

PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND
LEVEL OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT

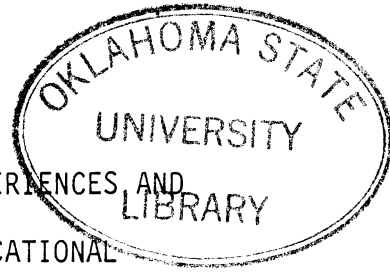
By

MARTHA NEW ALBIN

Bachelor of Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
1970

Master of Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
1979

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of the Oklahoma State University
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Thesis Approved:

A. Kenneth Steen

Thesis Adviser

Kenneth M. Clair

Wayne B. James

Phil E. Smith

Norman D. Durbin

Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Tyler (1978) has said that education in our society serves three functions: (1) to enable young people to acquire understanding, skills and attitudes required for constructive participation in a democracy; (2) to allow mobility within the society; and (3) to help each person achieve all that he is capable of achieving. Schools have become the primary formal vehicle for achieving these functions even though schools represent only one aspect of the total educational system of today's society. Tyler further concluded that our society, with its continued technological advances, is continually raising its formal educational expectations. The importance of the level of educational attainment, therefore, does not disappear with high school graduation. A college diploma is as important to the present generation as a high school diploma was to the preceding one (Bachman, Green and Wirtanen, 1971).

Youth currently not only have the right to attend school but are required by law in Oklahoma to attend until the age of 16. Along with this development of compulsory school attendance until middle adolescence has come the development of the secondary school. Compulsory attendance laws have not, however, included requirements of course offerings, instructional leadership or facility availability to be uniformly fulfilled by the school curriculum beyond those minimums

mandated by state departments of education. These decisions have been left to the individual school district and have been specified by local leadership as a response to community and student needs. These local curriculum additions and requirements provide the foundation on which post-secondary educational attainments are built.

Yet, given the established importance of post-secondary educational attainment and the ability of the local district to lay the basis for this attainment, only 49 percent nationally of high school graduates in 1981 attempted post-secondary education; of those who began a program, only half would continue to completion (U.S. National Center for Educational Statistics, 1982). Therefore, for many high school graduates, post-secondary attainment is still more an unrealized potential rather than an achievement. Why do students not continue formal education, and how are the functions of education, according to Tyler (1978) to be achieved with the variations prevalent in attainment levels? What factors can be researched to provide educators assistance in analyzing levels of educational attainment, as well as provide guidelines for program evaluations?

Depending on the conceptual framework being used, a number of explanations for the differing amounts of formal post-secondary educational participation by students have been proposed. Economists have used the demand-supply framework to explain capacity and opportunity factors that led to varying levels of attainment (Hill, 1979). Hill (p. 9) saw amount of school as the: ". . . expectation of returns from a particular level of schooling, schooling achievement and the probability that the particular individual will in fact succeed in attaining this level." Attainment is seen as a function of individual

capacities, the schooling environment and the extent the individual believes in the schooling environment and curriculum.

Jencks (1972, p. 135) argued that "People who stay in school and attend college would differ from people who now drop out even if they all have exactly the same amount of school." He portrayed schools as selection and certification agencies which use educational attainment as a means of measuring and labeling people while legitimizing inequality. Educational attainment, from his sociological point of view, was influenced mainly by family background and cognitive skills and little by qualitative differences among schools.

By providing another aspect to the importance of the level of attainment, Sewell, Hauser and Featherman (1976) have linked the outlined conceptual ideas with Tyler's (1978) functions of education. Their conclusions, based on sociological models, found educational attainment to have "a large independent influence on later achievements" (p. 11). Educational attainment was found to play a crucial role in later occupational attainment processes and had even more influence than did the first job held.

Certainly, there is more to schooling than its value as a credential or job performance preparation. For some there are intrinsic values or motivations for post-secondary attainment (Bachman, Green and Wirtanen, 1971). Those who find stimulation are likely to go on to complete higher levels and, on the average, to aim for college and even advanced degrees.

Howard and Anderson (1978) suggested that the amount of education attained was not an isolated decision but was based on both personal and academic factors. Decisions to drop out or continue may therefore

have only been continuations of other events in life, whether personal, school or community, of an adolescent. Bachman, Green and Wirtanen (1971) found it useful to broaden the dimensions of commitment to educational attainment by placing the levels achieved along a continuum distinguishing dropout, graduates and those who go beyond high school. These studies found that, with research on a variety of relevant dimensions, educational attainment could be plotted between the three points and predictions about eventual student levels of attainment could be described and analyzed. Bachman et al.'s continuum is but another device which enabled educators to analyze student educational attainments.

