past that you have heard of, that are particularly memorable? People who really stand out for being special for some reason?
- R- In four years, I would not really be able to give you a very good answer for that. It depends what you mean. There is one who will be memorable, but that's all I want to say. They're fine. I usually get along well with administration. I don't do anything that would come at loggerheads with them. In this school I have always been particularly tolerant. I have been a temporary administrator in this school, and it's a different

job from teaching; it's a support. I think we are always supported when we need it. When we are not supported, it is sometimes because, in fact, we don't deserve it. Normally, I think all our administrators have been competent and would earn the respect of most people. The person I would think of in the four years I have been here would be memorable because they do not fit the mould of administrators. And, in this school, unless you are competent and work efficiently, it is noticeable. It would not necessarily be noticeable in other schools.

Q- What advice would you give to a new teacher coming to this school to help them adjust more easily?

R- It is just the same as you would give to a teacher going into any school. It would be the problem with cheating. This is the thing that sets the school apart, apart from the other things in the actual day-to-day routines, and it's to do with the ability to succeed, and the demand for top marks, and the status of the family which is wrapped up in your performance. It's also due to the fact that many students come from areas of the world where cheating is endemic and a normal part of living, and you do whatever you have to do to succeed. It must come as a great shock that this is not a value that we particularly admire, and so there are strategies that one employs to make sure that the work the students do is reflective of their ability. That's the only advice I would give to someone who is new to the school that would be different from any other school.

Q- What do you do to ensure that that doesn't happen in your classes?

- R- You have to make sure that the work that you give, and which you are basing your term's marks, is work that is mostly done in front of you in class. Work that is done at home is of less value mark-wise than work done in school.
- Q- Is it the idea that kids might be getting a lot of help from home?
- R- They buy it. If you give research papers (which you have to do) there are certain things. You get them to hand in their notes, you get them to make an outline, then they hand in their essay. After they have handed in their essay, I always make them write a page on what they have learned when they were writing their essay. You can also ask them to give an oral report which of course is not as effective as having them write because they can learn it. They learn it off by heart. You supervise them very carefully. You make sure they can't cheat. The most effective thing is the IB Program where you can't cheat because they are thinking questions. I often give open-book tests to students because they can bring all their books, but it isn't going to make any difference to the outcome because the question is geared to thought processes. These are the sorts of strategies. If it is simple multiple-choice and learning, they will steal papers, they will ask the class before what the answers are, they do anything you can possibly think of. They will get someone to write their term paper. The homework assignment you give will be done or corrected by the tutor. These are standard procedures, only worse in this school because they have the money to do it, and secondly, they're absolutely

terrified at what's going to happen to them if they don't get an "A", even though they can't speak English well enough to write.

Q- Do you feel that this is a fairly open place? Do you feel that people can, generally speaking, confront each other, openly discuss issues and problems to resolve things, or do you feel that some people are really reticent to do that kind of thing?

R- I think people speak out when there is something that needs to be attended to. We do have problems. Some subjects think they are the only important things in the world. Homework demands are totally unreasonable. That sort of thing has to be adjusted. Generally speaking we solve our problems.

Q- It sounds like you have such a large committee structure in the school that there would be a lot of dialogue?

R- Nothing seems to get to a point where you are actually at each other's throat, which has appeared at other schools I've been in, because things are allowed to accumulate until they are insurmountable problems. Here, I don't think so.

Q- If you could put it into a few words, what do you think the school stands for?

R- Academic excellence.

Q- That's it, basically?

R- Basically. I think that's what the school stands for in the public view. I think we have another view of our students who pass out into the world, and I think that just academic excellence simply underestimates the ability of these kids. However, I think to the general public, and the

world at large, and certainly to those parents who insist on getting their kids into this school, it's academic excellence.

Q- Do you think the school has any kind of vision for the future for itself?

R- I don't think that has ever been verbalized. I think we hope in our own little way, that since we are taking a lot of students from the cultures that are so different from ours, and yet are making such an impact on this city, that maybe in our little way we can cultururate them and give them an inkling into the broader perspective of Canadian culture, and so do our little bit to perhaps prevent some of the problems that appear to be arising. That's a very grand statement, and I'm not sure if we have any effect at all.

Q- Obviously, the school does have that reputation for being academically successful. What do you see as the main reason for that?

R- It's always had a reputation for academic excellence. When it was first built in the 50s and 60s, there was a large Jewish population, and they have the same strive in many ways for academic excellence, and then as the Jewish population have moved north and gone to (another municipality), the Chinese have moved in. Whether they were attracted for their excellence or whatever reason, we are also in fair proximity to a lot of university people who live in this area. It has always had a reputation for scholastic achievement, but not quite the reputation it has now.

Q- The reputation has kind of kept the ball rolling in effect, you say?

- R- It has grown. It was always there because of the nature of the population, but the clientele has changed and people have moved out.
- Q- You think it is the people in the catchment area itself that are at the root of that?
- R- Yes. It has always been very professional and middle-class. I would say with the Chinese you have a great element of entrepreneurial, but that's the new values that are coming in, and they somewhat clash with the academic established professional people before.
- Q- If you had kids, would you like them to come to this school?
- R- I think so. The students are terribly interesting. It's a great variety. They would get a great education. I think because of the emphasis on academic achievement, and because of the fact that the students, generally speaking, are not poor, but we do have our students who are not certainly wealthy. We have super wealthy, and very comfortable, and then we do have another group. At the same time, because of that, we have fewer of the problems that I think generally affect other high schools. For instance, you would think that because of our clientele we would have a lot of gangs. In fact, really, they are not here. It's just a minor problem compared to other schools. Drugs, I think, are less of a problem than they would be ... smoking in the washrooms, that sort of thing. They are almost non-issues here. It's not that they are not there. They are so small, and it's probably because the kids come from really controlled backgrounds, interested parents (for right or

wrong reasons) and carefully directed. I had a parent a couple of years ago who actually came frequently to search the son's locker to make sure there was nothing there that shouldn't be there. They look after their children too much sometimes, but there is that strict degree of parental control that is missing in many of the other areas.

Q- Is there anything about this school you would change if you could exert your will and say, "Yes, I would like that changed?"

R- We need courses for the less-able. It's not that we don't address the needs of the less-able child, but we do not, I think, address the needs of the less-able student as a school. As teachers we probably try to, but as a school we have few remedial classes. We have them in English, because of the ESL problem. Math is there too, but in no other subject. I don't know whether this would be a good idea or not, because I don't think you would get anyone admitting that they need help. Far better to stick them at the bottom of a regular class with very bright students, and this would be the family attitude, I think. I think if you need remedial help, this is not the school for you. It's available, but because of the pressures on the children and the family, they often won't ask for it.

Q- There is no particular screening process here for students, apart from special programs, Immersion and IB Programs, but would there be any kind of an informal screening process because of the nature of the school and the high achievement? Do you think there would be cases where some kids may not

come to the school because they feel they cannot cope, or parents would think that way?

R- I don't think so. The problem is that the parents want their kids to cope, and when they don't, it creates all sorts of problems. We had one particular student whose one parent was a fisherman and his mother was a lawyer, and who withdrew their child after three years in this school. They would not accept the fact that their child was not going to be a lawyer like mother. He was going to be a fisherman like father, and this created incredible problems in the kid. The kid was a psychological mess. They withdrew him to a private school, and he will probably do better, and they will say (school) was wrong. It was a combination of the reason they sent him here, the fact that they would not accept that their child needed something that this school could not provide. The school could have provided it, but they would not have been comfortable with it. He will go to the private school and be at the lower end of the private school, but it will be smaller. This is why I say we don't provide except in our own classrooms, but I'm not sure even if we did provide it it would be accepted.

Q- If you are thinking about this school and forming a mental image or picture of some aspect of the school that would stand out in your mind, what would that picture look like?

R- I see the kids out of the classroom because I have to do field studies, and I get an image of happy kids. I don't see any kids, or few kids, that are unhappy. I don't see any fear in this school, a fear of teachers. I think the image would be a

very comfortable one. The picture that pops into my head is something that happened in my first year here. I took three Pre-IB classes and I allowed them to debate, as parliament would have debated, the hanging of Louis Riel. Should Louis Riel be hanged or not? Because I have French Immersion too, I allowed the debate in French and English. One of the classes got so wound up that they actually acted like parliament would and they literally took off and got so wrapped up in it. They had done so much research, they were going at it hammer and tongs, and the fellow who taught next door to me at that time, and who probably is one of the most incompetent teachers I have ever met, came in to see if there was something wrong. Normally he would not have noticed if there was any noise at all. They were making so much noise and none of us noticed. We were, in fact, totally involved in the process. We got carried away.

