

**SELECTED FACTORS AND PERCEPTIONS INFLUENCING  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NOT TO ATTEND  
MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

By

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**1985**

**Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
December, 1994**

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express his gratitude to Dr. James White for his support and assistance. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Robert Terry, Dr. James Key, Dr. Gerald Bass, and Dr. Eddie Finley for their encouragement and advice.

Appreciation is also extended to the students, faculty, and administration of Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Guthrie, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, Perkins-Tryon, Pawnee, Perry, and Stillwater schools for their assistance in completion of the study.

A sincere "thank you" is due to the very special people at Meridian Technology Center who assisted me every step of the way by providing continual encouragement and support.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

At an early age, high school students are asked to plan their future careers. Increased college entrance requirements help dictate in which academic courses "college-bound" students must enroll during high school. Increased college tuition fees force many students to look closely at the financial burdens they will encounter throughout a college education. Today's skilled labor force requires high levels of academic and technical expertise which must be acquired somewhere. These are only a few of the issues facing today's high school students.

Each year, Meridian Technology Center assists hundreds of students within its district through career counseling, skills training, leadership development, job placement, as well as a variety of other services. In fact, Meridian Technology Center offers 22 different areas of skills training in 14 programs to the district's high school students. These students are given the chance to enroll in the various programs before enrollment is offered to new adults who wish to take advantage of the training opportunities.

Meridian Technology Center employees could do a better job of helping with the important issues affecting high school students if they knew and understood the barriers preventing many students from attending Meridian Technology Center.

### Problem

Meridian Technology Center offers high school students an opportunity to train for careers in a variety of programs which would prepare them for a future in the military, college or labor force. Are there circumstances, situations and influences present which high school students perceive that prevent them from taking advantage of the opportunity to attend Meridian Technology Center?

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the importance of selected factors and perceptions which prevent high school students from attending daytime programs at Meridian Technology Center.

### Objectives

1. To rank, according to importance, selected factors which prevent daytime high school students from attending Meridian Technology Center as perceived by junior students within the district who did not attend.
2. To describe the perceptions of high school juniors who did not attend Meridian Technology Center.
3. To describe observable differences among students attending large and small schools within the Meridian Technology Center District and their perceptions of Meridian Technology Center.

### Assumptions

1. The respondents answered the survey questions honestly and to the best of their understanding.
2. The survey instrument elicited the responses for which it was designed.

### Scope of the Study

The scope of this study involved 658 high school juniors who chose not to attend Meridian Technology Center during the 1994-95 school year but who were enrolled in one of the ten high schools within Meridian Technology Center District.

### Definitions

Adult Students - Persons not attending high school who are over the age of eighteen years.

Daytime Adult Students - Individuals over the age of 18 that are enrolled in daytime programs at an area vocational-technical school.

In-District Students - Students whose hometowns' school districts are members of the Meridian Technology Center district. These include: Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Guthrie, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, Perkins-Tryon, Pawnee, Perry, and Stillwater.

Institutions of Higher Education - Institutions that offer college degrees to graduates of their programs.

Daytime Programs - Regular training classes offered at Meridian Technology Center between the hours of 8:15 a.m. and 3:35 p.m.

These include: Air Conditioning/Refrigeration, Auto Body, Automotive/Diesel Technology, Business Training Center, Commercial Food Production, Cosmetology, Drafting, Electronic Systems and Applications, Health Science Technology, Home and Business Services, Masonry, Metal Fabrication, Residential and Commercial Construction, and Vocational Careers. (Licensed Practical Nursing and Radiologic Technology are offered during the daytime but are not open to high school enrollment.)

Small High Schools - High schools with less than 100 students per class (Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, Perkins-Tryon, Pawnee, and Perry).

Large High Schools - High schools with more than 100 per class (Guthrie and Stillwater).

Meridian Technology Center - (Formerly known as Indian Meridian Area Vocational-Technical School, District 16). Meridian Technology Center became a legal entity under the name of Indian Meridian Area Vocational-Technical School, District No. 16, on July 1, 1973 with Dr. Fred A. Shultz as its superintendent. In August 1975, classes began in the newly constructed building with 13 daytime programs and a staff of approximately 30. In addition to serving high school students and adults in the full-time day programs, short-term evening courses were also offered which served 1,635 student the first year. The facility, located on 70 acres west of Stillwater just south of High way 51, began with 92,000 square feet, which has increased to over 182,000.

During the succeeding years, the school has grown to 31 daytime and adult full-time programs (with approximately 900 students attending in this area alone). The school employs over 100 full-time employees; additionally, approximately 300 instructors are employed on a short-term adult basis. Total enrollment for last school year, which includes short-term adult courses, business and industry training, daytime instruction, full-time adult programs, and customized training, was over 10,000 students.

Sending Schools - In-district high schools.

Secondary Students - Students in ninth through twelfth grades.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Legislative Background

Throughout most of the early and mid-twentieth century, vocational offerings to high school students were somewhat limited. Vocational agriculture and home economics were available at most high schools within Oklahoma. However, as society and the industrial world began to become increasingly technical and advanced, the need for a more skilled labor force started to persuade the government to look at various options. Consequently, legislation passed in the early 1960s allowed phenomenal growth within vocational education to occur.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 assisted in two ways. First, it helped in the development of vocational programs across America which could be staffed with personnel to provide instruction to people of all ages. Second, the Vocational Education Act provided funding for the construction of facilities for area vocational-technical schools. These schools would make the programs more accessible to a larger number of individuals (Mobley and Barlow, 1965, p. 195). In addition to the 1963 Act, the Vocational Education Amendment of 1968 (Public Law 90-576) used federal funds to increase appropriations for vocational education.

These two acts solidified a place for area vocational-technical schools within vocational education.

#### Industry Needs

Vocational education uses a hands-on approach to teaching which helps prepare its students to make the transition into the business and industry workforce. Meridian Technology Center has continuously responded to the changing needs of industry by updating, adding, or dropping programs to better serve the Meridian Technology Center district residents.

In a study by Angresano (1980, p. 335) on the relationship between the output of vocational training programs and job accession throughout Tennessee, employers were surveyed to determine the factors they considered important in finding quality workers. One aspect of the study showed that employers most often believed that one of the values of vocational-technical training was completers who have sufficient basic and technical skills to be inexpensively trained by the employer to become a valuable worker. The analysis by Angresano was valid in 1980, but industry has rapidly moved into the 1990s.

Research by Hines (1993, p. 56) on transferable skills and future jobs indicated that "the single most desirable quality of tomorrow's workers is the ability to learn or adapt to changing conditions." The reasoning behind this conclusion was relatively simple to understand. Modern technology, as well as the job market, adapted to match the needs of constant change. As the process

unfolded, people changed jobs and even careers many times. The days of lifetime employment in the same career or at the same company ended. Consequently, the vocational-technical system within Oklahoma kept pace with changes in industry and developed today's system.

### Career Counseling

In recent decades, people have lived in a time of rapid change. The assumption that one will settle down to a lifetime career has become almost increasingly obsolete. This is made more clear by a statement by Joan Schippmann (1994, p. 1) while explaining the

American worker will have two to five careers in his or her lifetime! 50% of the occupations we know today will have disappeared by the year 2000, to be replaced by jobs yet to be developed!

The acceleration of change has become evident not only by new technologies in business and industry but also by shifting family roles and lifestyles. This phenomenon has impacted high school students across Oklahoma. Over the last few years, students have needed more guidance than ever before. A few areas of assistance which have been made available to them by many vocational technical schools across the state (Meridian Technology Center included) is career counseling. Career counseling offers personalized consultation and assessment for individuals of all ages who are exploring new career or life options. High school students are guided through various aptitude, academic, interest, and value



assessment which prepare them for the interpretations provided by counselors who are professionals in career planning and development.

Students and counselors at Meridian Technology Center explore the career opportunities and interests through self-assessments, labor market analyses, studies of business and industry trends, etc., until the students feel sure about their program choices and resulting career paths.

This philosophy agrees with a recent publication by Kathy Leftwich (1994, p. 29) about jobs in 2005.

In addition to focusing on occupational fields that will produce lots of jobs in the years ahead, students preparing for the workforce also should consider factors like pay and career advancement.

Ethical, professional, and well-trained career counselors at Meridian Technology Center have worked hard to develop a program which is one of the strongest career counseling programs in the state of Oklahoma.

Frosty Troy (1992, p. 1) referred to the vocational-technical education system as the "Oklahoma Miracle."

The future of public education must transcend test scores, tailored to a market with genuine jobs, not be restricted by age or ability. Only 59 percent of graduating seniors enroll in college, only 30 percent end up with degrees.

Career counseling utilizes a broad variety of assessment tools and professionally accepted practices to help many students find an appropriate beginning vocation. Counselors then help students develop qualities within themselves which will help them to be able to adapt to future unforeseen changes.

### Enrollment Trends

Since Meridian Technology Center opened for students in 1975, the school has experienced changing enrollment trends within its daytime programs. Various factors have contributed to these trends; consequently, an overview of this topic might help explain the various reasons why some students choose to not attend Meridian Technology Center.

To the more traditional, many programs offered at Meridian Technology Center appear to be designed for either boys or girls. However, since 1975, the barriers and sexual stereotypes have slowly been disappearing. According to Hickey and Vetter (1986, p. 28), the reason for increased non-traditional students can be attributed to several legislative acts, but, specifically, the Title IX Educational Amendment and the Carl D. Perkins Act. The original Title IX Educational Amendment of 1972 prohibited sex discrimination in federally supported programs and was amended in 1972 to include vocational education. When these amendments passed, there was an increase in women entering the programs that were traditionally perceived to be "male-oriented"; consequently, there was an increase of female high school students attending non-traditional vocational-technical education programs.

Institutions of higher education have always had an impact on vocational education. As the entrance requirements have become more stringent during recent years, high school students have had a harder time trying to fit vocational courses into their "college-bound" curriculum, thus reducing the number of students who are

eligible to attend. Furthermore, most colleges and universities have increased tuition charges; consequently, more high school students are looking to area vocational-technical schools as a viable option to prepare for careers in business or industry or to put themselves through college.

The most significant trend at Meridian Technology Center over the last four years centers around the proportion of high school students to adults. A statistical breakdown of these changes is included in Table I.

The Meridian Technology Center high school enrollment information which is presented in Table I varied from the statewide summary of secondary students enrolled in area vocational-technical schools found in Table II. Although both summaries showed an increase in the percentage of secondary enrollment, the statewide trend was very slight and appeared to have very little significance. The upward trend at Meridian Technology Center was much greater, showing a great deal of significance.

