

A REPORT ON SCHOLASTIC ATTAINMENT AND PLANS  
OF ACADEMICALLY TALENTED SOPHOMORES  
AT MANATEE HIGH SCHOOL, FALL, 1958

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The students in this study included those who scored in the upper 40 per cent on the battery of the Florida State-wide Ninth-grade Testing Program in October, 1957. These students were considered, arbitrarily, to be potentially qualified for some kind of advanced education beyond the high school level. The objective was to determine what proportions were making plans for such training and the extent to which they were making the necessary preparation. Certain other pertinent facts are also reported. The information was obtained from the students through the questionnaire and interview method. The nature of this method makes it necessary to interpret the data with reservations in some cases because of the inaccuracies that are inevitable in such surveys.

The results of the study, as a whole, present an encouraging picture. The great majority of these students recognize their talents, and with their families, are already making plans to continue their education beyond high school. The majority is also enrolled in the college preparatory curriculum. An alarming number of students, however, reveal school performance records that are considered well below their level of ability and understanding as measured by the achievement and aptitude battery. To determine what factors might be related to the poor classroom performance of many students, information was secured on the education of parents concerned.

It will be readily seen from the statistical data following that any major weaknesses in the preparation of students for advanced work is not altogether attributable to the school programs. A primary factor associated with inadequate student preparation appears to lie in the home. Table 1 presents actual data on this condition.

Table 1

Relation of Parental Education to School Performance  
of Academically Talented Students

	Group A Mother is College Graduate		Group B Mother is not College Graduate	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Proportion, "B" average or above	28	82	17	45
Proportion, "C" average or less	6	18	21	55
Total	34	100	38	100

Those students who have a parent with academic background tend to obtain high grades in school. If their parents have not finished high school, however, the students tend to obtain lower grades, even though they appear to be learning at a level comparable to the students in Group A. There is no evidence that lack of parental education is the actual cause of low student performance, but its association cannot be overlooked.

Table 2 presents additional data on student plans and performance as they are related to varying degrees of parental education. The rows show the proportion of students, with the indicated parental education, who plan continued education beyond high school, are enrolled in the college preparatory curriculum, need financial help, and are underachievers. A distinct relationship exists between each category, providing the advantage to students whose parents are college trained.

Table 2

The Relationship of Certain Student Characteristics  
to the Educational Background of Their Parents

	Proportion of Parents		Students Planning Higher Education		Enrolled in College Prep Classes		Need Financial Help		Underachievers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Both Having College Degree	14	8	14	100	14	100	2	14	3	21
One Having College Degree	26	14	26	100	26	100	5	19	6	23
One or Both Having Some College	28	15	24	85	26	93	16	57	10	36
Both Having H. S. Certificate	39	22	26	67	29	75	20	52	14	35
One Having H. S. Certificate	41	23	27	66	31	76	30	73	14	34
Both Having Less Than 4 Yrs. H. S.	32	18	17	53	19	60	20	63	17	52
Total	180	100	134	75	145	81	93	52	64	36

These data suggest that counseling and guidance are especially important at this stage in the students' lives. They further suggest that the counseling be directed to parents, since their own background so profoundly influences the future of their children. The importance of acting early is readily observed in the fact that those students who will be in greatest need for scholarships and loans will be the least eligible.

Further studies are now being planned to determine the effectiveness of counseling with parents whose children are talented but indicate poor prognosis for continued education.