Administrator

- Q- How long have you been associated with this school?
- R- Ten years.
- Q- Could you describe a typical work day, that is, the kinds of school-related activities you would be involved with inside and outside of regular school hours?
- R- To try to describe a typical day ..., but there is an incredible variety because, there isn't one day that's similar to another, and that's possibly one of the reasons I like this job, because the variety and change from day to day is quite considerable. If we take two days ago, I arrived at about 8 o'clock. I have a certain amount of preparation to do for assembly. I give notices in assembly, bring assembly to order. That lasts about ten minutes. Then I go into a first-period class which lasts until approximately quarter to ten, and that would be a French 12A class. I have a study period in which I do some administration, but also look after the students. I have an administration period in which I would meet, say, (headmaster), or there are certain days when I have a double administration period. Then I meet for about an hour-and-a-half with (headmaster) and (other assistant headmaster) in order to establish policy, and also to establish the items we will use on the agenda for the following staff meeting. In the afternoon, there are two periods one of which might be an administration period, and the other would be a teaching period, Grade 11 French. In that afternoon administration period, I would answer all kinds of phone calls, I would deal with

discipline problems that have arisen, and also, I would write the letters I am required to do, or as I am today, I would be updating the prospectus for the next publication. That doesn't account for anything that I am normally supposed to do, which is to look after the academic program. In the letters that I would be writing, I would be writing to parents to inform them about the SAT or the Advanced Placement Tests, and in turn, some of the administration time I have would be in setting those up and administering them. In addition, then, I have to also look after the Grade 12s, so Thursday morning I start the day by having a Grade 12 meeting, and we discuss anything from graduation requirements to the graduation dinner/dance and preparing that kind of thing, the social aspect. Sometimes, during this whole scenario, I interview every single Grade 11 and every single Grade 12 student to make sure they are on the right track for their provincial graduation certificates, to make sure they know which universities are available for various activities, to know what is involved if they want to go away for a year then come back and continue with their studies. There is that academic counselling that goes on all the time. In the evening, two days ago, we had, of course, the parent/teacher information evening which requires that all the teachers be on deck (a) to introduce themselves at the beginning and give a little outline of what they do in the school, and then (b) to be in their classrooms to give the parents a run-down on exactly what they will be doing for the full year. On the parent/teacher information

evening, the parents go through the timetable of their own son or daughter, from entering the school at about quarter after eight, to leaving about 5:30. In summer, I do tennis after school.

Q- You act as a general counsellor here, or just academic counselling?

R- Just academic counselling, supposedly. You know it never works out because one of the first things I do in September is to sort everybody's timetable out. They each have a timetable by the time they come into school on the first day of school in September, but of course, they need to change, or they find they have a conflict. They've decided over the summer they want to do something else. I have, in the past two weeks of term, gone through about 150 total timetable changes and organized that.

Q- Would you say that (school) has rules which would be different from the rules of other schools?

R- Well, first of all, we emphasize that common sense, courtesy, and safety are the major guidelines. Then, we say cooperation is the type of discipline we would like to foster in the school. In other words, this preempts a lot of behaviour problems. The other major commitment we make of our students is that when they ~~enter~~ the school, we take the students aside without the parent and we say, "Do you really want to come to this school?" and if they really want to come to this school, they may come. We do not enroll any student who does not wish to come to the school, or says that they do not like the idea of wearing uniforms and conforming to the so-called rules that we operate under. We do start by having a

commitment from each student that they want to be here. After that, we say if a student disrupts the work of another student or of teachers, then they may well have to be dismissed. They may well have to leave. We start off by having two kinds of little forms, and one is called the "yellow slip" and one is called the "blue slip". The blue slip is a commending form, a congratulations form, and similar to the so-called yellow slip in that the student also has to sign it, so the student knows as well that they are being commended for something. On the other side, the yellow slip is the one that outlines the misdemeanor, and has again the student sign it saying that this isn't appropriate. It is passed to the home form teacher, and then it is put in the student's file. We find that those little yellow slips help us because it pulls a child up to say, "I don't find this behaviour appropriate", without making a big deal about it. It just says, "I don't like it, I'm registering it, it's in your file." We find that it works particularly well for a student who never does anything seriously wrong, but is a constant irritation, and when we eventually bring the student's parents into the school and the parent says, "What is all the fuss about? He or she has not done anything really serious", we trot out the yellow slips and say, "No, there is nothing major, but this child is a constant irritation and he's not cooperating, and we have the impression that his or her attitude is not right, and that we would like to have this child understand that we would like a different attitude." So, we have the system of yellow slips

which can lead into a parent/teacher interview situation. After the yellow slips, if there is some other kind of misdemeanor that's fairly important, we give the formal warning and that constitutes a letter that is sent home and illustrates the actual misdemeanor that we are talking about. This would have to be something like smoking in uniform, which to us is a major crime, or drug taking, or something of that nature that we do not tolerate at all. Even, students driving other students during school hours, or joy riding, that kind of stuff. For a fairly serious misdemeanor, we write a letter which is considered a warning. If the misdemeanor continues, then we would have an in-school suspension which consists of students attending school, but being isolated in either my office or (other assistant headmaster)'s office for the full school day. They would have the recess and lunchtimes staged so that they didn't have contact with their friends. It is not a pleasant state for them, but they do the work of that day. Then, if the problem continues, we give what is called an out-of-school suspension, which is ... to say that the student is dismissed, but we are giving him one more try. A child is usually only suspended for one day because again, it is a flag in this process of disciplining, and of course, if the problem persists, then dismissal follows. We try to go through this logical sequence and this process of law, in order that students realize that they are on a slippery slope and they better pull themselves together before they go too far.

- Q- What are the main attitudes and values that would be common to the members of the school?
- R- On that positive side, I would say honesty, I would say courtesy to others, I would say that would mean helpfulness, I would say initiative, I would say integrity in general, and I guess that goes with honesty. I would say self-discipline, and then hard work. First and foremost we say academics count, then development of the social attitudes, and also the physical fitness side of living are slightly secondary to that.
- Q- Those are the expectations for student behaviour, work ethic, and so forth. How do you think students live up to those expectations here?
- R- Pretty well, in that it is a very friendly, open atmosphere. I don't think I'm exaggerating when I say that. I think we have a cooperative atmosphere between both the students and the teachers, so that it becomes a friendly atmosphere. It's not one that is constantly threatening or menacing. I believe that the expectations that we have of our students can be met by them. I think that our expectations are quite high, but I think that is also a product of our testing program and our screening program at their entrance. We do have a superior clientele. We are aware that we have screened our students and that they are not the run-of-the-mill students that you might find in every public school. We are very fortunate from that point of view.
- Q- The students are screened then, so you are getting a better academic student in this school, and obviously this school has a reputation for its academic performance in the province. Are there

any other elements, factors that would account for the academic achievement, apart from that fact that you have some very good students in the programs?

R- Well, I would really and truly say that the staff commitment is the major area there. First of all, role models. The staff themselves are pretty hard working, pretty generous with their time, pretty active in all aspects of life. I think the expectations of the students are actually lived out in the lives of most of their teachers, so I think that plays the role. I should probably point out one thing. We are not totally blessed, in that we do admit students in Grade 1 and in Kindergarten, and we feel we do have a commitment to those students to bring them through to Grade 12, so that we do not have a totally brilliant group academically. Many of our students, do in fact, flounder, and we do support them. We do have weak students as well as the very academic, gifted ones.

Q- Could you point out some of the main events and traditions that occur in the school on an annual basis?

R- As far as the students' activities are concerned, the events would be surrounding first of all the opening, which involves an initiation of the new students. We have a buddy system that takes care of new students as they come in, gives them a friend to guide them around on the first day. That we find helps a great deal in the transition coming from the outside. Just for the first day, but then the relationship continues very often. We don't force that because I don't think you can

force a friendship on anyone, but we do ask that buddy to watch out for that other person, and if they are settled, there's no problem, they can back off. If there is a problem, they should either see to it or point it out to a teacher. We start off with a kind of social event. Also, on that day we have a leadership conference and commitment to the development of leadership. I think this is an important aspect of our school. We have parent/teacher information evenings within the first two weeks. We have new parents' evenings, in which we have a social gathering of the new parents and the teachers to get to know each other. We have a barbecue, and I suppose I should highlight the fact we have a Parent Auxiliary which is very very strong in the school. In addition to providing funds for all kinds of ... things, keeps up a level of spirit in this school which is quite something. We have father and daughter dances, parent and daughter dances. We have, from the Student Council point of view, dances at least one a term, if not two a term. We have closing ceremonies and dinner/dance for the graduates, quite a nice tradition. I think we have a tradition on this campus of looking out for the little ones which is very nice, in that the senior students are looked up to by the junior students, and therefore there's a kind of caring atmosphere that is fostered.