If the trend toward increasing high school enrollment continues within the Meridian Technology Center district, it will become increasingly more important for high school students to attend during their junior and senior years; there may not be sufficient space for them to be accepted into the program of their choice as adults.

TABLE I

A SUMMARY OF SECONDARY ENROLLMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF SECONDARY STUDENTS ATTENDING MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS

| Year        | Percent (%) of Secondary Students | Percent (%) Increase from Previous School Year |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1994 - 1995 | 79                                | 8  |
| 1993 - 1994 | 71                                | 9  |
| 1993 - 1993 | 62                                | 13   |
| 1991 - 1992 | 49                                | Unknown  |

TABLE II

A SUMMARY OF SECONDARY ENROLLMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF SECONDARY STUDENTS ATTENDING AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS DURING THE PAST SIX YEARS

| Year        | Percent (%) of Secondary Students | Percent (%) Increase from Previous School Year |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1994 - 1995 | Summary not available             | Percent unknown                                |
| 1993 - 1994 | 14,554                            | Percent Unknown                                |
| 1992 - 1993 | 14,447                            | 0.74   |
| 1991 - 1992 | 13,581                            | 6.38   |
| 1990 - 1991 | 13,719                            | -1.01  |
| 1989 - 1990 | 13,467                            | 1.87   |

### Previous Studies

Two previous studies have been conducted on selected factors influencing Meridian Technology Center students; however, both of these studies addressed why students decided to attend. In one of these studies conducted by DeMuth (1986), the factors that influence high school juniors and seniors to attend Indian Meridian Area Vocational-Technical School (now Meridian Technology Center) were analyzed. Major findings in DeMuth's study showed that in response to specific peoples' influences, students ranked "parents" as the group having the most influence. "Fellow Indian Meridian Area Vocational-Technical School (IMAVTS) students" were second, and "vo-tech teachers" ranked third.

In response to the influences of recruitment activities, the high school students indicated that the most important influence was the "modern, up-to-date machines and equipment available at IMAVTS." Ranking second was the "appearance of the campus," while the "tour of the campus" ranked third.

Occupational plans and career goals were also factors in the students' decisions to enroll. To "learn a new trade" was the highest influence that the students noted with "exploring job opportunities" ranking second. "Practical job experience" was noted as the third highest factor in the occupational category.

From this study, it was also noted that the students did not perceive employers, high school principals, high school counselors,

or high school teachers as having a positive influence on their decision to enroll. Each had a mean of less than 3.5. In the recruitment category, the students indicted "no influence" in only two areas: financial aid and open house.

In looking at occupational influences, DeMuth (1986) found that "learning a new trade," "exploring job opportunities," "practical experience," and "interest" were the only positive influences. Factors such as "summer jobs," "background for college or armed services," or "earnings for college" were seen as having "no influence" on a student's decision to enroll.

A similar study was conducted by Major (1991), where the importance of selected factors influencing daytime adult students to attend IMAVTS was analyzed. Major's study concluded that 1) parents, spouses, and other family members have the greatest impact on adult students' decisions to enroll in classes at IMAVTS; 2) teachers and other employees at IMAVTS have a large impact on the students' decisions; 3) career counselors, high school counselors, and employment agency personnel do not have a high degree of positive influence on students' decisions to attend IMAVTS; 4) students enrolled in different programs are influenced by different things; 5) the appearance of the IMAVTS campus was extremely important; 6) brochures serve as a positive recruitment tool; and 7) "new trade for work after completion" was chosen by a vast majority as the most important influence.

It is interesting to note that both DeMuth and Major predicted that many of the same factors which influenced some students to

attend Meridian Technology Center would also prevent others from attending.

#### Marketing

Since the Vocational Education Act established area vocational-technical schools in 1963, correctly marketing the various opportunities presented by each one of these schools in Oklahoma has been difficult.

Information concerning course offerings, expanded services, educational enhancement, financial aid, career counseling and assessment, job placement, as well as other pertinent information must reach potential students, their parents, business and industry, high school counselors and staff, as well as the general public. To accomplish this goal, aggressive marketing and advertising campaigns must be used by the leaders in vocational education.

In recent years, industries such as health care, finance, and law have been aggressively marketing their services. This departure from tradition is a response to sweeping changes in technology, demographics, and new customer demands. Vocational education, like other service industries, must respond to such change--and in addition, to changes within education itself (O'Connor and Trussell, 1987, p. 32).

During the last few years, Meridian Technology Center has had a very healthy working relationship with each of its sending schools. That relationship, coupled with a very active recruitment and enrollment campaign, lead to the large increase in the percentage of enrolled high school students.

Furthermore, the administration at Meridian Technology Center recognized the importance of continuing the relationship into the

next century; consequently, a marketing division was created within Meridian Technology Center with a staff of highly-qualified professionals to assure the continuation of that relationship.

#### Summary

Throughout the last few decades, vocational education within the state of Oklahoma has experienced phenomenal growth and change. The area vocational-technical schools have expanded their course offerings, redesigned existing programs, added various student services, and worked very hard to keep up with the fast-paced world of business and industry. This has presented a unique challenge as business and industry is always in a state of transition from one form of technology to a more advanced and efficient way of doing things.

As if this last task was not enough, changes in educational reform, college entrance requirements, and various societal expectations helped to change the overall face of vocational education. Career counseling helped individuals understand themselves first, and then helped them with the tough decisions facing them on a daily basis as to training or education options, employment possibilities and where to look for solutions in the future. The process worked. Meridian Technology Center, for example, served multitudes of satisfied individuals last year through career counseling. (According to the testimonials, career counseling made a positive influence on the individuals' general senses of satisfaction and happiness.)



Even though the overall high school enrollment trend in Oklahoma failed to show a significant increase, the secondary enrollment within the Meridian Technology Center district provides a different perspective. The percentage of high school students enrolled at Meridian Technology Center is increasing at an continuous rate. In fact, if this trend continues, the decision to attend must be made at an earlier age to provide the student a chance to enroll during high school. Throughout the enrollment process at Meridian Technology Center last year, numerous adult students were not allowed to enroll in the programs of their choice because the classes were full with high school students.

Since individuals have been asked at a young age to decide what career path they will follow, it has been important to remove as many barriers to enrollment as possible. To be able to do this effectively, previous studies were conducted to determine why students attend Meridian Technology Center; however, a study to determine what influences of people, influences of circumstances or outside factors, or overall perceptions about Meridian Technology Center prevented secondary students from attending Meridian Technology Center had never been conducted. This study was designed to help analyze that issue.

After barriers and/or concerns are recognized, Meridian Technology Center has always worked hard to remove the obstacles from the path of the student. The results of this study, too, will be used to make needed changes.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the importance of selected factors which prevent daytime high school students from attending Meridian Technology Center. The objectives were: 1) To rank, according to importance, selected factors which prevent daytime high school students from attending Meridian Technology Center as perceived by junior students within the district who did not attend; 2) To identify and analyze the various perceptions of high school juniors who did not attend Meridian Technology Center about Meridian Technology Center; and 3) To compare findings to discover notable differences which may exist between the large and small schools within the Meridian Technology Center district concerning the perceptions of Meridian Technology Center.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods used in meeting these objectives. The procedures involved in the completion of this study were to:

1. Determine the population for the study;
2. Develop the instrument for data collection;
3. Develop the procedure for data collection; and
4. Select methods for data analyses.

### Population

The population of this study was limited to the 658 high school juniors who chose to not attend Meridian Technology Center during 1994-95. These students represented the ten high schools within the Meridian Technology Center district: Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Guthrie, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, Perkins-Tryon, Pawnee, Perry, and Stillwater. Even though juniors and seniors are allowed to attend Meridian Technology Center, the junior class provided more accurate information since they experienced the enrollment process just six months earlier.

Five hundred and nine (77.4 percent) high school juniors responded to the survey administered during October 1994.

### Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University policy require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators can begin their research. The Oklahoma State University Office of University Research Services and the IRB conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. In compliance with the aforementioned policy, this study received the proper surveillance and was granted permission to continue. This study was assigned the following research project number: AG-95-001.

### Development of the Instrument

The questionnaire was a modification of the instrument used in two similar studies conducted by DeMuth (1986) and Major (1991) which involved high school and adult student enrollment at Indian Meridian Vo-Tech (now Meridian Technology Center). Both studies addressed selected factors which influenced students to attend; this study addressed selected factors which high school students perceived prevented them from attending. The questionnaire was written in such a way as to assure the respondent that his or her response would be important to the completion of the study as well as maintain anonymity. The questionnaire was developed as a forecast response instrument utilizing a "Likert-type" scale. The various questions and alternatives were straight-forward and clear. Major topics that were included on the questionnaire were divided into three sections: Section A--Influences of People; Section B--Circumstances or Outside Factors; and, Section C--Perceptions of Meridian Technology Center. This instrument sought to measure levels of influence through 30 forced-item statements and three optional open-ended responses.

The completed questionnaire was reviewed by administrators at Meridian Technology Center, the faculty in the Agricultural Education Department at Oklahoma State University, and the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board. Suggestions for changes were incorporated and the final copy was developed and administered to the population.

### Collection of Data

The questionnaire was completed by 509 junior students who were not enrolled at Meridian Technology Center during 1994-95 but who attended one of the ten Meridian Technology Center District schools. The questionnaire was taken to each of the sending schools' junior English classes. Instructions were clearly provided to the students in each class prior to the instrument's being administered. Upon completion by the students, the questionnaires were returned to the researcher.

### Analysis of Data

Returned questionnaires were collected and the data were analyzed and summarized using descriptive statistics. The various statistics used to treat the data were means, medians, modes, ranks, percentages, and frequency distributions.

In order to interpret the data ascertained via the "Likert-type" scale, real limits were established for the scale of assigned numerical values (Tables III and IV).