This research seeks to add to educators' understanding of why students do or do not attempt further educational attainment after high school graduation. Combinations of school characteristics, student grade point averages (GPA's), sex, race and course selection have already been correlated with post-secondary attainment levels in a number of studies. This study seeks to add the dimension of the variability between graduates' perceptions of high school experiences and their level of educational attainment. Another intent is that additional areas of potential school evaluation and points of needed change which affect educational attainment might be better understood.

Statement of the Problem

Educational attainment, no matter which conceptual framework is used, is an outcome or consequence of a variety of factors. This research was designed to address the questions of what variabilities exist between students' perceptions of their school experiences and

educational attainment, if any, after high school graduation. Graduate perceptions categorized were: felt gains from high school experiences, adequacy of curriculum offerings and suggested changes with emphasis in various high school characteristics. Educational attainment consisted of three levels: high school graduation only; attendance at a two-year, trade or vocational program; or attendance at a four-year, bachelor or graduate level program.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain information from former high school students which would outline factors determining their decisions to attain post-secondary education. It was also the intention of this researcher to conduct a study which would enable individual school districts to see the importance of evaluating their philosophies and programs so that the potential attainment levels of all students could be strengthened. Former high school students, by responses in subsequent years to school experiences, can be looked upon as evaluation resources by the school community. This is not to say that the school can overcome all the intervening influences of the family and community environment, but identification of areas that can be influenced may lead to the maximum utilization of school resources for the accomplishment of increased post-secondary educational attainment of its graduates.

Significance of the Problem

Low level of attainment has been referred to by Bachman, Green and Wirtanen (1971) as a symptom of an already existent problem and

not the problem itself. The level attained by a particular student is often an outcome of a combination of variables categorized as either academic, environmental or both. Variables such as sex (Alexander and Ecklund, 1974), ethnic group (Aptekar, 1981) and GPA (Burkheimer and Jaffee, 1978) are often interactive with other variables related more directly to individual schools. These have been studied by researchers to gain a perspective of attainment levels to be expected from students in varying school districts. Additional studies have also been conducted correlating the effect of school characteristics on educational attainment, but have resulted in mixed results (Meyer, 1970). At best, all these variables can account for only a small percentage of the variance in student attainment levels.

Graduates' perceptions are areas that have not been studied in the search for answers to attainment level questions. Their perceptions of the amount gained from high school curriculum, adequacy of the number of courses offered by their school and changes they would make in the curriculum emphasis help to determine the influence of high school program characteristics on the attainment level of students. It was the influence of these factors on level of educational attainment that the researcher sought to add to the other already well researched factors.

Research Questions

The importance of this research lay in its addition of graduates' perceptions of school experiences as important aspects influencing their participation in post-secondary educational institutions. Therefore, after examination of the literature on educational attainment

and reconsideration of the purpose and need of this study, answers to the research questions which follow were sought.

Graduates' perceptions of the amount gained from experiences in high school range from highly positive to none at all. Question 1 was designed to establish the relationship between graduates' perceptions of amount gained from high school experiences and participation in post-secondary education.

Question 1: Does participation in post-secondary educational attainment vary according to graduates' perceptions on the amount gained from high school experiences?

Regardless of whether or not a student participated in all curriculum offerings of the high school attended, perceptions of the adequacy of these offerings affected willingness to participate in additional educational offerings. Question 2 was designed to establish the strength of this relationship.

Question 2: Does participation in post-secondary educational attainment vary according to graduates' perceptions on the adequacy of curriculum offerings?

Curriculum consists of providing learning experiences in a variety of areas. Perceived emphasis on aspects of the curriculum affects graduates' willingness to participate in additional educational activities. Question 3 was designed to establish the relationship of proposed emphasis changes to participation in further educational opportunities after high school graduation.

Question 3: Does participation in post-secondary educational attainment vary according to graduates' recommended changes in emphasis on high school characteristics?

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

For purposes of this research, due to their size and location, it was assumed that the curriculum and extracurricular activities of the study districts was similar. Their effect on graduates' level of attainment was also similar. It was also assumed that those graduates who attempted some variety of post-secondary educational effort were more likely to return completed questionnaires than were those who did not.

Other studies have explained only a small percentage of the variance in level of educational attainment. Therefore, the need for this study was substantiated.

The findings of this research were limited to the specific schools and respondents involved with some basic generalizations to other schools and communities with comparable characteristics. The data collected on graduates' perceptions and attainment level were limited to that received from responses on the follow-up questionnaire.

Definitions of the Study

The following terms appear often in this study:

Curriculum: That which includes all experiences of students for which the school accepts responsibility, except extracurricular activities (Ragan and Shepherd, 1977).