Q- You mentioned earlier that the students are rewarded by the slips that they get. Are there any other ways that the students get recognized or are rewarded in this school?

R- In the junior school there is a citizenship system, but we do not do that in the senior school because it would be laughed at, I think. We do have an honour system rewarding academics. They get a little gold pin at the end of each term and they contribute to the points that a house makes. I guess that would overlap with the concept of tradition because the tradition of houses was brought over by the founding members of the school from England. As you probably know, a common practice in English schools was to have houses that competed against each other, and we have that system which then spawns the intramural system of games and activities.

Q- I wonder, if you could possibly tell me how decisions are made in the school? In general, are decisions generally made amongst the administrative team, with the Board, the leadership of the school basically giving whatever decision, and the rest of the school follows, or would you say decisions are done by consensus in this school?

R- I would say it depends on the actual material. There are certain Board policies that are handed down.

Q- What sorts of things would they be?

R- Board policies would include the contents of the constitution of the school which have been changed three times in my life here at the school. Questions of, whether there should be morning prayer, whether this is a slightly denominational school, nondenominational school, or a totally religious school. Those kinds of policies are debated at the Board level. Fee structures would

be debated and set up at the Board level. Teachers' salaries would be set up at the Board level. Those kinds of broad outlines and guidelines of the school. Strictly speaking, the Board is the policy maker for the society because as you know, we are registered under the Societies Act. It's responsible for the large planning of the school. It also looks after questions of the grounds or questions of building, appropriation of surrounding properties, that sort of thing. The larger picture, the larger policies are put down by the Board of Governors. The day-to-day activities are the province of the headmaster. He arrives at those policies by discussing with (other assistant headmaster) and myself at our weekly meeting, then the agenda for the staff meeting is drawn up at that time with the addition of any topics the staff members themselves may have asked to see discussed. We have weekly staff meetings that discuss day-to-day activities. We all hear the opinions of all staff members at that time. Decisions are not made at staff meetings. The headmaster then will either make a decision by himself on the basis of what he has heard, or he may again consult (other assistant headmaster) and myself and see what we think of that. At other times, he may go back to the Board and discuss what was brought up at the staff meeting and he would see a decision then. For instance, the question of whether we have an ESL Program or not, that infringes on the day-to-day activities in school, but the staff did not make a decision one way or another. We made our comments and then the

headmaster with the Board approves that ...  
course.

Q- It is fair to say then that individuals within the organization here would have some input depending on who is affected, the students perhaps through their Student Council or through individual representation could make their point of view known. The same with the staff, but basically the final decisions in terms of daily operation, by the headmaster, or by the headmaster in consultation with the Board.

R- Very definitely. The headmaster is definitely in control of the day-to-day activities of the school and he is given free rein on that. You are perfectly right in thinking that the Student Council plays a significant role in bringing out some of the issues that are then discussed at the staff meeting. The Student Council is an elected body, and therefore they are the student leaders. In addition, (headmaster) meets on a weekly basis with the head boy and head girl, takes them out to lunch and hears the point of view of the students expressed to him. He takes all that into consideration when he then makes his final decision.

Q- Given the assumption that many people forget a lot of the details, the factual information they learn at school, what do you hope the students here will take away with them, from you?

R- What we say about our school is that, we do not prepare our students for university admission. We prepare them for university. In other words, we want to prepare them for life rather than the individual topics they may encounter. So, I would

say, it's the life-style they would take away, and we hope that would be a life-style that involves being a conscientious, hard working, caring member of society.

Q- What do you think it takes to be a successful teacher in this school?

R- Energy.

Q- Administrators, too?

R- Flexibility. All the qualities I just described in the students because those are, as I said, we are supposed to be the role models for the students.

Q- How do you think teachers get their rewards? How are they recognized in the school?

R- First of all I would say, it is their own integrity. They have to have the conviction that this is the kind of education that is meaningful and that the students that they have under their care mean a lot to them. I don't think one could work in this school if one did not have that as a base.

Q- From your point of view, how knowledgeable do you think the teaching staff is, and I guess the other administrators too, in terms of teaching strategies and ways that students learn?

R- First of all, we are specialist teachers and those specialist teachers are definitely well trained. I glance at the staff list and their qualifications would indicate that. I realize those are paper qualifications. We go through a rather stringent interview process and employment process to make sure that all the teachers we do employ are of a like nature. A strange thing happened, and I don't know if I'm supposed to

mention it. One of the things is for instance, that they would not be smokers. This is a non-smoking school and so one of the worst things we could do is to bring in a teacher who smokes and that would ruin the whole atmosphere.

Q- Even if they promise not to smoke during the day?

R- We have had that. As I said, we are flexible and tolerant and all those wonderful virtues.

Q- I understand that you actually like to see a teacher perform teaching duties before they are hired?

R- That is one of the little techniques that we use. We don't simply interview, we try to see the person in the environment where they are presently teaching.

Q- What sorts of professional development activities, and time and resources are put aside for professional staff to get this kind of professional development?

R- Every teacher has the opportunity to go to at least one conference. However, (headmaster) is very generous in his contributions to that. Not only are they encouraged from the point of view of the financial backing that we have, but also if a teacher covers more than one subject area or covers more than one area of interest, they are also encouraged to go to other conferences. In addition, teachers are encouraged to do marking for the Grade 12 provincial exams, setting the Grade 12 provincial exams. That we feel as a school, helps us to be totally up-to-date, and know what is in the Ministry.

Q- Are there any teachers or administrators, either present or in the past, that you would either know

about or have heard about that are particularly memorable? Something about them that really stands out to make them special? And if there is, what is it about them that has made them particularly special that they are remembered?

R- We have venerable old heads who are still alive and they are .... But, I would say in answer to that question, we don't have any singularly outstanding individuals. What we have is a very high calibre of general individuals, and I think that is probably true of our teaching staff. We don't have many olympic winners. We do have a couple, but we don't go in for the one personality type of enhancement. We rather look at a total person. The memorable thing is simply the high quality of the persons that have passed through the school.

Q- What do you tell new teachers coming to this school to help them adjust more successfully to the school?

R- We have social activities for them. We have a New Teachers' Evening on the second day of term, where we invite the new teachers to one of our homes and help them get to know us. We also have a system of subject coordinators in which every subject that person happens to fall in, that person is definitely looked after by that subject coordinator, so they have a definite one person. We also have a teacher's handbook which is a ... thing I produce, and quite honestly, a new teacher need do nothing more than read the handbook because everything is contained in it. My preface says that the first year of (school) is either like knitting fog or swimming in jello, and we

hope that this handbook puts a little bit of structure to the whole thing.

Q- In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good headmaster and assistant headmaster?

R- It has to be someone of an intellectual status. I think he has to be someone who is dynamic. I think he has to be there, physically, and give an exemplary role model, both to the teachers and then subsequently, to the student. I think it has to be someone who has a vision of what they would like the school to be.

Q- Does the school have a particular vision for the future?

R- I would say we do. We have it actually outlined in our school philosophy, and it simply states that we will try to bring every single student under our care to their maximum capacity. To foster the kinds of goals that have been established in western civilization. It sounds very noble, but that is what it states. The principle set out in our philosophy of what we stand for, and of course you can find the philosophy in our handbook, and we also have ideals that are quality, excellence, truthfulness, integrity, compassion, caring. These are the ideals of (school). We also say the school's goal is a simple one; to help students realize their own great potential. It requires students who are willing to give their best, teachers who can inspire. It requires a positive atmosphere where self-discipline ... responsibility, and excellence are encouraged. We also have a rather more sombre type of philosophy. This is supposed to help a student realize his/her fullest intellectual,

physical, and spiritual potential, so that students are encouraged to develop a true understanding and appreciation of all those aspects of human experience that will ... enrich their lives. It is something we try to keep in front of our minds. It appears in the front of both the teacher's handbook and the parent's handbook, and also the student agenda.

Q- Do you think that the people (teachers) generally openly disagree and confront each other and so forth to resolve issues in the school?

R- Yes, confrontation is a funny word because we definitely have an open line to our headmaster. One of his major characteristics is that you can always speak to him. You can always speak your mind to him and that is not held against you. One of the principles that I work on is, one can argue and argue one's point before a decision is made. When the decision is made there should be no argument. There should be support. Up until the final point, one can express one's views, one can say what one likes, but after the event, one supports.