TABLE III

NUMERICAL VALUES AND REAL LIMITS ESTABLISHED CONCERNING  
THE INFLUENCES OF PEOPLE AND CIRCUMSTANCES  
OR OUTSIDE FACTORS

| Scale of Numerical<br>Values and Categories | Real Limits of<br>Numerical Values |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 = No Influence                            | 1.0 - 1.49                         |
| 2 = Small Amount of Influence               | 1.5 - 2.49                         |
| 3 = Moderate Amount of Influence            | 2.5 - 3.49                         |
| 4 = Great Amount of Influence               | 3.5 - 4.49                         |
| 5 = The Reason I did not Attend             | 4.5 - 5.00                         |

TABLE IV

NUMERICAL VALUES AND REAL LIMITS ESTABLISHED FOR STUDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER

| Scale of Numerical<br>Values and Categories | Real Limits of<br>Numerical Values |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 = I don't agree at all                    | 1.0 - 1.49                         |
| 2 = I somewhat agree                        | 1.5 - 2.49                         |
| 3 = I moderately agree                      | 2.5 - 3.49                         |
| 4 = I strongly agree                        | 3.5 - 4.49                         |
| 5 = I very strongly agree                   | 4.5 - 5.00                         |

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

Three separate sections A, B, and C were used to present the findings of the study. Section A described, interpreted, and analyzed the "Influences of People" on the students' decisions not to attend Meridian Technology Center. In addition, Section A also described observable differences between large and small schools concerning this topic. Section B described, interpreted, and analyzed the perceived effects circumstances or outside factors had on the respondents' decisions not to attend Meridian Technology Center. Section B also sought to identify and describe observable differences in perceptions among students attending large schools and those attending small schools within the district. Section C described, interpreted and examined the student populations' perceptions of Meridian Technology Center and notable differences between large and small schools.

The information in the data base for sections A, B, and C was compiled from 509 in-district junior students not attending Meridian Technology Center during the 1994-95 school year. The information from the returned survey instruments was analyzed and summarized to help reach the objectives of the study. To completely and accurately present the data, various tables were formulated.

### Influences of People

The data in Table V indicated that "friends or fellow classmates" had the highest degree of influence on the juniors' decisions not to attend Meridian Technology Center. According to the information presented, 19.65 percent of the population reported "friends or classmates" as at least a moderate or greater amount of influence on them to not attend.

Ranked second in "Influences of People" was "parents" with 15.72 percent of the surveyed students reporting at least a moderate or greater amount of influence. The influence of "fellow students enrolled at Meridian Technology Center" ranked third with 12.77 percent indicating at least a moderate or greater amount. "Teachers or other employees at the high school" came in fourth with 12.38 percent and "high school counselors" came in fifth with 10.02 percent. (Both percentage levels indicate at least a moderate or greater amount of influence.)

At this level, the other seven forced-response items on the questionnaire each received less than ten percent of the responses.

The data in Table V were split into two classifications in Tables VI and Table VII. Table VI contained data on the large schools (Guthrie and Stillwater) and Table VII included data on the small schools (Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, Perkins-Tryon, Pawnee, and Perry).

Data in Table VI indicated "friends and fellow classmates" influenced more juniors from the large schools to not attend Meridian Technology Center with 18.72 percent of the respondents



TABLE V

A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE "INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE" AFFECTING THEIR DECISION NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Influence                    | No Influence |       | Some Negative Influence |       | Moderate Influence |       | Great Amount of Influence |      | Reason Did Not Attend |      | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|--|--------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|---------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|  | N            | %     | N                       | %     | N                  | %     | N                         | %    | N                     | %    | N     | %     |               |      |
| Parents                                  | 379          | 74.46 | 50                      | 9.82  | 28                 | 5.5   | 24                        | 4.72 | 28                    | 5.5  | 509   | 100.0 | 1.57          | 2    |
| Brothers, Sisters, Realities             | 426          | 83.69 | 40                      | 7.85  | 23                 | 4.52  | 10                        | 1.97 | 10                    | 1.97 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.31          | *6   |
| Friends, Classmates                      | 354          | 69.54 | 55                      | 10.81 | 54                 | 10.61 | 29                        | 5.7  | 17                    | 3.34 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.62          | 1    |
| Spouse                                   | 472          | 92.72 | 11                      | 2.16  | 10                 | 1.97  | 6                         | 1.18 | 10                    | 1.97 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.17          | 12   |
| Employment Agency                        | 462          | 90.77 | 19                      | 3.73  | 13                 | 2.55  | 6                         | 1.18 | 9                     | 1.77 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.19          | 11   |
| Career Counselor(s)                      | 444          | 87.23 | 25                      | 4.91  | 18                 | 3.54  | 9                         | 1.77 | 13                    | 2.55 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.28          | 10   |
| High School Counselor(s)                 | 415          | 81.53 | 43                      | 8.45  | 26                 | 5.11  | 12                        | 2.36 | 13                    | 2.55 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.36          | 5    |
| Teachers/Employees at Vo-Tech            | 432          | 84.87 | 32                      | 6.29  | 19                 | 3.73  | 15                        | 2.95 | 11                    | 2.16 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.31          | *6   |
| Teachers/Employees at High School        | 407          | 79.56 | 39                      | 7.66  | 40                 | 7.86  | 11                        | 2.18 | 12                    | 2.34 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.39          | 4    |
| Students Enrolled at Meridian Technology | 400          | 78.59 | 44                      | 8.64  | 38                 | 7.47  | 14                        | 2.75 | 13                    | 2.55 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.42          | 3    |
| Former Meridian Technology Students      | 444          | 87.23 | 23                      | 4.52  | 16                 | 3.14  | 12                        | 2.36 | 14                    | 2.75 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.29          | 9    |
| Current/Previous Employer(s)             | 445          | 87.42 | 23                      | 4.52  | 10                 | 1.97  | 8                         | 1.57 | 23                    | 4.52 | 509   | 100.0 | 1.31          | *6   |

\*Indicates a tie in rankings by mean response.

TABLE VI

AN IN-DISTRICT LARGE SCHOOL SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE  
 "INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE" AFFECTING THEIR DECISION NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY  
 CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Influence                       | No Influence |       | Some Negative Influence |       | Moderate Influence |      | Great Amount of Influence |      | Reason Did Not Attend |      | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|---|--------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|------|---------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|   | N            | %     | N                       | %     | N                  | %    | N                         | %    | N                     | %    | N     | %     |               |      |
| Parents                                     | 247          | 75.76 | 32                      | 9.82  | 17                 | 5.22 | 12                        | 3.68 | 18                    | 5.52 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.53          | 2    |
| Brothers, Sisters,<br>Realities             | 272          | 83.42 | 26                      | 7.98  | 17                 | 5.22 | 7                         | 2.15 | 4                     | 1.23 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.30          | 6    |
| Friends, Classmates                         | 227          | 69.63 | 37                      | 11.35 | 31                 | 9.51 | 22                        | 6.75 | 9                     | 2.76 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.62          | 1    |
| Spouse                                      | 304          | 93.25 | 7                       | 2.15  | 6                  | 1.84 | 3                         | .92  | 6                     | 1.84 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.16          | 11   |
| Employment Agency                           | 304          | 93.25 | 7                       | 2.15  | 9                  | 2.76 | 2                         | .61  | 4                     | 1.23 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.14          | 12   |
| Career Counselor(s)                         | 287          | 88.04 | 17                      | 5.21  | 12                 | 3.68 | 4                         | 1.23 | 6                     | 1.84 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.24          | 10   |
| High School Counselor(s)                    | 266          | 81.59 | 31                      | 9.51  | 16                 | 4.91 | 6                         | 1.84 | 7                     | 2.15 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.33          | 5    |
| Teachers/Employees at<br>Vo-Tech            | 277          | 85.00 | 23                      | 7.06  | 11                 | 3.34 | 10                        | 3.07 | 5                     | 1.53 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.29          | *7   |
| Teachers/Employees at<br>High School        | 260          | 79.76 | 25                      | 7.67  | 31                 | 9.51 | 5                         | 1.53 | 5                     | 1.53 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.37          | 4    |
| Students Enrolled at<br>Meridian Technology | 251          | 76.99 | 34                      | 10.43 | 27                 | 8.29 | 8                         | 2.45 | 6                     | 1.84 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.42          | 3    |
| Former Meridian<br>Technology Students      | 286          | 87.73 | 15                      | 4.60  | 12                 | 3.68 | 7                         | 2.15 | 6                     | 1.84 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.26          | 9    |
| Current/Previous<br>Employer(s)             | 288          | 88.35 | 14                      | 4.29  | 6                  | 1.84 | 4                         | 1.23 | 14                    | 4.29 | 326   | 100.0 | 1.29          | *7   |

\*Indicates a tie in rankings by mean response.

TABLE VII

AN IN-DISTRICT SMALL SCHOOL SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE  
 "INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE" AFFECTING THEIR DECISION NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY  
 CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Influence                       | No Influence |       | Some Negative Influence |      | Moderate Influence |       | Great Amount of Influence |      | Reason Did Not Attend |      | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|---|--------------|-------|-------------------------|------|--------------------|-------|---------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|   | N            | %     | N                       | %    | N                  | %     | N                         | %    | N                     | %    | N     | %     |               |      |
| Parents                                     | 132          | 72.13 | 18                      | 9.84 | 11                 | 6.01  | 12                        | 6.56 | 10                    | 5.46 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.63          | 2    |
| Brothers, Sisters,<br>Realities             | 154          | 84.15 | 14                      | 7.65 | 6                  | 3.28  | 3                         | 1.64 | 6                     | 3.28 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.32          | 10   |
| Friends, Classmates                         | 127          | 69.40 | 18                      | 9.84 | 23                 | 12.57 | 7                         | 3.83 | 8                     | 4.37 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.64          | 1    |
| Spouse                                      | 168          | 91.80 | 4                       | 2.19 | 4                  | 2.19  | 3                         | 1.64 | 4                     | 2.19 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.20          | 12   |
| Employment Agency                           | 158          | 86.34 | 12                      | 6.56 | 4                  | 2.19  | 4                         | 2.19 | 5                     | 2.73 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.28          | 11   |
| Career Counselor(s)                         | 157          | 85.80 | 8                       | 4.37 | 6                  | 3.28  | 5                         | 2.73 | 7                     | 3.83 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.34          | *8   |
| High School Counselor(s)                    | 149          | 81.42 | 12                      | 6.56 | 10                 | 5.46  | 6                         | 3.28 | 6                     | 3.28 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.40          | 5    |
| Teachers/Employees at<br>Vo-Tech            | 155          | 84.70 | 9                       | 4.92 | 8                  | 4.37  | 5                         | 2.73 | 6                     | 3.28 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.35          | 6    |
| Teachers/Employees at<br>High School        | 147          | 80.33 | 14                      | 7.65 | 9                  | 4.92  | 6                         | 3.28 | 7                     | 3.83 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.43          | *3   |
| Students Enrolled at<br>Meridian Technology | 149          | 81.42 | 10                      | 5.46 | 11                 | 6.01  | 6                         | 3.28 | 7                     | 3.83 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.43          | *3   |
| Former Meridian<br>Technology Students      | 158          | 86.44 | 8                       | 4.37 | 4                  | 2.19  | 5                         | 2.73 | 8                     | 4.37 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.34          | *8   |
| Current/Previous<br>Employer(s)             | 157          | 85.80 | 9                       | 4.92 | 4                  | 2.19  | 4                         | 2.19 | 9                     | 4.92 | 183   | 100.0 | 1.36          | 7    |

\*Indicates a tie in rankings by mean response.

listing this item as a moderate or greater amount of influence. "Parents" were ranked second with 14.42 percent listing them as a moderate or greater amount of influence. Also, at least moderate or greater amount of influence was indicated for "fellow students enrolled at Meridian Technology Center" with 12.58 percent, "teachers or other employees at the high school" with 12.57 percent, and "high school counselors" with 8.9 percent. The order of the top five from the large school summary in Table VI coincided with the same order of the top five influences in of the overall summary in Table V.

