

## **Underachievement**

- It appears that underachievement often begins in elementary school, perhaps due to an unchallenging curriculum.
- There appears to be a relationship between inappropriate or too-easy content in elementary school and underachievement in middle or high school.

### Early grades:

- ❖ Habits of mind
- ❖ Inconsistent expectations
- ❖ Unchallenging work
- ❖ Confusing messages about effort and ability
- ❖ Honor role blues
- ❖ Parental involvement
- ❖ Peer issues

### Middle level:

- ❖ Boredom
- ❖ Absence of challenge
- ❖ Too much free time
- ❖ The “unhurried” adolescent
- ❖ “hidden audience” of peers

### Senior high:

- ❖ Unproductive or damaging use of time
- ❖ The importance of teachers
- ❖ Peer issues
- ❖ Learned habits
- ❖ Poor study skills
- ❖ Limited course options

- Underachievement appears to be periodic and episodic, occurring in some years and not others, and in some classes but not others.
- However, increasing episodes of underachievement may produce a more chronic pattern.
- Parental issues interact with the behaviors of some underachievers, yet no clear pattern exists about the types of parental behaviors that may influence underachievement.
- Peers can play a major role in keeping underachievement from occurring in closest friends, making peer groups an important part of preventing and reversing underachievement.
- Adolescents who are involved in clubs, youth groups, extracurricular activities, sports, and religious activities tend to be effective learners in school.

- Helping gifted students develop regular patterns of work and practice seems to be very beneficial. Music, dance, and art lessons combined with regular time for homework and reading, can be helpful in developing positive self-regulation strategies.
- A caring adult in school can help reverse the process of underachievement. This adult may be a counselor, coach, club advisor, or academic teacher.
- Some students may underachieve as a direct result of an inappropriate and unmotivating curriculum.