Q- Do you feel that generally speaking people here feel that they can voice their opinion?

R- Absolutely. And do so at staff meetings, but do so, not in a confrontational way, but again in a cooperative way. The calibre of discussion is quite high and is ... they are also respected.

Q- Is there anything about the school you would change if you could wave your magic wand?

R- Yes, the physical plant. I think we are lacking in fine architectural surroundings for this school.

- Q- Is there anything else you would like to change about this school given the opportunity?
- R- No. When you ask me ... I would say that we are constantly working to ... to change, and we have a commitment to change, a commitment to progress, but strangely enough over the last ten years there have been incredible changes around here. We have moved from separate schools to an amalgamated mixed school. We have enlarged the plant, we have enlarged the academic program, we have created a new Arts Program with its own theatre, we have enhanced all the individual academic programs, we have caused subject coordinators to be formed, we have defined the areas we thought we would like to see changed, and we have consistently worked through these changes. At the moment, after the upheavals of the last few years, we're looking for a steady state. Some sort of consolidation of the school.
- Q- If you were asked to paint a picture that represented some aspect of the school that was important to you, what would the picture look like?
- R- Children laughing. I think there is a general feeling of enjoyment of what is going on here, both inside the classroom and on the playing field. I think it has been a major change over the last ten years that I have been here that children enjoy coming to this school now. There was a time when this was school, this was work, this was a chore, and now, since amalgamation, obviously there is the male/female ..., but I think it is true that the girls did not like going to an all-girls school for the most part, and the

boys didn't really profit from an all-boys school. The fact now is that if you pass through the corridors you will see a very fine interaction and it's not a silly boy/girl relationship. It's an actual respect for each other's differences. I think you will find that we are producing rather mature adults. One of the things I think we pride ourselves on is the public speaking and the debating. It is indeed phenomenal. We had a public speaking competition at the end of last year and the calibre of speech was quite outstanding, and it just kept all of us howling in the aisles. It really was superb. It was funny, it was mature, and it was incredibly delivered. I think we are developing young adults who can do something for our society. One of the things I really haven't mentioned is this concept of compassion and community service. We try to encourage that. We operate with Operation Track Shoes and also we have students with (home for the aged) and also (centre for the handicapped). We try to encourage some social conscience, for the lack of a better word, in our students, and I think that is quite significant. They come to a maturity level because of those things as well.

Q- Is there anything about the school that you would like to let me know about that I haven't gained through the questions?

R- No, I presume that you have asked someone else about the cocurricular activities and the extracurricular activities because they do constitute quite a considerable amount of time and also of energy for the school. The academics are almost a given and the energy goes in for a great

deal of activities to these cocurricular activities. The drama, the Music Program, the debating, the public speaking I've mentioned, but also to the teams and to the sports activities in general. The outdoor activities like Strathcona Park Lodge, and ski trips, and things of that nature.

Parent

Q- How long have you had children in the school?

R- All three started together three years ago. My oldest in Grade 9.

Q- Why did you select this particular school for your children?

R- I really didn't select the school, the school selected us, in a sense. As a figure of speech. When we decided that we were going to remove our children from the public school, we were tossed with very few options because there isn't that many private schools in town. So we basically went through recommendations, people that we knew who have children. We knew several teachers that were teaching at different schools, and we could take their advice against parents that had children going to the schools. We chose to take the advice of the parents, rather than the teachers. So it was through that process that we ended up coming to (school). We didn't necessarily think that (school) was better than (another school) or (another school), we didn't really know anything about it. It was just the one school that had the most appeal at that time.

Q- You selected a private school, though?

R- Definitely. That decision had been made because we had the three children going to public school.

Q- What was the attraction of private school?

R- Well, having three children, I can tell you I have three different views, to move down to private schools. Each one was very individual. They were very strong reasons. It wasn't something that we just woke up in the morning, and said, "Oh, it would be nice for them to wear uniforms." The

children weren't open to that idea. They really fought it at the beginning and in fact they still do. They are curious about it and would like to go back. I think they are starting to recognize a reasoning for having them here and accept it. They have adjusted real well. I had real strong reasons to start with, based on our experience in the public school. We had built up quite a few strong reasons, and we didn't know if the private school was going to be a solution to those problems, and it turns out it has, so we are very happy. At the time, it could have turned out to be the same as before.

Q- Could you tell me what one or two of those main reasons were?

R- Oh yes. I'm sure it is something a lot of people have experienced but never acted on as we did. Maybe they were not as in tune as we were. My oldest son ... I have three children and they are all very different. The oldest one is a good student, bright boy and very responsible about school. To him, school is something he accepts and he does his job. As far as I was concerned he was not achieving his best, because he is the type of child, who will, because he is very responsible, he will give you what is expected of him. He won't give you more or he won't give you less. He will give you exactly what you demand of him. That's his nature. When he was in the public school, I found it very disappointing because I thought he was doing work that I thought he was capable of doing better, and he was getting great results for that kind of work. In my estimation I didn't think it was good enough, but

yet when he came home and had an "A", I couldn't dispute with him the quality of his work. So we were always at odds, always fighting over it. I would say, "(respondent's son), that assignment is terrible. You have done a poor job on that!" And he would say, "No, no, you don't know anything. My socials teacher is the judge." Well, the socials teacher would give him an "A". I had lost the argument right there. Eventually, I approached his teacher and said, "I don't think he deserves what he is getting", and he was very frank with me. He was a man I respected. I knew him personally, and he said, "Look at this. I have 35 students in my class. If I show you the bottom of this, the child who brought the worst assignment, and compare to (respondent's son), and give him a "C+" which he really deserves, what am I going to give the poor kid at the bottom? I have to fail half of the class." He was doing by comparison, and I got a bit tired of my child having to be compared to the worst rather than the best, because he was getting an attitude that he was really very good when he wasn't. It was a false evaluation for him. After that conversation with that one teacher, I said, "Well, I understand your point of view." I don't agree with it, but I guess he is put in a position. I respected him for it. I know he was a good teacher, but I think he had his hands tied. That made the decision for (school).

Q- Do you think that (school) has rules that are different from other schools?

R- I think they have rules, very different from the school I have been familiar with, but I haven't

been familiar with many schools. I have only been through actually one in the public system and here. Discipline is one area that's different. More discipline. Now again, my children were never in high school except here, so I can't make a comparison there. Well, from what I hear through the kids, I know at (public school), they allow the children to smoke in the school grounds, and they gave them a tree to smoke around. Consequently, there are 30 or 40 kids around this tree smoking. But, I find that is very wrong. I would be very upset if they had this kind of rules in this school.

Q- Do you know what would be the most important school rules here?

R- I think citizenship is, definitely. Again, I am interpreting what my children are feeling. I think that's the feeling they have. They are very conscious about citizenship, and the fact in my case, my oldest son is a real jock. He is really good in sports, loves it. He was used to being number one in the public school, and there was never a question of whether he would make a team or not. It didn't matter ... into consideration, it was the fact that he was good. I think he learned since he got here, that his attitude is more important than his ability and it has helped him because he became more aware of other boys on the team who might not be as good, but he knows he has to care for them as well.

Q- Do you think the school here has values that are different from other schools?

R- Well, yes, I think maybe. It's not that they have different values. I think they have better

opportunity to express those values. They are at liberty to enforce those values a bit more than they were at the public school. I think they had values, but it became more individual's, so it varied from one person to another. The kids would be in touch with a group of people or a group of teachers that had certain values. They would relate to that. It wasn't as general as it is here. Here, we seem to have a more of a general agreement.

Q- It seems that you are talking about citizenship as being a key value or key attitude here. Are there any other things that you know, that would be considered to be key values or key attitudes?

R- Well, yes, there is a lot of things. Responsibility, that's also very important. I don't seem to deal with it. I don't know a lot of the things that happen because I think the kids have to account for it. The parents are very much in touch with the staff, the teachers, and the activities, but I hear six months later if there was an incident or something the kids have done. They dealt with the teacher and I never got to know about it. I think they do take charge, a lot of responsibility. They make the kids be responsible for their actions. I don't have a lot of negative points so far.

Q- Do you have a sense for the types of events or traditions that are celebrated or recognized in the school?

R- I am starting to. For one thing, I have a different ethnic background, so I have come to appreciate those things over the years. I am from Brazil, so I wasn't familiar with a lot of the

traditions. My husband is English and through him I came to appreciate ...

Q- What are some of those traditions that you have learned about?

R- It is everything you do, because Brazilian, South American culture is so different in every way. For me, everything ... is something that I had to deal with. In Brazil we were always late, and that's considered normal. Just about every facet in your day-to-day living is a tradition.