Data in Table VII indicated "friends and fellow classmates" as the number one influence of juniors from small schools not attending Meridian Technology Center; 20.77 percent of the respondents listed this factor as a moderate or greater amount of influence. Also with moderate or greater amount of influence were "parents" with 18.03 percent, "students enrolled at Meridian Technology Center" with 13.12 percent, "teachers and other employees at the high school" with 12.03 percent, and "high school counselor(s) with 12.02 percent. The top ranked five influences from the small schools matched the same order as the composite in Table V and, therefore, matched the top five from the large schools in Table VI.

The large and small schools agreed on the top five ranked influences of people which influenced their decision to not attend Meridian Technology Center. Therefore, no notable difference was found in this section between large and small schools.

Table VIII contains a summary of the calculated mean data from Tables V, VI, and VII. When compared to the summary of absolute limits of numerical values in Table III and IV, something interesting developed. In all three instances, only the means of "friends and fellow classmates," and "parents" were ranked high enough to be classified as a small amount of influence. All ten of the following influences fell into the no influence category in all three summaries: "Students enrolled at Meridian Technology Center," "Teachers/employees at high school," "High school counselor(s)," "Teachers/employees at Vo-Tech," "Current/previous employer(s)," "Brothers, sisters, and relatives," "Former Meridian Technology Center students," "Career counselor(s)," "Employment agency," and "Spouse."

#### Circumstances or Outside Factors

The data in Table IX represented the degree of influence specific circumstances or outside factors had on the juniors' decisions to not attend Meridian Technology Center. "High school schedule" was the number one reason why most of the juniors decided to not attend Meridian Technology Center; 56.58 percent of the respondents listed this circumstance as having a moderate or greater amount of influence, and 30.65 percent listed "high school schedule" as the reason they did not attend. "No interest in the programs offered at Meridian Technology Center" came in second; 37.13 percent indicated at least a moderate amount of influence, and 21.22 percent listed "lack of interest" as the reason they did not attend.

TABLE VIII

A SUMMARY OF SCORES AND RANKS REGARDING THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE "INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE" AFFECTING THEIR DECISION NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Influence                    | Overall Composite |      | Large School Composite |      | Small School Composite |      |
|--|-------------------|------|------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
|  | Mean              | Rank | Mean                   | Rank | Mean                   | Rank |
| Parents                                  | 1.57              | 2    | 1.53                   | 2    | 1.63                   | 2    |
| Brothers, Sisters, Realities             | 1.31              | *6   | 1.30                   | 6    | 1.32                   | 10   |
| Friends, Classmates                      | 1.62              | 1    | 1.62                   | 1    | 1.54                   | 1    |
| Spouse                                   | 1.17              | 12   | 1.16                   | 11   | 1.20                   | 12   |
| Employment Agency                        | 1.19              | 11   | 1.14                   | 12   | 1.28                   | 11   |
| Career Counselor(s)                      | 1.28              | 10   | 1.24                   | 10   | 1.34                   | *8   |
| High School Counselor(s)                 | 1.36              | 5    | 1.33                   | 5    | 1.40                   | 5    |
| Teachers/Employees at Vo-Tech            | 1.31              | *6   | 1.29                   | *7   | 1.35                   | 6    |
| Teachers/Employees at High School        | 1.39              | 4    | 1.37                   | 4    | 1.43                   | *3   |
| Students Enrolled at Meridian Technology | 1.42              | 3    | 1.42                   | 3    | 1.43                   | *3   |
| Former Meridian Technology Students      | 1.29              | 9    | 1.26                   | 9    | 1.34                   | *8   |
| Current/Previous Employer(s)             | 1.31              | *6   | 1.29                   | *7   | 1.36                   | 7    |

\*Ties in rankings based on mean scores.

TABLE IX

A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE "CIRCUMSTANCES OR OUTSIDE FACTORS" AFFECTING THEIR DECISION NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Influence                    | No Influence |       | Some Negative Influence |       | Moderate Influence |       | Great Amount of Influence |       | Reason Did Not Attend |       | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|--|--------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|  | N            | %     | N                       | %     | N                  | %     | N                         | %     | N                     | %     | N     | %     |               |      |
| High School Schedule                     | 174          | 34.19 | 47                      | 9.23  | 51                 | 10.02 | 81                        | 15.91 | 156                   | 30.65 | 509   | 100.0 | 3.00          | 1    |
| Transportation Problem                   | 425          | 83.49 | 37                      | 7.27  | 18                 | 3.54  | 11                        | 2.16  | 18                    | 3.54  | 509   | 100.0 | 1.35          | 8    |
| Perception of Meridian Technology Center | 351          | 68.95 | 56                      | 11.01 | 51                 | 10.02 | 20                        | 3.93  | 31                    | 6.09  | 509   | 100.0 | 1.67          | 4    |
| Job                                      | 398          | 78.19 | 29                      | 5.70  | 36                 | 7.07  | 17                        | 3.34  | 29                    | 5.70  | 509   | 100.0 | 1.53          | 5    |
| Did Not Like Facilities                  | 441          | 86.64 | 25                      | 4.91  | 17                 | 3.34  | 5                         | 0.98  | 21                    | 4.13  | 509   | 100.0 | 1.31          | 9    |
| Book & Supplies Expense                  | 397          | 78.00 | 46                      | 9.04  | 24                 | 4.71  | 14                        | 2.75  | 28                    | 5.50  | 509   | 100.0 | 1.49          | 6    |
| No Interest in Programs Offered          | 280          | 55.01 | 40                      | 7.86  | 48                 | 9.43  | 33                        | 6.48  | 108                   | 21.22 | 509   | 100.0 | 2.31          | 2    |
| Not Given the Chance to Enroll           | 430          | 84.48 | 19                      | 3.73  | 13                 | 2.55  | 15                        | 2.95  | 32                    | 6.29  | 509   | 100.0 | 1.43          | 7    |
| Sports                                   | 319          | 62.67 | 23                      | 4.52  | 31                 | 6.09  | 47                        | 9.23  | 89                    | 17.49 | 509   | 100.0 | 2.14          | 3    |

"Sports" was ranked third with 32.81 percent responding as at least a moderate amount of influence, and 17.49 percent listed it as the reason they did not attend.

None of the other six circumstances or outside factors were close to the levels indicated by the top three ranked items in this section of the survey instrument. However, the following list of those six factors were ranked in the order specified by the respondents: 4) Perception of Meridian Technology Center, 5) Job, 6) Books and supplies expense, 7) Not given the chance to enroll, 8) Transportation problems, 9) Did not like the facilities.

Table X revealed the separation between the two large schools Guthrie and Stillwater from the overall findings described in Table IX. Not only were the top three circumstances or outside factors constant, but the order of all nine of the items were exactly the same. "High school schedule" was ranked number one; 57.36 percent indicated at least a moderate amount of influence, and 29.75 percent listed "high school schedule" as the reason they did not attend. "Lack of interest in the programs offered" came in second; 39.27 percent responded as at least a moderate amount of influence, and 22.7 percent listed it as the reason they did not attend. Ranked third, "sports" had at least a moderate amount of influence on 31.91 percent of the respondents and was listed by 17.49 percent as the reason they did not attend. The other six circumstances listed by the large school juniors were well below the levels indicated by the top three.



TABLE X

AN IN-DISTRICT LARGE SCHOOL SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENT'S PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE  
 "CIRCUMSTANCES OR OUTSIDE FACTORS" AFFECTING THEIR DECISION NOT TO ATTEND  
 MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Influence                       | No Influence |       | Some Negative Influence |       | Moderate Influence |       | Great Amount of Influence |       | Reason Did Not Attend |       | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|---|--------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|   | N            | %     | N                       | %     | N                  | %     | N                         | %     | N                     | %     | N     | %     |               |      |
| High School Schedule                        | 114          | 34.97 | 25                      | 7.67  | 34                 | 10.43 | 56                        | 17.18 | 97                    | 29.75 | 326   | 100.0 | 2.99          | 1    |
| Transportation Problem                      | 270          | 82.82 | 27                      | 8.28  | 11                 | 3.37  | 7                         | 2.15  | 11                    | 3.38  | 326   | 100.0 | 1.35          | 8    |
| Perception of Meridian<br>Technology Center | 216          | 66.25 | 38                      | 11.66 | 35                 | 10.74 | 16                        | 4.91  | 21                    | 6.44  | 326   | 100.0 | 1.74          | 4    |
| Job   | 255          | 78.22 | 19                      | 5.83  | 18                 | 5.52  | 13                        | 3.99  | 21                    | 6.44  | 326   | 100.0 | 1.55          | 5    |
| Did Not Like Facilities                     | 287          | 88.04 | 13                      | 3.99  | 9                  | 2.76  | 3                         | 0.92  | 14                    | 4.29  | 326   | 100.0 | 1.29          | 9    |
| Book & Supplies Expense                     | 255          | 78.22 | 27                      | 8.28  | 16                 | 4.91  | 10                        | 3.07  | 18                    | 5.52  | 326   | 100.0 | 1.49          | 6    |
| No Interest in Programs<br>Offered          | 171          | 52.45 | 27                      | 8.28  | 31                 | 9.51  | 23                        | 7.06  | 74                    | 22.70 | 326   | 100.0 | 2.39          | 2    |
| Not Given the Chance to<br>Enroll           | 273          | 83.74 | 16                      | 4.91  | 11                 | 3.37  | 9                         | 2.76  | 17                    | 5.22  | 326   | 100.0 | 1.41          | 7    |
| Sports                                      | 208          | 63.80 | 14                      | 4.29  | 17                 | 5.22  | 30                        | 9.20  | 57                    | 17.49 | 326   | 100.0 | 2.12          | 3    |

Table XI separated the small schools within Meridian Technology Center's district (Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, Perkins-Tryon, Pawnee, and Perry) from the overall summary in Table IX. The number one circumstance or outside factor which influenced the small school respondents to not attend was "high school schedule." "High school schedule" ranked first with 55.19 percent of the respondents listing at least a moderate amount of influence, and 32.24 percent listed "schedule" as the reason they did not attend. "Sports" came in second; 34.43 percent indicated at least a moderate amount of influence, and 17.49 percent listed it as the reason they did not attend. Ranked a very close third, "no interest in the programs offered" provided 33.33 percent of the respondents with at least a moderate amount of influence, and 18.58 percent indicated "lack of interest" as the reason they did not attend. To determine which factor should be ranked second and third in this section, the mean was used because of the similarity between the data. "Sports" had a mean of 2.18 while "no interest in the programs" had a mean of 2.16. The switching of second and third was the only difference between the ranking of all nine circumstances or outside factors between small and large schools.