Educational Attainment: The level of formal post-secondary education participated in by a student. For purposes of this study, the terms "attainment" and "participation" were used interchangeably.

Formal Education: Educational activities, public or private, that lead to certification, license or graduation from a prescribed course of study and which are conducted by accredited institutions.

Graduate: A person who has completed the requirements of the state and district to receive a high school diploma.

Perceptions: Meaningfulness; interpretation of information in light of memories from past experiences (Sartain, 1967).

Post-Secondary Education: Formal education that occurs after graduation from high school.

School Characteristics: Traits which help to describe a particular school district such as number of teachers or per pupil expenditure.

Student Characteristics: Traits which apply to individual students in a school district such as race, sex, or GPA.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research has reported a number of factors that affected the eventual level of education completed or attempted by high school graduates. The independent variables, student perceptions of school characteristics, were examined as a part of this review. Influences on the dependent variable, level of attainment, on the individual or student level and the organizational or school level were also examined. Finally, due to their part in the development of research on educational attainment, Parts III and VI of the Youth in Transition studies were included in the review (Bachman, Green and Wirtanen, 1971; Bachman, O'Malley and Johnston, 1974).

Student Perceptions of School Experiences

Concentrating on the students' feelings or perceptions of high school characteristics and experiences, studies have added available information which may have an impact on level of formal post-secondary educational participation. The underlying implication in all these studies was that the more positively students viewed educational experiences, the more likely they were to hold and attain post-secondary educational goals.

An older, although still often cited, study was conducted by Jackson and Getzels (1959) to examine the differences in those who

were satisfied with recent school experiences and those who were dissatisfied. A student opinion poll elicited responses to satisfaction/dissatisfaction with teachers, curriculum, student body and classroom procedures. In addition, each student completed an adjective checklist by choosing those six words which best described his feelings while attending classes. The authors concluded that: "Dissatisfaction with school is a perceptual set of the student's view of himself and his world and not a direct reflection of inefficient functioning in the classroom" (p. 299). Dissatisfied former students, boys in particular, used negative adjectives far more frequently than did satisfied students, specifically girls.

Using somewhat the same conceptual base, Beelick (1973) measured student satisfaction/dissatisfaction as they affected school performances, personalities, health and attitudes toward school and educational goals. Personal interviews were content analyzed and classified as either showing student satisfaction or student dissatisfaction. Major sources of satisfaction were found to be: achievement, recognition, school work itself and school activities. Major sources of dissatisfaction were: teachers' behavior, school policy and administration and interpersonal peer relationships. A significant relationship existed between a student's satisfaction scores and the GPA of that student. Both impacted strongly on educational goals of students.

"Almost four out of five respondents actually feel 'good' about their school experiences," cited Morris and Melvin (1981, p. 11). Yet, more than half of these same students scored very low on a survey tool measuring the level of need fulfillment accomplished by their

educational environment. Morris and Melvin designed a study using the lowest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to assess student perceptions of their physiological and/or safety need deficiencies. Results showed that as student attitudes toward school became more positive, their needs deficiencies decreased. Scores varied significantly by age, race and grade level, with younger, minority, lower level students having higher deficiency scores. Physical Education (PE) was the curriculum most preferred, while mathematics, science and English were the least preferred. Students strong in PE had fewer deficiencies, as did those involved in traditional science curriculums. Students in social sciences and English had the greatest deficiencies.

The purpose of Applegate's (1981, p. 49) study was ". . . to identify secondary students' perceptions of their school-related problems to gain knowledge about how adolescents view their lives in school." The problem areas of Teacher Support and Independence were identified by personal student accounts as occurring most frequently and being most bothersome. Teachers' behavior as perceived by students, shaped student attitudes toward school life. Students expressed a need for teachers who were fair, patient, helpful, calm, understanding, kind and clear in their teaching. Students' independence concentrated on the desire for more freedom in school. The dimensions of time (lack of free time) and structure (freedom of choice) were described as providing more opportunities for students to make decisions.

A near sociological match of subjects was used by Aptekar (1981) to understand the perceptions of schooling experiences on a regional culture of Mexican-Americans:

If students feel themselves to be involved in the decision-making process and perceive that decisions which affect them are not arbitrarily or captiously made, they are more likely to be involved in school life (p. 17).

The fundamental unit of influence was found to be the daily living situation between teachers and students. Girls saw school in a more positive light than did boys, but neither felt school was doing them justice by preparing them for either college or careers.

In a final study of importance to student perceptions of their school experiences, it was established that a single organization did in fact serve some clients better than others (Grandjean and Vaughn, 1981). Student opinions of school effectiveness were strongly influenced by their own experiences; those schools who were judged effective were performing well the tasks students saw as most important. In general, students tended to view the school as more effective if they were male, non-college track, socially active athletes, received high grades, or if they felt that students had appropriate influence on school politics.