Q- I'm thinking of long-term traditions within the school itself.

R- I've been through closing ceremonies.

Q- What do you think the school expects from the students in terms of behaviour, attitudes, and work habits?

R- Well, I think I know what they expect, and I think they get it by and large. Behaviour, like I said, I'm extremely impressed with discipline. I think they have excellent discipline. In fact, whatever system they use, it works, because I notice with my son, he is the first one to criticize if there is somebody that is really off the wall, that's standing out as being different from the rest of the class. I noticed when we were in public school there was a real division. They had half the kids follow a set of values and rules, and the other half, if you did something wrong you were never an outcast. You always fit in with a group. Here it seems to be the other way around. The kids that don't do well, don't observe rules, are too obvious about it, they become outcasts and the kids themselves are the ... they are the first ones to cast them aside as outsiders. To be

honest, this is only my third year. I think those children eventually won't survive in a school like this because the experience they had, the two or three that stood out as not competing, they didn't come back the following year, and it is never a surprise when the kids come home and say they didn't come back. The school has instilled that value in the boys, that we are striving to do our best and if we are not, we just don't fit. They don't have a little support group to say it's okay to be different or whatever. That doesn't fit.

Q- How do you think students are rewarded in the school?

R- They have quite a bit of recognition through their awards system, which I don't know if necessarily I'm all in favour. It is nice to have those awards, but maybe not. I don't think you have to rub it in. Maybe there is too much emphasis on that. They are recognized especially in the academics. I think they reward them in different ways too. For instance, as a junior boys' school, they have competitions outside of the province for soccer, or different sports and things like that, and that comes back to what I was talking about before. My son again, the middle one, who tries out for anything that has to do with sports, was never used to being turned down because his ability was the focus. He had to deal with that, that the school will rather send a poor athlete to compete for the school, with a good attitude, than a good athlete with a poor attitude. I think that's a real reward to good behaviour. There is a real balance in the end and they learn very quickly that the two goes hand in hand. That

because you are a natural doesn't give you an opportunity ahead of somebody else that's not a natural. They have to compete on other levels.

Q- Do you think that the students' opinions are taken into consideration when important decisions are made in the school?

R- Well, I don't know. I guess so. I don't know how much input they have. Well, I have never heard anything. I never hear my children complain about decisions being made with regards to them, that they totally disagree. They may have something they would prefer. I think they probably do. I would have heard otherwise.

Q- Eventually, what benefits do you think your children will have from having attended this school?

R- All those things we just talked about. Again, I'm talking about three individuals and they are all getting different things. They are not necessarily getting the same benefits because they all have different needs. I think they will have tremendous benefits. Citizenship I think is a very important one for them to learn at an early age because it is too late when they get older to get those values. Responsibility and work habits. Work habits has been the number one thing we have gained coming to this school, that I found they didn't have any before. It doesn't matter what they do. Maybe they won't be scholars, and might not be doing Ph.D.s like you are, but they will have good work habits no matter where they go.

Q- As a parent, what are your expectations for teachers in the school?

R- That's interesting because, as we moved from the public to the private system, all of a sudden, I have higher expectations and only because I am paying for it. It's a funny thing. All of a sudden I'm paying the bill and I feel I should get something in return. It's the wrong way of thinking, and I don't do it consciously, but I realize that I do have higher expectations. What I ultimately expect from the teachers is that they are motivators, that they will be able to stand in front of my children and motivate them to learn and not just pass on the information. You are not going to get that every time. They are all individuals as well. I can't categorize teachers as all being able to do that because they are teachers, but by and large I found them to be very good at that.

Q- What do you see as being the most important qualities of an administrator?

R- That goes hand in hand with the other one because I think the headmaster should give motivation to the teachers. That's his most important job. I found that in the public schools again, that was what was lacking. The teachers didn't have guidance from the principals because they were too concerned about keeping their things in order from an administrative point of view. They didn't seem to get into that part, of getting the teachers motivated.

Q- Do you think the teachers are motivating students? Do you think the head and assistant heads are motivating teachers?

R- I think the headmaster is wonderful. I placed a lot of the reasons for the school to work the way

it does, has a lot to do with him. I can't say every teacher has fulfilled that expectation that I have. There has been a few that have been short. It has been compensated by and large by being better than the average. I know that if I have any problems, the headmaster is somebody I feel very comfortable to go to, and he would be very keen to look into it and help.

Q- How do you think teachers are rewarded in the school?

R- Well, I hope they get rewarded by achievements, what they feel is very high achievement. I understand that they don't have the financial rewards that they would like. We can't really compete with the public schools. If they stick around, they are obviously getting rewards other than financial. Other rewards are seeing the success of the students. I think that if you are a teacher in a very successful school where the children are maintaining a certain standard of learning, that has to be the best reward.

Q- How knowledgeable do you think the teachers and administrators are in this school, with respect to different teaching strategies and ways of learning?

R- I don't know. They have a very young teaching staff, and I think they have a very open mind on learning. We have had a couple of experiences where I would like to have more information about different areas with my own children, and I think the teachers that didn't know about it were willing to research about it, or to read about it, or discuss it, or try to learn. It is so important that they have an open mind and try to

learn more about what they are doing. I hate to keep making comparisons between the public and private schools, but when I was in the public school, a lot of the teachers were very old because they were there because of seniority. They didn't have a choice. I remember specifically one lady who had been there forever, and they had tried everything to remove her from the school, but she wouldn't be moved because she had seniority. She was a very nice person. I had her for a teacher for one of my kids in Grade 3, but she was doing things like they did thirty years ago. It didn't apply to today's society, and I found that very sad because she wasn't able to adapt and she wasn't going to, and I felt badly for the kids who in the meantime had to go through her because they didn't have a choice. I found the teachers here are all young and open-minded. I don't say they have the answers for everything, but there is a willingness to learn about it.

- Q- Do you think that the Board and headmaster listen to the opinions of the teachers when important decisions are made in the school?
- R- I don't know about that. I couldn't tell you.
- Q- What about parents? Do you think parents have some kind of input into decision making here?
- R- The parents have input, provided they are willing to participate. There is ... for that and we have a very very strong Parents' Auxiliary. I just became part of the Auxiliary this year, so I didn't realize until becoming part of it how much influence they had on a lot of the issues inside the school. It is very strong. I think anybody

who is willing to put in the time and participate, yes, they will listen to it very carefully.

Q- Who does the Parent Auxiliary meet with to get this across?

R- I don't know, I haven't had any meetings. I just joined. The Parents' Auxiliary meets once a month and we have an honorary president who is the headmaster's wife, and I never thought about that. Maybe she is one of the wheels between her husband and the PTA. She would be able to pass on the concerns of the parents in a better way than anybody else could. On top of that, they do meet with (headmaster), who meets with the various committees on a regular basis as needed.

Q- Are there any teachers or administrators, either present ones in the school or ones that you have heard of in the past, who are kind of legendary people?

R- Yes, they seem to honor the founders of the school. They celebrated the 75th anniversary last year, and my daughter came home. It was through her that I really realized how important this affair was to the whole school. She was so impressed because during assembly, they brought in the very first student who came to the school, and the lady who was the first headmistress. Well, she was really impressed with the history.

Q- Do you think that the school administration provides support, financial support and time, to improve the instruction of the school, to give professional development to the staff?

R- I don't know about that. I think if they can afford it, I am sure they do. Here, it is so different because everything is attached to

dollars, and that's the downfall of the private schools. It is expensive to run and they don't necessarily have the money to do it, and yet there are a lot of things I'm sure they would like to do, but they are limited by funds.

Q- Do you have a feeling that the administrators here have confidence and trust in the teachers and the students?

R- Yes, very much so.

Q- Do you think that people in the school can openly disagree, confront each other, and discuss to resolve issues?

R- I can only speak for our family, and they are all very outspoken. My kids would never hold back. Maybe, it's not something that was necessarily generated by the school atmosphere. That's the way we are as a family. I never have had the feeling that they rather not have you confront them. I never got that feeling. If I ever had a problem, I felt welcome to come in and discuss it. It's been open. I'm dealing with three different campuses and there is a little bit different philosophy in each one of them. Although we are amalgamated now, they are still very much independent from one another. The girls' school has different philosophy than the boys' school.

Q- What's the difference?

R- In small things, not large issues. The boys' seem to have, maybe because they realize that you can't treat the boys and the girls the same way, they are different make up and they don't respond to the same kind of discipline. The girls' campus is way more strict than the boys'. The boys seem to have more freedom to let loose. They allow them

to have freedom, maybe because they realize boys need that kind of freedom, but the girls' is way more strict. They have to be presentable, they have to be very careful, their shoes are polished, the way they sit, the way they walk around. They seem to instill those values in the girls. Now, we are living in a society where girls and boys are acting more alike all the time, so there is a bit of a rebellion.