Table XII contained a summary of the mean data from Tables IX, X, and XI. When compared to the summary of absolute limits of numerical values in Table III and IV, additional analyses were possible. "High school schedule" was the only factor consistently ranked high enough to warrant a moderate amount of influence in all three breakdowns of the data with means of 3.0, 2.99, and 3.01 in

TABLE XI

AN IN-DISTRICT SMALL SCHOOL SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENT'S PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE  
 "CIRCUMSTANCES OR OUTSIDE FACTORS" AFFECTING THEIR DECISION NOT TO ATTEND  
 MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Influence                       | No Influence |       | Some Negative Influence |       | Moderate Influence |      | Great Amount of Influence |       | Reason Did Not Attend |       | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|---|--------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|   | N            | %     | N                       | %     | N                  | %    | N                         | %     | N                     | %     | N     | %     |               |      |
| High School Schedule                        | 60           | 32.79 | 22                      | 12.01 | 17                 | 9.29 | 25                        | 13.66 | 59                    | 32.24 | 183   | 100.0 | 3.01          | 1    |
| Transportation Problem                      | 155          | 84.70 | 10                      | 5.46  | 7                  | 3.83 | 4                         | 2.19  | 7                     | 3.83  | 183   | 100.0 | 1.35          | 8    |
| Perception of Meridian<br>Technology Center | 135          | 73.77 | 18                      | 9.84  | 16                 | 8.74 | 4                         | 2.19  | 10                    | 5.46  | 183   | 100.0 | 1.56          | 4    |
| Job   | 143          | 78.14 | 10                      | 5.46  | 18                 | 9.84 | 4                         | 2.19  | 8                     | 4.37  | 183   | 100.0 | 1.49          | 5    |
| Did Not Like Facilities                     | 154          | 84.15 | 12                      | 6.56  | 8                  | 4.37 | 2                         | 1.09  | 7                     | 3.83  | 183   | 100.0 | 1.34          | 9    |
| Book & Supplies Expense                     | 142          | 77.60 | 19                      | 10.38 | 8                  | 4.37 | 4                         | 2.19  | 10                    | 5.46  | 183   | 100.0 | 1.48          | 6    |
| No Interest in Programs<br>Offered          | 109          | 59.56 | 13                      | 7.10  | 17                 | 9.29 | 10                        | 5.46  | 34                    | 18.58 | 183   | 100.0 | 2.16          | 3    |
| Not Given the Chance to<br>Enroll           | 157          | 85.79 | 3                       | 1.64  | 2                  | 1.09 | 6                         | 3.28  | 15                    | 8.20  | 183   | 100.0 | 1.46          | 7    |
| Sports                                      | 111          | 60.66 | 9                       | 4.92  | 14                 | 7.65 | 17                        | 9.29  | 32                    | 17.49 | 183   | 100.0 | 2.18          | 2    |

TABLE XII

A SUMMARY OF MEAN SCORES AND RANKS REGARDING THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF "CIRCUMSTANCES OR OUTSIDE FACTORS" AFFECTING THEIR DECISION NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Influence                    | Overall Composite |      | Large School Composite |      | Small School Composite |      |
|--|-------------------|------|------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
|  | Mean              | Rank | Mean                   | Rank | Mean                   | Rank |
| High School Schedule                     | 3.00              | 1    | 2.99                   | 1    | 3.01                   | 1    |
| Transportation Problem                   | 1.35              | 8    | 1.35                   | 8    | 1.35                   | 8    |
| Perception of Meridian Technology Center | 1.67              | 4    | 1.74                   | 4    | 1.56                   | 4    |
| Job                                      | 1.53              | 5    | 1.55                   | 5    | 1.49                   | 5    |
| Did Not Like Facilities                  | 1.31              | 9    | 1.29                   | 9    | 1.34                   | 9    |
| Book & Supplies Expense                  | 1.49              | 6    | 1.49                   | 6    | 1.48                   | 6    |
| No Interest in Programs Offered          | 2.31              | 2    | 2.39                   | 2    | 2.16                   | 3    |
| Not Given the Chance to Enroll           | 1.43              | 7    | 1.41                   | 7    | 1.46                   | 7    |
| Sports                                   | 2.14              | 3    | 2.12                   | 3    | 2.18                   | 2    |

Tables IX, X, and XI, respectively. Only three of the other circumstances or outside factors consistently ranked high enough in all three summaries to warrant a small amount of influence ("no interest in the programs," "sports," and "perceptions of Meridian Technology Center"). The other five factors in this section had a mean which ranged from a low of 1.29 to a high of 1.55, depending on which summary of circumstances or outside factors was examined; but all scored right at or below the no influence absolute limit.

#### Student Perceptions of Meridian Technology Center

The information in Table XIII reflected the respondents' feelings about nine forced-item statements. Using a "Likert-type" scale with numerical values different from those used in Sections A and B, juniors ranked their degree of agreement with various perceptions of Meridian Technology Center. The statement "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to learn a new skill" had the highest degree of agreement with 81.38 percent moderately, strongly, or very strongly agreeing with that statement. The next highest ranked agreement was for the statement "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to go to school" with 71.12 percent moderately, strongly, or very strongly agreeing to the statement. Also using moderately, strongly, or very strongly in terms of agreement was "Meridian Technology Center is a fun school to attend" which came in third with 56.7 percent and "Meridian Technology Center is for

TABLE XIII

A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER  
BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Perception                               | Don't Agree at all |       | Agree a Little |       | Moderately Agree |       | Strongly Agree |       | Very Strongly Agree |       | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|--|--------------------|-------|----------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|  | N                  | %     | N              | %     | N                | %     | N              | %     | N                   | %     | N     | %     |               |      |
| Meridian Technology Center:                          |                    |       |                |       |                  |       |                |       |                     |       |       |       |               |      |
| ...is a great place to go to school                  | 57                 | 11.93 | 81             | 16.95 | 190              | 39.74 | 90             | 18.83 | 60                  | 12.55 | 478   | 100.0 | 3.03          | 2    |
| ...is a great place to learn a new skill             | 44                 | 9.21  | 45             | 9.41  | 156              | 32.64 | 128            | 26.77 | 105                 | 21.97 | 478   | 100.0 | 3.43          | 1    |
| ...is a fun school to attend                         | 89                 | 18.62 | 118            | 14.68 | 178              | 37.24 | 53             | 11.09 | 40                  | 8.37  | 478   | 100.0 | 2.66          | 3    |
| ...is for the non-college bound student              | 208                | 43.52 | 73             | 15.27 | 92               | 19.25 | 49             | 10.24 | 56                  | 11.72 | 478   | 100.0 | 2.31          | 4    |
| ...is for people who can't go to college             | 242                | 50.63 | 57             | 11.93 | 98               | 20.50 | 35             | 7.32  | 46                  | 9.62  | 478   | 100.0 | 2.13          | 6    |
| ...is for people who get good grades in school       | 276                | 57.73 | 89             | 18.62 | 81               | 16.95 | 15             | 3.14  | 17                  | 3.56  | 478   | 100.0 | 1.76          | 9    |
| ...is for people who don't get good grades in school | 253                | 52.93 | 69             | 14.44 | 100              | 20.92 | 32             | 6.69  | 24                  | 5.02  | 478   | 100.0 | 1.96          | 8    |
| ...classes are easy                                  | 172                | 35.98 | 136            | 18.46 | 129              | 26.99 | 21             | 4.39  | 20                  | 4.18  | 478   | 100.0 | 2.12          | 7    |
| ...classes are hard                                  | 162                | 33.89 | 126            | 26.36 | 164              | 34.31 | 9              | 1.88  | 17                  | 3.56  | 478   | 100.0 | 2.15          | 5    |

people who do not want to go to college" coming in fourth with 41.21 percent.

On the opposite end of the scale, 57.73 percent of the respondents marked that they did not agree at all with the statement "Meridian Technology Center is for students who get good grades in school."

It should be noted that only 478 of the 509 study respondents completed Section C. Thirty-one students left this section blank possibly because it was on the back of the page.

Table XIV summarized the large school levels of agreement concerning specific statements about Meridian Technology Center. "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to learn a new skill" ranked the highest with 83.66 percent of the respondents moderately, strongly, or very strongly agreeing to the statement. Also using moderately, strongly, or very strongly agreeing as the guide, "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to go to school" was second with 68.63 percent; "Meridian Technology Center is a fun school to attend" was third with 53.6 percent; and "Meridian Technology Center is for people who do not want to go to college" was fourth with 43.14 percent.

On the opposite side of the scale, 54.9 percent of the juniors surveyed stated that they did not agree at all with the statement "Meridian Technology Center is for students who get good grades in school."

TABLE XIV

AN IN-DISTRICT LARGE SCHOOL SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Perception                               | Don't Agree at all |       | Agree a Little |       | Moderately Agree |       | Strongly Agree |       | Very Strongly Agree |       | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|--|--------------------|-------|----------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|  | N                  | %     | N              | %     | N                | %     | N              | %     | N                   | %     | N     | %     |               |      |
| Meridian Technology Center:                          |                    |       |                |       |                  |       |                |       |                     |       |       |       |               |      |
| ...is a great place to go to school                  | 38                 | 12.42 | 58             | 18.95 | 129              | 42.16 | 55             | 17.97 | 26                  | 8.50  | 306   | 100.0 | 2.91          | 2    |
| ...is a great place to learn a new skill             | 19                 | 6.21  | 31             | 10.13 | 111              | 36.27 | 79             | 25.82 | 66                  | 21.57 | 306   | 100.0 | 3.46          | 1    |
| ...is a fun school to attend                         | 52                 | 16.99 | 90             | 29.41 | 113              | 36.93 | 28             | 9.15  | 23                  | 7.52  | 306   | 100.0 | 2.61          | 3    |
| ...is for the non-college bound student              | 122                | 39.87 | 52             | 16.99 | 57               | 18.63 | 37             | 12.09 | 38                  | 12.42 | 306   | 100.0 | 2.40          | 4    |
| ...is for people who can't go to college             | 148                | 48.37 | 45             | 14.71 | 59               | 19.28 | 26             | 8.50  | 28                  | 9.15  | 306   | 100.0 | 2.15          | *5   |
| ...is for people who get good grades in school       | 168                | 54.90 | 65             | 21.24 | 56               | 18.30 | 8              | 2.61  | 9                   | 2.94  | 306   | 100.0 | 1.77          | 9    |
| ...is for people who don't get good grades in school | 149                | 48.69 | 48             | 15.69 | 70               | 22.88 | 23             | 7.52  | 16                  | 5.23  | 306   | 100.0 | 2.05          | 8    |
| ...classes are easy                                  | 106                | 34.64 | 93             | 30.39 | 80               | 26.14 | 16             | 5.23  | 11                  | 3.60  | 306   | 100.0 | 2.13          | 7    |
| ...classes are hard                                  | 96                 | 31.37 | 90             | 29.41 | 107              | 34.97 | 5              | 1.63  | 8                   | 2.61  | 306   | 100.0 | 2.15          | *5   |

\*Indicates a tie in rankings by mean response.



Table XV summarized the small school respondents' levels of agreement in regard to the forced-item statements regarding Meridian Technology Center. Having at least a moderate, strong, or very strong degree of agreement, the statements "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to learn a new skill" was ranked first with 77.32 percent; "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to learn a new skill" was a close second with 75.6 percent"; "Meridian Technology Center is a fun school to attend" came in third with 62.21 percent; "Meridian Technology Center is for people who do not want to go to college" ranked a distant fourth with 37.8 percent.

Looking at the opposite end of the scale, 62.8 percent of the respondents did not agree at all with the statement "Meridian Technology Center is for students who get good grades in school."

Table XVI contained a summary of the calculated mean data from Tables XIII, XIV, and XV. When compared to the summary of absolute limits of numerical values in Table III and IV, a clearer picture of the agreement patterns emerged. According to the overall mean average of each statement, only the following three statements scored high enough to be placed in the "I moderately agree" category: "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to learn a new skill," "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to go to school," and "Meridian Technology Center is a fun school to attend." All six of the other statements fell into the "I somewhat agree" level. In summary, the responses to all nine of the forced-item statements were varied and, with the exception of the top three, it is evident that a lot of different opinions about Meridian

TABLE XV

AN IN-DISTRICT SMALL SCHOOL SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Perception                         | Don't Agree at all |       | Agree a Little |       | Moderately Agree |       | Strongly Agree |       | Very Strongly Agree |       | Total |       | Mean Response | Rank |
|--|--------------------|-------|----------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
|  | N                  | %     | N              | %     | N                | %     | N              | %     | N                   | %     | N     | %     |               |      |
| Meridian Technology Center:                    |                    |       |                |       |                  |       |                |       |                     |       |       |       |               |      |
| ...is a great place to go to school            | 19                 | 11.05 | 23             | 13.37 | 61               | 35.47 | 35             | 20.35 | 34                  | 19.78 | 172   | 100.0 | 3.24          | 2    |
| ...is a great place to learn a new skill       | 15                 | 14.53 | 14             | 8.14  | 45               | 26.16 | 49             | 28.49 | 39                  | 22.67 | 171   | 100.0 | 3.37          | 1    |
| ...is a fun school to attend                   | 37                 | 21.51 | 28             | 16.78 | 65               | 37.80 | 25             | 14.53 | 17                  | 9.88  | 172   | 100.0 | 2.75          | 3    |
| ...is for the non-college bound student        | 86                 | 50.00 | 21             | 12.21 | 35               | 20.35 | 12             | 6.98  | 18                  | 10.47 | 172   | 100.0 | 2.16          | 4    |
| ...is for people who can't go to college       | 94                 | 54.65 | 12             | 6.98  | 39               | 22.67 | 9              | 5.23  | 18                  | 10.47 | 172   | 100.0 | 2.10          | 7    |
| ...is for people who get good grades in school | 108                | 62.80 | 24             | 13.95 | 25               | 14.53 | 7              | 4.07  | 8                   | 4.65  | 172   | 100.0 | 1.74          | 9    |
| ...is for people who don't get good grades     | 104                | 60.47 | 21             | 12.21 | 30               | 17.44 | 9              | 5.23  | 8                   | 4.65  | 172   | 100.0 | 1.81          | 8    |
| ...classes are easy                            | 66                 | 38.37 | 43             | 25.00 | 49               | 28.49 | 5              | 2.91  | 9                   | 5.23  | 172   | 100.0 | 2.12          | 6    |
| ...classes are hard                            | 66                 | 38.57 | 36             | 20.93 | 57               | 33.14 | 4              | 2.33  | 9                   | 5.23  | 172   | 100.0 | 2.15          | 5    |

\*Indicates a tie in rankings by mean response.

TABLE XVI

A SUMMARY OF MEAN SCORES AND RANKS REGARDING THE RESPONDENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF  
MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCE

| Category of Perceptions                              | Overall Composite |      | Large School Composite |      | Small School Composite |      |
|--|-------------------|------|------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
|  | Mean              | Rank | Mean                   | Rank | Mean                   | Rank |
| Meridian Technology Center:                          |                   |      |                        |      |                        |      |
| ...is a great place to go to school                  | 3.03              | 2    | 2.91                   | 2    | 3.24                   | 2    |
| ...is a great place to learn a new skill             | 3.43              | 1    | 3.46                   | 1    | 3.37                   | 1    |
| ...is a fun school to attend                         | 2.66              | 3    | 2.61                   | 3    | 2.75                   | 3    |
| ...is for the non-college bound student              | 2.31              | 4    | 2.40                   | 4    | 2.16                   | 4    |
| ...is for people who can't go to college             | 2.13              | 6    | 2.15                   | *5   | 2.10                   | 7    |
| ...is for people who get good grades in school       | 1.76              | 9    | 1.99                   | 9    | 1.74                   | 9    |
| ...is for people who don't get good grades in school | 1.96              | 8    | 2.05                   | 8    | 1.81                   | 8    |
| ...classes are easy                                  | 2.12              | 7    | 2.13                   | 7    | 2.12                   | 6    |
| ...classes are hard                                  | 2.15              | 5    | 2.15                   | *5   | 2.15                   | 5    |

Technology Center were within the juniors surveyed. Unfortunately, no notable differences emerged between the fourth through ninth ranked responses.

#### Demographics

Table XVII represents a summary of the number of juniors from the in-district schools, the number enrolled at Meridian Technology Center, the number eligible to fill out the survey instruments, the number returned by each school, and the percentage returned by each school. Of the 658 juniors within Meridian Technology Center's district which could have filled out a survey, 509 or 77.36 percent responded.

Table XVIII showed a distribution of respondents by school affiliation. Stillwater had the most responding with 230 of the 509 respondents (45.12 percent).

Table XIX showed the distribution of large and small schools. Large schools had 326 respondents (64.05 percent) while small schools made up 183 (35.95 percent).

TABLE XVII

A SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENTS RETURNED FROM EACH IN-DISTRICT  
SCHOOL DURING THE 1994 FALL SEMESTER

| School          | Total Number of<br>Junior Students | Total Number of<br>Juniors Enrolled | Total Number of<br>Juniors Eligible | Number of Surveys<br>Returned from School | Percent of Population<br>Respondents |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Agra            | 24                                 | 3                                   | 21                                  | 18  | 85.71                                |
| Carney          | 21                                 | 7                                   | 14                                  | 12  | 85.71                                |
| Glencoe         | 15                                 | 3                                   | 12                                  | 11  | 91.67                                |
| Guthrie         | 214                                | 52                                  | 162                                 | 96  | 59.26                                |
| Morrison        | 33                                 | 7                                   | 26                                  | 24  | 92.31                                |
| Mulhall-Orlando | 20                                 | 10                                  | 10                                  | 10  | 100.00                               |
| Pawnee          | 60                                 | 17                                  | 43                                  | 40  | 93.02                                |
| Perkins-Tryon   | 82                                 | 31                                  | 51                                  | 24  | 47.06                                |
| Perry           | 89                                 | 23                                  | 66                                  | 44  | 66.66                                |
| Stillwater      | 313                                | 60                                  | 253                                 | 230                                       | 90.91                                |
| Totals          | 871                                | 213                                 | 658                                 | 509                                       | 77.36                                |

TABLE XVIII  
A DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SCHOOL AFFILIATION

| School          | Frequency Distribution |        |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------|
|                 | N=509                  | %      |
| Stillwater      | 230                    | 45.12  |
| Guthrie         | 96                     | 18.86  |
| Perry           | 44                     | 8.64   |
| Pawnee          | 40                     | 7.86   |
| Morrison        | 24                     | 4.72   |
| Perkins-Tryon   | 24                     | 4.72   |
| Agra            | 28                     | 3.54   |
| Carney          | 12                     | 2.36   |
| Glencoe         | 11                     | 2.16   |
| Mulhall-Orlando | 10                     | 1.96   |
| Total           | 509                    | 100.00 |

TABLE XIX  
A DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY LARGE OR  
SMALL SCHOOL AFFILIATION

| Classification   | Frequency Distribution |        |
|--|------------------------|--------|
|  | N=509                  | %      |
| Large Schools  |                        |        |
| Guthrie and Stillwater   | 326                    | 64.05  |
| Small Schools  |                        |        |
| Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Morrison,<br>Mulhall-Orlando, Pawnee,<br>Perkins-Tryon, and Perry | 183                    | 35.95  |
| Total  | 509                    | 100.00 |

decisions not to attend Meridian Technology Center; and (3) Summary of "Perceptions of Meridian Technology Center."