Q- If you could summarize, what would you say the school stands for?

R- I think it stands for good education, to give your best at all times. I think they are very fair on that. They do expect the children to do their best. They realize the best is not the same for everybody, and they are understanding of that. So I don't think they discriminate against the ones that can't give the same level.

Q- Do you think the school has a vision for the future?

R- I think they hope they can pay their bank loan more than anything else. It was an incredible financial undertaking to build this school, very expensive, very small school. It's a business. It has to come first to be able to survive the financial burden. As far as a vision as an educational institution, I don't know.

Q- Why do you think the school is particularly successful in academic achievement?

R- I'm speaking for our case. The only reason is because they have really taught the kids good work habits. That has been the number one factor that has made a difference in the type of education my children are receiving. They came into the

system, not knowing what to expect, and they stumbled for the first year because they were not quite prepared to give the effort that was expected of them. Finally, we are getting results.

- Q- Do you think the teachers have a common expectation for work habits?
- R- So far yes, with maybe a couple of exceptions. Their expectations have been very positive.
- Q- If you had other kids, would you like them to come to this school?
- R- If I could afford it, yes. Unfortunately, for many people it is very expensive, and not possible for them to make the sacrifice to send the kids here.
- Q- If you could change certain things in the school, what would they be?
- R- I don't think anything that I would change would be that important. They would be so petty little things that would make no difference in what really counts. One thing that I would like to mention, also, is the one thing that happens when you go into a private school. Because you are paying the bill, it makes you way more aware, more concerned. The tendency is not to just leave it up to the teachers to do the job. You take a little more responsibility. You want to make sure you get value, so take a little more ... and I have found in general that the great difference in the school is that most parents feel that way. When you have a parents' meeting, I'm always surprised. I can't find a place to park, because all the parents come. I used to go to meetings at the other school and there was four people there.

- Q- If you could paint a picture that represented the school, what would the image look like?
- R- Now we are spread around a bit more, it's difficult to say. I get that feeling with the boys' campus more than here because it's getting big. When I go into the junior boys' school, from the janitor, to the teacher, to the headmaster, I relate to them, in the same level, just like I would like to see a very close friend or relative. You really get that feeling of a family. This is too new, the school is bigger, it's spread around. I guess ... that kind of image anymore. I still have that feeling about the little school.

Secretary

- Q- How long have you worked at the school?
- R- It will be exactly four years on September 30th.
- Q- What were you doing before that?
- R- I've always worked in secretarial/office management. Immediately before coming here, I worked for a small lumber manufacturing plant that was trying to get started with grant money in (town). Previously before that I worked three years at the intermediate care facility in (town). The same sort of job.
- Q- What are your main duties in your job now?
- R- Paper flow. I always think of the school secretary as kind of the mother, counsellor, lots of things besides secretary. Lots of paper, record keeping. I handle all the bookkeeping records, budget management for the school, in consultation with the administrators. All the student record keeping, other than registers, the home room teachers do that. I look after the permanent record cards and making sure the grades at the end of the year are recorded there. Making up timetables for the kids. Everything that has to do with paper that goes in and out.
- Q- Do you think this school has rules which are different from other schools?
- R- No, I don't really think so. I think the rules are pretty much similar. I am not sure that the rules are always enforced, but I don't think it is any different than any other school.
- Q- Can you give me some idea what you think are the most important school rules here?
- R- I would say that the rules are really cut to a minimum. I think most of it is common sense, and

I think the most important rule is being considerate of the other students and people in your environment. The one thing that really impressed me the most when I came to work here, after having children here, my older daughter was in Grade 7 when I began working here, so she had been here for seven years, was the tremendous amount of respect between the students and the teachers. I think that goes a long way, not having to say, "This is what the rules are", because people just tend to respect each other and each other's rights to be in the classroom. I know that teachers set up their own rules in the classrooms, and the kids react to them in different ways. In general, the school rules are kept to a minimum, and the most important is just respecting.

- Q- Respect, I guess, is a kind of value. In addition to that, are there any attitudes or values which could be said to be common in the school?
- R- I think an underlying value is high academic performance, and I think everybody, staff-wise, tries to contribute towards that value.
- Q- Is that what this school stands for?
- R- Providing an education in general, is what the school stands for. Allowing each child to reach his or her own potential is probably the best value I could identify. Whether or not they are a true academic student, if their potential is going to a vocational program, or simply getting to Grade 12 graduation, the goal that is recognized and reached, that is the potential for that student. I see lots of team work. If there is a problem identified for a student, people are

working towards working through the problem to help this kid reach whatever goal that is there for that person.

Q- What events and traditions are held by the school?

R- Christmas Concert is a big community event here. The gym is packed. People who don't have children involved in the school, come. It's sort of a major focus for the community at that time of the year to have. Everybody knows Christmas Concert comes before school gets out. Graduation is also a major community event. People don't have to be invited to attend, and lots of people in the community like to attend, even if they don't necessarily know lots of the kids that are graduating. We have several retired teachers who like to come back and see their kids graduate, and that kind of thing. I would say the Christmas Concert and Graduation are the two major events that happen at the school, that are really community-based. The school as a community centre I would say, isn't at the maximum use level, where in a lot of communities this size, the school would be a real community centre. But, there is a real diversification of activities here. The school is used, but everybody doesn't look at it as the centre of their social life, recreation, and that kind of thing.

Q- You have mentioned a lot in terms of behaviours and attitudes that are expected of the students in the school. In terms of work habits and work ethic, what are the expectations for kids here?

R- The stated expectation is, so much homework at this grade level, so much at that grade level. Looking back at my own high school career, I don't

think these kids do enough homework. I think the kids are encouraged to learn how to learn and how to use resources, and how to go about doing their work. And, transferring that into a job situation, we're constantly saying, "You are late. If you were on a job, you couldn't do that", so I think they are prepared well for moving on out of school.

Q- Is that a conscious effort of the school?

R- I think so. The adults talk about that when there aren't kids around. These kids have to be prepared to move on into the real world. The whole business about being late, encouraging them not to be because that isn't something you can get away with. I think the kids learn that if assignments are given, they are expected to have them done. I know I really reinforce that with my kids, and I get very upset when I get a note from the teacher saying, "Oh, so-and-so only did ten out of thirteen homework assignments in the last grading period." To me, I like to reinforce the idea that, that's your job. You have these assignments and you get them done. You can't just say, "I don't feel like doing that today", and I think that is a general encouragement of all the kids. Their responsibility is to get their work done and be on time with their work.

Q- If those are the expectations, how do you see the kids performing in respect to the expectations? Do they meet them in general?

R- In general, I would say, yes. There are always the exceptions, kids who never do homework and never intend to, and it doesn't matter what you do with them, they are never going to do it. I think

there ... there is a lot of reinforcement from home. If there isn't, you are probably not going to get much help in getting the kids to respect the work.

Q- Now that you bring that up, do you think there is, in general, a lot of encouragement, a lot of monitoring at home, a certain amount of pressure to perform at school?

R- I would say less so than when I was at school. Of course, I went to a high school where it was just a ... and you went on to school after you graduated from high school. There was a lot of pressure to do well and perform. But, in general, in the community, the motivation comes from either the parents not having graduated from high school and really wanting that for their children, so they will motivate them any way they can, not from experience, but from saying, "Well, you can't live at home if you are not going to school." Then there's the other segment of the community that's motivating because they know the value of education, and they really want their kids to get the most out of it, and they have their goals set for going on to colleges or university.

Q- So you think most kids are motivated one way or the other to perform?

R- The majority, yes.

Q- It is interesting because the one rural community I know well, about 10 % of the kids go on to university. It seems like a much greater proportion of kids go to college or university from here.

R- I think that is more a function of the staff than it is of the families. I was just thinking that

the third motivation comes from the kids wanting to please the teachers that they care for. "I want to do well for this teacher", so they are motivated sort of in a lesser way by that. I think that our proportion of kids that continue on to education is due to a lot of encouragement at this ... rather than at home, because most of the family at home don't know what is out there. High school graduation is the big thing, and they don't think beyond that. I feel that the staff here is very good at working with the kids, figuring out what they want to do, pointing them in the right direction, helping them along, working with the family saying, "This is a program your son would really enjoy. Can we work together and see if we can do this?" I think that is one reason why so many kids do continue. And, even a lot who don't go to school get accepted in the programs, so there are lots of years where almost everybody is headed in some direction.

Q- How do you think students are rewarded in this school?

R- I always tell my kids that good grades are a reward in themselves. In some classes, privileges are extended to the class as a whole in some cases, or taken away if the class isn't performing.

Q- Do you think that students' opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are made in the school?

R- By some people, yes. In some situations, I wouldn't say that it is always taken into consideration. The Student Council is just trying to become more active and more representational of

the different age groups, but it's still not a real strong body, and I wouldn't say on every issue they are consulted. I know on several occasions the administrators have asked for input from the kids on various things. (principal) has made a big effort to make sure that the kids are really well aware of what is happening with the construction and what they would like to see. I know a lot of thought went into providing areas for them to congregate. The kids' opinions are valued, and certainly if they voice them, they are listened to.

- Q- Remembering students that you have either enjoyed, or respected, or admired, what do those kids have in common?
- R- They are always pleasant to be around, and if you ask them to do something, they do it. They are not grumbly. They generally are better students academically. You do remember them because they were pretty special. I work with the ... yearbook and newspaper, helping with the computer aspects of it, and I spend a lot of time with those kids, and it is really neat for me to watch them learn. Sometimes it's very frustrating. Mostly, the kids I remember are the ones who are always happy, pleasant to be around, never seem to be grumbly about what they are doing or what is expected of them. Nice people in general.
- Q- Given the assumption that a lot of kids forget a lot of the details of the material they learn at school, what do you hope kids might remember from you?
- R- I feel that the most valuable contribution I make is in assisting with the counselling in that a lot

of the kids will come and ask me about different questions. I don't know why they think I know the answers about courses, about things for the future, school-wise, and I think probably the kids I work with doing layouts for the yearbook and the newspaper will really remember that. The only two that we have done in the last couple of years have both commented to me that they will both remember that.

Q- What do you think it takes to be a successful teacher here?

R- The person really has to know their material, because kids are really sharp these days and they will catch you if you are not well-prepared and well-versed in your subject area that you can go off topic and not get caught. I think you have to have good classroom management skills because the kids learn better in that environment. I sit in a very unique position that I can comment on these things. I think that a good combination between good classroom management in that you have rules in your classroom that the kids know they shouldn't step over the line, and yet, you are a friend to the kids, and they can come to you and feel comfortable with you. In comparison to twenty years ago when I was in high school, and it was in a fairly big school, you would never think a teacher as your friend, but I think the kids here do. They will go to a teacher with a personal problem. Sometimes, I think they do that, and I think that's a real tribute to a good combination between teaching and a friend.

Q- How do teachers get their rewards from the school system here?

R- Measurably, I think they feel good if kids do well on provincial exams. I think they feel really good when kids go on to college, or university, or vocational school, or whatever, and do well, or even go. They are particularly rewarded when the kids do well and come back and say, "You made it so easy for us because we learned that already from you." In terms of high school teachers, they are most rewarded when the kids are actually gone and they feel they have been successful with this person.

Q- What about you? Where do you get your rewards?

R- When people say, "We couldn't live without you." I don't intend to make myself indispensable or whatever, but the nature of the job is kind of like that. You are into so many different areas of the school and are involved in so much of what goes on here. It really makes me feel good when people say, "How did we ever manage?" The person before me was the only secretary the school every had. She was here for over twenty years. That was a big role to fill when I came, and everybody was, "We're going to miss (name)", and the kids, "Are we going to like her?" Obviously, there were kids who knew, but there were others who didn't. For me, when people come and say, "Thank you", "This is so wonderful you did this", and the kids say, "Gosh, that was wonderful. Thank you for helping me with that", that really makes me feel real good.

Q- How knowledgeable would you say teachers and the administration are with respect to teaching strategies and modes of student learning?

- R- Some I would say are more educated in those areas than others, or at least are willing to put it to use. It is probably true of all schools, there is a range. My overall impression of the teachers is that there is a real wide range between what I would consider to be a good teacher and not a good teacher.
- Q- Do you get the sense that the teaching staff give a lot of assistance among themselves, help each other out a lot?
- R- I don't know if I would say, a lot. I'd say probably not, in that you usually have only one teacher, two at the most teaching in each subject area. The opportunities for helping each other aren't great, it's hard. There is some working together in terms of, for example, the Social Studies Department person will say he's having this term paper, and work together with the English Department for putting together a research paper, and that kind of thing. They do work together in terms of the kids. In terms of helping each other, I see a lot of reluctant sharing of materials, but like I say, it's hard for the math teacher to share with the social studies teacher. I would say they probably don't as much as they might if there were a whole department full of teachers.
- Q- Do you think the teachers' opinions are really taken into consideration in the whole decision-making process in the school?
- R- I think they are listened to. There again, like the students, I don't know, even if they are right, I don't know if they have always gone along with their opinions. Somebody has to be a

decision maker. It is not a democratic process. Usually, the administrators have to take into consideration more than just the teachers' viewpoint.

Q- Do you feel that you have some input into the whole system here?

R- Yes, I think I do. I think because I sit in an observation spot, and I do talk a lot with (principal), and I think he takes my opinions quite often. On certain issues, what I say does matter.

Q- Are there any teachers or administrators, either present or past, that are particularly memorable? That is, people that really stand out as being special, and if so, what is it about their character that makes them special?

R- I am sure people will talk to you about the principal who was here before who set a very high academic and personal standard, I think. To me, the academic standard, everybody recognizes that, but I think he set a very high personal standard that the kids respected, and didn't want to disappoint him. I see a bit of change in behaviour in the high school in the last couple of years since he has been gone. He just wouldn't tolerate, and the kids just felt that. Sure, there were kids who were suspended for whatever reasons, but I think he commanded a higher level of behaviour than is expected now. He has definitely made an impact on this school. He really was the one who raised, I think, the academic standard, encouraged, really supported the teachers tremendously. He had a good background in education and had a lot of

experience in life that he brought to being a principal. In a lot of cases, the decisions he made might not have been the best for the school. He wouldn't go out and ask for things for the school, or fight with the other administrators in the District, that wasn't him. But, in terms of whatever was best for the kids and encouraging those kids to reach their potential and paying attention to all the kids, no matter who they were, he will be remembered by everybody who came in contact with him for that. Teacher-wise, a couple of teachers. One who has left this year, I know kids who have gone through the system, my kids, everybody loved him. He was very strict and didn't put up with any monkeying around, but the kids enjoyed learning with him and they knew instinctively that he was a very brilliant person who was a good teacher and could bring out the best in every student no matter who they were. Right now, there is a teacher at the school who, I think, the kids love and love to be in her class. To me that is the best learning situation because they will respect whatever rules she sets down and yet they know they are going to learn. I would say those three people stand out in my mind as being the most memorable, and would be for the kids.

- Q- What advice would you give to a new teacher coming into the school to help them adjust to the school more easily?
- R- In terms of success with the kids, I would say, be really well organized to start with, because the kids will pick up on any little bit, and so again, know your stuff, be well organized, know exactly

where you are going and let the kids know it, lay down your rules, but let them know you are approachable as well. In terms of dealing with the rest of the staff, normal, don't align yourself too quickly. Be friends with everybody.

Q- In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good principal or vice-principal?

R- I think that the principal should set the tone for the school and, if the principal lets the teachers and kids know what his expectations are, and he/she lives up to those expectations, then I think the rest will follow along. That is why I think (former principal) was such a successful principal, is that everybody knew where he stood and he never wavered from that. He was consistent, and he projected, sometimes maybe a bit of coldness, but everybody knew exactly what he expected of them and they responded well. I think that a person who can make decisions intelligently and stick with them, not be too wishy-washy. A good administrator is one who sets the tone for the school and makes decisions accordingly. And, not somebody who is easily swayed by power groups within the school.

Q- Do you see either of the administrators as being an educational leader in the school?

R- Not really.

Q- Is there somebody who you would see as that?

R- I think it is too fragmented. I don't think any of the staff have looked to any one person as being, "This is the person I think is a good model as a good educator." I think it is too fragmented in terms of, "This is my department."