#### Influences of People

The students ranked "friends or fellow classmates" as the group which had the most influence on their decisions to not attend Meridian Technology Center. One hundred respondents (19.65 percent) reported that this influence had at least a moderate or greater amount of influence on them to not attend Meridian Technology Center.

Ranked a very close second were "parents." Eighty students (15.72 percent) reported that parents had at least a moderate or greater amount of influence on their not attending Meridian Technology Center; however, of that eighty, twenty-eight listed parents as the reason they did not attend.

Only the means of "friends or fellow classmates" and "parents" were high enough on the scale to indicate even a small amount of influence. All ten of the following influences' means indicated no influence in preventing the students from attending: "Students enrolled at Meridian Technology Center;" "Teachers/employees at high school;" "High school counselor(s);" "Brothers, sisters, and relatives;" "Teachers/employees at Vo-Tech;" "Current/previous employer(s);" "Former Meridian Technology Center students;" "Career counselor(s);" "Employment agency;" and "Spouse." Table XX provides a summary of respondents' perceptions regarding influences of people

TABLE XX

A SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS INDICATED AS MEAN SCORES, LEVELS OF INFLUENCE AND RANKS REGARDING THE "INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE" AFFECTING THEIR DECISIONS NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER

| Category of Influence                           | Mean | Degree of Influence | Rank |
|---|------|---------------------|------|
| Parents   | 1.57 | Small amount        | 2    |
| Brothers, Sisters, Relatives                    | 1.31 | No Influence        | *6   |
| Friends, Classmates                             | 1.62 | Small Amount        | 1    |
| Spouse  | 1.17 | No Influence        | 12   |
| Employment Agency                               | 1.19 | No Influence        | 11   |
| Career Counselor(s)                             | 1.28 | No Influence        | 10   |
| High School Counselor(s)                        | 1.36 | No Influence        | 5    |
| Teachers/Employers at Vo-Tech                   | 1.31 | No Influence        | *6   |
| Teachers/Employees at High School               | 1.39 | No Influence        | 4    |
| Students Enrolled at Meridian Technology Center | 1.42 | No Influence        | 3    |
| Former Meridian Technology Center Students      | 1.29 | No Influence        | 9    |
| Current/Previous Employer(s)                    | 1.31 | No Influence        | *6   |

\*Indicates a tie in rankings by mean response.



affecting their decision to not attend Meridian Technology Center by category of influence.

When the data on influences of people were broken into large schools and small schools, the two resulting summaries showed no notable difference. Although a few of the mean rankings changed slightly (summarized in Table VIII), the two top influences remained constant, and none of the other influences had a mean score high enough to be notable.

#### Circumstances or Outside Factors

The students clearly ranked "high school schedule" as the most important circumstance or outside factor preventing them from attending Meridian Technology Center. Two hundred and eighty-eight respondents (56.58 percent) indicated their schedules had a moderate or greater degree of influence on their decisions to not attend Meridian Technology Center, and 156 (30.65 percent) marked their high school schedule as the reason they did not attend.

"No interest in the programs offered by Meridian Technology Center" was ranked second with 189 (37.13 percent) indicating a moderate or greater amount of influence; and 108 checked this circumstance or outside factor as the reason for their not attending Meridian Technology Center.

The only other factor which had a high enough mean to show significance was "sports." "Sports" was ranked third in this section after 167 (32.81 percent) respondents indicated moderate or

greater amounts of influence and 89 listed "sports" as the reason they did not attend.

"Perceptions of Meridian Technology Center" was ranked fourth by the students with a mean of 1.67 and "job" was ranked fifth with a mean of 1.53. The other four circumstances or outside factors had means low enough to fall into the "no influence" category ("Book and supplies expense," 1.49; "Not given a chance to enroll," 1.43; "Transportation problem," 1.35; "Did not like facilities," 1.31). Table XXI provides a summary of respondents' perceptions regarding circumstances or outside factors affecting their decisions to not attend Meridian Technology Center by category of influence.

Of other interest, 441 (86.64 percent) of the respondents did not agree at all with the statement "did not like the facilities."

When the data concerning circumstances and outside factors were broken into two district groups (large schools and small schools), one minor but somewhat interesting result appeared. The large schools indicated "no interest in the programs" with a mean of 2.39 as being the second ranked factor and "sports" ranked third with a mean of 2.12. In comparison, the small schools ranked "sports" second with a mean of 2.18 and "no interest in the programs offered" third with a mean of 2.16. All other circumstances or outside factors matched exactly by rankings indicated by both large and small schools.

TABLE XXI

A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS INDICATED AS MEAN  
SCORES, LEVELS OF INFLUENCE AND RANKS REGARDING  
"CIRCUMSTANCES OR OUTSIDE FACTORS" AFFECTING  
THEIR DECISIONS NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER

| Category of Circumstance                 | Mean | Degree of Influence | Rank |
|--|------|---------------------|------|
| High School Schedule                     | 3.00 | Moderate Amount     | 1    |
| Transportation Problem                   | 1.35 | No Influence        | 8    |
| Perception of Meridian Technology Center | 1.67 | Small Amount        | 4    |
| Job                                      | 1.53 | Small Amount        | 5    |
| Did Not Like Facilities                  | 1.31 | No Influence        | 9    |
| Book & Supplies Expense                  | 1.49 | No Influence        | 6    |
| No Interest in Programs Offered          | 2.31 | Small Amount        | 2    |
| Not Given the Change to Enroll           | 1.43 | No Influence        | 7    |
| Sports                                   | 2.14 | Small Amount        | 3    |

Student Perceptions of Meridian  
Technology Center

The students had the highest level of agreement for the statement "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to learn a new skill" after 389 (81.38 percent) either moderately, strongly, or very strongly agreed.

Three hundred forty (71.12 percent) ranked "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to go to school" second by listing moderately, strongly, or very strongly agree on their surveys. "Meridian Technology Center is a fun school to attend" was third; 271 (56.7 percent) indicated the same levels of agreement.

According to the mean averages, only the top three ranked statements scored high enough to be placed in the "I moderately agree" category. All of the following statements fell into the "I somewhat agree" level: "Meridian Technology Center is for people who do not want to go to college;" "The classes at Meridian Technology Center are hard;" "Meridian Technology Center is for people who can't go to college;" "The classes at Meridian Technology Center are easy;" "Meridian Technology Center is for students who do not get good grades in school;" "Meridian Technology Center is for students who get good grades in school." In summary, there were widely varying opinions about Meridian Technology Center indicated by the junior respondents from the high schools.

Table XXII provides a summary of respondents' agreement levels regarding "Perceptions of Meridian Technology Center." This table reported two other interesting rankings. "Meridian Technology

TABLE XXII

A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS INDICATED AS  
MEAN SCORES, LEVELS OF INFLUENCE AND RANKS REGARDING  
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AT MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER

| Category of Perception                               | Mean | Degree of Influence | Rank |
|--|------|---------------------|------|
| <b>Meridian Technology Center:</b>                   |      |                     |      |
| ...is a great place to go to school                  | 3.24 | Moderately Agree    | 2    |
| ...is a great place to learn a new skill             | 3.37 | Moderately Agree    | 1    |
| ...is a fun school to attend                         | 2.75 | Moderately Agree    | 3    |
| ...is for the non-college bound student              | 2.16 | Somewhat Agree      | 4    |
| ...is for people who can't go to college             | 2.10 | Somewhat Agree      | 7    |
| ...is for people who get good grades in school       | 1.74 | Somewhat Agree      | 9    |
| ...is for people who don't get good grades in school | 1.81 | Somewhat Agree      | 8    |
| ...classes are easy                                  | 2.12 | Somewhat Agree      | 6    |
| ...classes are hard                                  | 2.15 | Somewhat Agree      | 5    |

Center is for people who do not want to go to college" came in fourth with a mean of 2.31; and a related statement, "Meridian Technology Center is for students who get good grades in school," came in last with a mean of 1.76.

When the data from the respondents was separated into the large and small school categories, nothing notable was found. The top four ranked items were constantly uniform throughout each summary; each statement's mean remained in the same absolute value levels; and the least agreed to statement remained the same. (Table XXIII provides an overall summary of respondents' perceptions regarding influences and perceptions affecting their decisions to not attend Meridian Technology Center.)

#### Characteristics of Study Respondents

Of the 658 in-district juniors who were eligible to fill out the questionnaire, 509 or 77.36 percent responded. Of the 509, 64.05 percent or 326 were from large schools while 35.95 percent or 183 were from small schools. Stillwater had the most respondents with 230 or 45.12 percent.

#### Conclusions

##### Influences of People

Based on the analyses and interpretations of the study findings, it was concluded that "friends or fellow classmates" have the definite impact on high school students' decisions not to attend Meridian Technology Center.

TABLE XXIII

A SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING INFLUENCES AND PERCEPTIONS AFFECTING THEIR DECISIONS NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER BY CATEGORY OF INFLUENCES, CIRCUMSTANCES OR PERCEPTIONS

| Influences                                       | Mean | Degree of Influence | Rank |
|--|------|---------------------|------|
| <u>People</u>                                    |      |                     |      |
| Parents  | 1.57 | Small Amount        | 2    |
| Brothers, Sisters, Relatives                     | 1.31 | No Influence        | *6   |
| Friends, Classmates                              | 1.62 | Small Amount        | 1    |
| Spouse   | 1.17 | No Influence        | 12   |
| Employment Agency                                | 1.19 | No Influence        | 11   |
| Career Counselor(s)                              | 1.28 | No Influence        | 10   |
| High School Counselor(s)                         | 1.36 | No Influence        | 5    |
| Teachers/Employers at Vo-Tech                    | 1.31 | No Influence        | *6   |
| Teachers/Employees at High School                | 1.39 | No Influence        | 4    |
| Students Enrolled at Meridian Technology Center  | 1.42 | No Influence        | 3    |
| Former Meridian Technology Students              | 1.29 | No Influence        | 9    |
| Current/Previous Employer(s)                     | 1.31 | No Influence        | *6   |
| <u>Circumstances or Outside Factors</u>          |      |                     |      |
| High School Schedule                             | 3.00 | Moderate Amount     | 1    |
| Transportation Problem                           | 1.35 | No Influence        | 8    |
| Perception of Meridian Technology                | 1.67 | Small Amount        | 4    |
| Job  | 1.53 | Small Amount        | 5    |
| Did Not Like Facilities                          | 1.31 | No Influence        | 9    |
| Book & Supplies Expense                          | 1.49 | No Influence        | 6    |
| No Interest in Programs Offered                  | 2.31 | Small Amount        | 2    |
| Not Given Chance to Enroll                       | 1.43 | No Influence        | 7    |
| Sports   | 2.14 | Small Amount        | 3    |
| <u>Perceptions of Meridian Technology Center</u> |      |                     |      |
| ...is a great place to go to school              | 3.24 | Moderately Agree    | 2    |
| ...is a great place to learn a new skill         | 3.37 | Moderately Agree    | 1    |
| ...is a fun school to attend                     | 2.75 | Moderately Agree    | 3    |
| ...is for the non-college bound student          | 2.16 | Somewhat Agree      | 4    |
| ...is for people who can't get o college         | 2.10 | Somewhat Agree      | 7    |

TABLE XXIII (Continued)

| Influences   | Mean | Degree of Influence | Rank |
|--|------|---------------------|------|
| ...is for people who get good grades in school       | 1.74 | Somewhat Agree      | 9    |
| ...is for people who don't get good grades in school | 1.81 | Somewhat Agree      | 8    |
| ...classes are easy                                  | 2.12 | Somewhat Agree      | 6    |
| ...classes are hard                                  | 2.15 | Somewhat Agree      | 5    |

\*Indicates a tie in rankings by mean response.



It was concluded that "parents" also have a definite impact on the students' decisions not to attend Meridian Technology Center.

Furthermore, it was concluded that preconceived differences regarding the influences of people existed among students from large or small schools concerning decisions not to attend Meridian Technology Center.

After reviewing the findings, it was concluded that "Teachers/employees at high school;" "High school counselor(s);" "Brothers, sisters, and relatives;" "Teachers/employees at Vo-Tech;" "Current/previous employer(s);" "Former Meridian Technology Center students;" "Career counselor(s);" "Employment agency;" and "spouse" did not affect respondents' decisions not to participate in the academic programs of Meridian Technology Center.

It was further concluded that a finding from this from a previous study agreed with a finding from DeMuth's (1986) study. "Parents" positive influence on students to attend Meridian Technology Center while "parents" were as having a definite influence on their childrens' decisions not to attend in this study.

#### Circumstances or Outside Factors

For a large majority of students not attending Meridian Technology Center, the "high school schedule" was a major factor affecting their decision not to attend Meridian Technology Center.

It was further concluded that "no interest" in the programs offered at Meridian Technology Center" and "sports" at the high school were important factors which influenced students not to

enroll at Meridian Technology Center. "Lack of interest in the programs offered" had more of an impact on the large school students, while "sports" had more of a difference on small school students in regard to their decisions not to enroll at Meridian Technology Center.

Furthermore it was concluded that: "Book and supplies expense;" "Not given the chance to enroll;" "Transportation problems;" and "facilities" did not influence students regarding their decisions not to participate in Meridian Technology Center's academic programs.

#### Student Perceptions of Meridian Technology Center

It was concluded that a very high number of students believe "Meridian Technology Center is a great place to learn a new skill" as well as "Meridian Technology Center being a great place to go to school" and have "fun" while attending.

It was also concluded that there was not a no notable difference among students' perceptions from large school students and those from small schools concerning decisions not to participate in Meridian Technology academic programs.

#### Recommendations

After conducting the study, the author would propose the following recommendations:

1. That Meridian Technology Center continue to work with the ten high schools within its district to help the students and faculty members understand the concept behind vocational education and the benefits it provides.
2. That Meridian Technology Center develop and implement expanded promotional concepts to reach parents of potential students so that they might better informed concerning what Meridian Technology Center has to offer.
3. That Meridian Technology representatives work closely with the high school counselors and administrators to remove the general class scheduling problems which prevent many students from attending Meridian Technology Center.
4. That Meridian Technology Center continue to look at the program offerings each year to make sure they meet the needs of students and business and industry as well as the institutional purposes of Meridian Technology Center.
5. That Meridian Technology Center continue to utilize and expand its use of assessment prior to student placement to ensure appropriate program selection.
6. That career and high school counselors strive to assist students in terms of in making career decisions, whether or not vocational education is appropriate.
7. That Meridian Technology Center pursue an aggressive marketing strategy which educates the general public about vocational education.

8. That Meridian Technology Center pursue changes in scheduling that would permit those students involved in sports to attend if they so desired.

9. That Meridian Technology Center continue to utilize one marketing strategy for both large and small schools.

10. That Meridian Technology Center aggressively survey the business and industry community to determine the appropriateness of the programs offered.

#### Implications

"Self" could be the greatest factor influencing students to not attend Meridian Technology Center since none of the categories of people had a moderate or greater amount of influence indicated by the respondents.

As for the overall attitude toward Meridian Technology Center, perception has become reality to the students involved in this study.

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**APPENDIXES**

**APPENDIX A**

**COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE**

**MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

1312 South Sangre Road Stillwater Oklahoma 74074-1895 Te: 405 377-3333 Fax: 405 377-9804

Dear Student:

The attached is a survey asking you for information about your choice to not attend Meridian Technology Center this year. This survey is completely voluntary and, if you do not choose to complete it, it will have no effect on your grades at your high school.

The information will be used to make changes in recruiting activities or programs at Meridian Technology Center. We would appreciate your sharing the information asked for as well as any other information you feel may be of helpful.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Greg Mitchell, Director  
Career Assistance Center  
Meridian Technology Center



School \_\_\_\_\_

(To be completed only by junior students who are not attending Meridian Technology Center.)

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

For Sections A and B, please use the scale below to rank the degree of influence each of the following factors had on your decision to not enroll at Meridian Technology Center. Circle the appropriate number beside each statement.

1. No influence
2. Small amount of influence
3. Moderate amount of influence
4. Great amount of influence
5. It is the reason I did not attend.

#### A. INFLUENCES OF PEOPLE

How did the following people influence your decision to not attend Meridian Technology Center?

- |     |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  | Parents  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.  | Brothers, sisters, or other relatives                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3.  | Friends or fellow classmates                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4.  | Spouse   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5.  | Employment agency personnel                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6.  | Career counselor   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.  | High school counselor(s)                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8.  | Teachers or other employees at vo-tech                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9.  | Teachers or other employees at high school                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | Fellow students who are enrolled at Meridian Technology Center | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | Former Meridian Technology Center students                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | Current or previous employer(s)                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Others (please list):  |   |   |   |   |   |

#### B. CIRCUMSTANCES OR OUTSIDE FACTORS

How did the following circumstances or outside factors influence your decision to not attend Meridian Technology Center?

- |     |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. | High school schedule                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Transportation problem                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Perception of Meridian Technology Center | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | Job                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | Did not like the facilities              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Book and supplies expenses               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | No interest in programs offered          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | Not given the chance to enroll           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Sports                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | Others (please list):                    |   |   |   |   |   |

-----

C. PERCEPTIONS OF MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Please use the scale below to rank your feelings about the following perceptions about Meridian Technology Center. Circle the appropriate number beside each statement.

1. I don't agree at all
2. I agree a little
3. I moderately agree
4. I strongly agree
5. I very strongly agree

- |     |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24. | Meridian Technology Center is a great place to go to school.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | Meridian Technology Center is a great place to learn a new skill.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. | Meridian Technology Center is a fun school to attend.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. | Meridian Technology Center is for people who do not want to go to college.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. | Meridian Technology Center is for people who can't go to college.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. | Meridian Technology Center is for students who get good grades in school.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. | Meridian Technology Center is for students who do not get good grades in school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. | The classes at Meridian Technology Center are easy.                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. | The classes at Meridian Technology Center are hard.                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. | Others (please list):  |   |   |   |   |   |
- 
-

**APPENDIX B**

**INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES FROM OPEN-ENDED  
QUESTIONS**

Question 13 -- Influences of People

- My parents would have liked me to, but I wanted to go to school.
- Didn't know it was available.
- My grandparents.
- I have too much to do in high school for college.
- I just didn't want to.
- Going college bound.
- Myself.
- I need to take real classes to be a doctor.
- My boyfriend attends vo-tech's auto/diesel mechanics class so my parents won't let me attend.
- Meridian Technology Center students were rude to me during the tour.
- No minority teachers.

Question 23 -- Circumstances or Outside Factors

- Rather be at school.
- Did not act fast enough.
- I just moved here.
- Getting up in the morning.
- College preparation
- I need more math and science for future courses.
- Credits for graduation and college.
- Forgot to enroll.
- Doesn't have "stuff" for field of interest.
- College.
- Concurrent enrollment at OSU.
- Messes up classes for college.
- Not required for college major.
- I like the high school.
- I'm interested in music.
- Can't afford the books.
- I would not be able to attend a journalism class.
- Took off Graphic Communications.

Question 33 -- Perceptions of Meridian Technology Center

- Most of the people that I know there are going to end up failures.

**APPENDIX C**

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)**

**APPROVAL FORM**

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 09-15-94

IRB#: AG-95-001

**Proposal Title:** SELECTED FACTORS AND PERCEPTIONS INFLUENCING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO NOT ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER

**Principal Investigator(s):** James White, Greg Mitchell

**Reviewed and Processed as:** Exempt

**Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):** Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL. ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

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Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: September 23, 1994

2  
VITA

GREGORY LEE MITCHELL

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

**Thesis:** SELECTED FACTORS AND PERCEPTIONS INFLUENCING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NOT TO ATTEND MERIDIAN TECHNOLOGY CENTER

**Major Field:** Agricultural Education

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Stillwater, Oklahoma, December 11, 1962 the son of Betty and Bob Mitchell.

**Education:** Graduated from Ripley High School, Ripley, Oklahoma, in May 1981; received Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education from Oklahoma State University in May 1985; completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in December 1994.

**Professional Experience:** Vocational Agriculture Instructor and FFA Adviser, Waurika, Oklahoma, July 1985 - June 1989; Agricultural Education Instructor and FFA Advisor, Marlow, Oklahoma, July 1989 - June 1991; Coordinator of Student Services, Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 1991 - October 1993; Assistant Director of Daytime Instruction, Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, November 1993 - June 1994; Director of the Career Assistance Center, Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 1994 - Present.

**Professional Organizations:** Oklahoma Vocational Association, American Vocational Association, National Career Development Association (Division of the American Counseling Association).