- Q- People are basically doing their own thing and keep to themselves in that regard?
- R- Yes. And, I think they all have their own idea of what a good educator is, and it isn't necessarily the same idea. I don't think there is a true educational leader in the school.
- Q- Do you think that people can openly disagree, confront each other, and argue things out to resolve issues, or are people more apt to be reticent to speak, for fear of reprisals, problems, that sort of thing?
- R- I think there's a lot of after-the-fact muttering when decisions are made that they might have personally felt they weren't in favour of, but went along with the group, or the group dominated, or whatever. Then, I hear a lot of, "I'm not happy with that." A lot of times when I think someone should say something, they don't. I think there is dissension, but I don't know if it is always voiced.
- Q- What do you think the school stands for?
- R- Education of the children in the community, and providing the best education that is available. I think that probably this school, in our District, is recognized as a good school, and I think that there is probably families that aren't real involved with any school in the District who recognize that it would be a good place for their kids to go. Over the years, there has been talk about sending the high school up to (town), or just the Grade 11 and 12 kids up to (town). "Oh, they would have so many more resources and so much more available", and this community says, "You aren't taking my kids anywhere. They are

staying." I know I talked to a friend of mine who lives in (town), who actually graduated from one of the two schools, who recognized there was quite a bit of animosity between the two high schools and she said, "I wouldn't want to see those kids come up here. It would be horrible for them." We were all very glad when they started building this school. And, I think it was pretty hard to ignore the accreditation report which says this is a good place to be. I don't think that people can ignore those kinds of things, and maybe provincial exam scores don't mean much to Joe public, but people do talk about the kind of publicity that's appeared in the newspaper this summer, and your project, things like that. Everybody's commented to me about that. That appeared right after that first letter and that was early summer, actually after school was out and, "What is this award?" Everybody interpreted it as an award. People in (town) and people down here, everybody was talking about it.

- Q- I think you have actually answered this, but do you think the school has a vision for the future?
- R- I don't know. I'm hoping that we are going to continue to strive for doing the best for the kids and making sure they are achieving what they can, and that our academic achievement is high. I think that the community, of course, would like to see that happen, and of course the teachers would too. I worry a bit about kind of being in a transitional state, and good people are going to want to leave if there isn't a clear focus for where the school is headed. We have a number of teachers who have been here for years and years.

Obviously they must like being here. I feel a little bit of a transition happening. We'll have to see what happens. I know a number of people think, oh well, when we are in the new school, everything is going to all of a sudden be wonderful, but I have never been tied to physical surroundings. I don't know if it is going to make a big difference or not.

Q- You have answered this in various ways throughout, but if you could just summarize in a few words, the school is obviously gaining a reputation for its academics. Why do you think this is the case?

R- Because of kids going away from here to other institutions and doing well. I think the teachers, going to workshops or meeting with their colleagues from all over the province, or whatever, and people saying, "Oh, you are from (town)." I think that (school) is being recognized because of all that is going on here, primarily that kids are going out into the world and are being recognized.

Q- If you had other kids, would you like them to come to this school?

R- Yes. I'm glad that my kids are here because I feel they are getting a good education. I like the idea of them having a personal relationship with the teachers. I like the idea of it being a small school. The teachers can work as a team to maximize each student's potential, and I don't think you would get that in a big school. I can't imagine that in a big city. I am very tempted, although (respondent's daughter) is in Grade 11 and getting to the point now where I wouldn't send her someplace else, but I would be very tempted if

the opportunity was available, to have them experience one year at a big school. Just because I think you miss something when you don't have football games and a lot of the big school activities we don't do.

Q- If you could change certain things about this school, what would they be?

R- I think it would be nice if kids could get those kinds of experiences, and I don't know how you provide it. Obviously, no school really has those kinds of opportunities for your Friday night dances after football games. Where I went to school, everybody went to basketball games. The whole town went to them. You just don't. My kid plays on the basketball team and you go, and there is a few people sitting there and even the kids don't support it. So I don't know how you do that or how you provide more at a small school, because obviously you have to trade good things and bad things. Overall, I am happy with what goes on. I wouldn't change much, although it would be nice if they could have the experience of a big school.

Q- If you could paint a picture that represented some important aspect of the school for you, what would the image look like?

R- It's really my initial impression when I started working here, as I said before, the respect between the teachers and the students. I think that has more to do with the success of the school than anything else. The recognition by the teachers, that the students are individuals and have their own personalities and need to be dealt with as individuals and not as a mass. The tempering of discipline rules with friends and

fun. I think that makes a pretty good combination, that makes the school work well. The number of times I've seen kids here till 5 o'clock in the afternoon wanting to get something done, not just because it was due, but because they wanted to do a good job. Watching the staff most of the time wanting to put out 100 %, 110 % in some cases, and wanting to be involved with extracurricular and making this an overall good experience for everybody.

## APPENDIX C

## Sample Letters and Forms

Initial Letter to School District

May 15, 1989

(Name)  
Superintendent  
School District  
Address

Dear (Superintendent):

Further to our telephone conversation of May 12, 1989, for my dissertation, I intend to address the topic of the cultures of high performance secondary schools in British Columbia. I have tentatively selected one school from among the highest performing urban, rural, and independent schools, the urban school being (school name) in your School District. The intention is to randomly select and interview ten students, ten parents, ten teachers, one secretary or custodian, and all administrators associated with the school, during the fall and winter, 1989/90. Interviews would be audio tape recorded and later transcribed for analysis. I intend to provide copies of my cultural summaries to representatives of respondent groups for their comment. I also intend to provide copies of my findings to both the school and the School District when the dissertation is complete.

I enclose a copy of the research purpose and methodology for your examination, and I can assure you that if you agree to my request to include (school name) as part of my study, the names of the School District, school, and respondents will remain anonymous.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Yours truly,

Richard M. Jones

Initial Letter to School

June 15, 1989

(Name)  
Principal  
School  
Address

Dear (Principal):

I would like to formally request the participation of (school name) as part of my doctoral dissertation research. For my dissertation, I intend to address the topic of the cultures of high performance secondary schools in British Columbia. I have selected one school from among the highest performing urban, rural, and independent schools, the urban school being (school name). The intention is to randomly select and interview ten students, ten teachers, ten parents, one secretary or custodian, and all administrators associated with the school, during the fall and winter, 1989/90. Interviews would be audio tape recorded and later transcribed for analysis. I intend to provide copies of my cultural summaries to representatives of respondent groups for their comment. I also intend to provide copies of my findings to the school when the dissertation is complete. Should you agree to my request to include (school name) as part of my study, I can assure you that the names of the school and respondents will remain anonymous.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Yours truly,

Richard M. Jones

Letter From the School to Parents

February 5, 1990

Dear Parent:

(school name) has been selected as the urban focus for a research study on the organizational cultures of three high performance secondary schools in British Columbia. The researcher would like to interview ten students, ten parents, ten teachers, one secretary or custodian, and the school administrative team. Interviews will be audio-taped and later transcribed for analysis. The names of the District, school, and the individual respondents will remain anonymous.

Your name has been selected by random draw for participating in a parent interview during the week starting the 26th of February, 1990. Interviews are of approximately one hour duration and will be held in the school library seminar room. Daytime and evening appointments are available for your convenience.

Please let me know whether or not you are willing to participate in this study by completing the enclosed consent form and returning it to me as soon as possible. Please be advised that you are under no obligation to attend an interview, but we would certainly encourage and appreciate your cooperation in this study.

Sincerely,

(Name)  
Vice-Principal

Parent Consent Form

Dear Parents:

I am a Ph.D. student from the University of Victoria. As part of my dissertation research, I will be conducting a study in your child's school, with the permission of the principal and the superintendent of the School District.

The study will describe the similarities and differences among the organizational cultures of high performance secondary schools in British Columbia.

In addition to interviews with parents, teachers, administrators, and secretaries and custodians, the methodology will involve interviews with a random sample of students to obtain their perspective on school culture. The interview will be approximately one hour long. The interviews are not tests, but rather, they are information gathering devices which will enable me to interpret and describe school cultures. Each child is a volunteer and has the right to withdraw at any time during the study. All information and names would be anonymous and confidential. The results have no bearing on report cards or academic standing.

If you are willing to have your son or daughter participate in the study, please complete and return the form below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Richard M. Jones

---

School Culture Study

I give my permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the school culture study. I understand that my child is a volunteer with the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that the information is confidential.

---

parent's signature

---

date

General Consent FormOrganizational Culture of Three High Performance  
Secondary Schools in British Columbia

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent to my participation in the descriptive study of the similarities and differences among the organizational cultures of selected high performance British Columbia secondary schools.

I understand that my involvement is completely voluntary, and that I may withdraw at any point without negative consequences.

I am aware that I will remain completely anonymous in the data and in the reporting of this study, and that any information I provide will be treated as confidential.

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

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COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

I, \_\_\_\_\_, authorize you,  
Richard M. Jones to include the transcript of my interview  
in your dissertation entitled "Organizational Culture of  
Three High Performance Secondary Schools in British  
Columbia. I am aware that you are granting an irrevocable  
non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
signature\_\_\_\_\_  
date