Educational Attainment

Student Factors in Attainment

Graduation from high school marks a major point at which decisions must be made that may have a profound effect on life goals. These goals and students' perceptions of the purpose of education have been affected to some extent by their high school experiences, as well as their home background (Trent and Medsker, 1968). In a study designed to look at a wide range of information about the post-graduate

pursuits of a sample of high school graduates, Trent and Medsker divided the sample into the three groups of college persisters, withdrawers and non-attenders. Academic aptitude, socioeconomic status and parental encouragement were all found to be related to college attendance and persistence of attenders. Persisters were more interested and involved in their education, both before and after entering college, and were more satisfied with the results of their education than were either of the other two groups.

A number of other studies also used family background as the focus for attainment relationships. One of the more often cited is Jencks' (1972) investigation of the effects of our educational system's way of certifying people, which interpreted educational attainment as: "The value of an individual's credentials is proportional to the highest grade in school he has completed" (p. 136). He examined factors that could determine how long people stayed in school with concentrations on economic background, race, family background and academic aptitude. The conclusions reached were:

1. Economic origins had a substantial influence on the amount of schooling people get with differences between rich and poor children being partly a matter of academic aptitude and partly a matter of money.

2. The overall difference between black and white attainment was much smaller than that difference between black and white test scores, occupational status or income. Young blacks had nearly caught up with whites in terms of credentials but not status.

3. On almost any reasonable set of assumptions, family background explained nearly half the variation in educational attainment.

4. Academic aptitude had slightly more influence than economic background on a student's chances of acquiring educational credentials.

A second major study (Mare, 1977) used data from the 1973 Occupational Changes in a Generation (OCG) Survey and found that school attrition was far from random with respect to family variables. This study used six transition periods to represent entry into and completion of the principal institutional stages of American formal school. The school continuation decision points were: (1) completes 8th grade; (2) attends 9th grade; (3) completes 12th grade; (4) attends 13th year; (5) completes college; and (6) attends graduate school. The means of variables studied all changed the most between high school graduation and college attendance levels (numbers 3 and 4), reflecting that the greatest attrition from schooling occurs at this point. With 72.5 percent of the men in the study having completed high school and only 39.8 percent showing college attendance, Mare stated:

. . . even relatively small social background effects on the decision to attend college given high school graduation are consistent with large changes in the means of the background variables (p. 25).

In further analysis, the school attrition process showed the diminishing effects of social background factors, particularly after the age of 16, with parental encouragement having a stronger effect on continuation decisions at higher than at lower socioeconomic levels. Using a cross-sectional analysis, the study concluded that current student average levels of schooling had increased over students born in the twentieth century and may have accounted for the decline in effects of social background. Cross-sectional variation induced

intercohort variations and Mare (p. 43) felt this may have been the "kernel to understanding" changes in level and distribution of formal schooling.

The background variables of father's occupation and education, mother's education, rural residence, farm background and number of siblings were used in a regression analysis to determine their effect on immediate or delayed postsecondary attainment (Robertshaw and Wolfe, 1980). The individual variables of ability, GPA and age-grade retardation were also used. When all of the variables were included in the regression equation, respondents with farm background, fewer siblings, higher grades and higher aspirations were more likely to enter into postsecondary institutions immediately after graduation from high school. In further analysis, Robertshaw and Wolfe concluded that delaying entry into a postsecondary institution or interrupting one's attendance reduced eventual educational attainment, but not significantly. The type of postsecondary institution attended had a somewhat more definite positive effect on attainment, with those attending two to four year colleges or universities having 1.5 years greater attainment than those attending other types of institutions. A note needs to be made that these data were for white males and the researchers suggested that the analysis needed to be extended for women and blacks because there were indications the results may well have been different than the ones given in the study.

While reaching similar conclusions about family influence, Withey (1971) used a different methodological approach. Correlates of attainment at the college level included type of secondary school, academic performance, interest in academic work, ability to pay and parental

influence. Other correlates came from the college experience itself, as well as from the kind of lives led by people who have degrees. Withey (p. 128) concluded: "The components of socioeconomic status--parents' income, occupation and education--contribute to the likelihood of offspring attending college." Also, factors were student's abilities and interest in extended education, influence of teachers and peers, and conditions of economic opportunity.

School Factors in Attainment

Studies examined which measured school factors of educational attainment showed some relationship to those previously described as individual factors. Boyle's (1966) meta-analysis of research on experiences of adolescents in high school found the implication of all the studies to be that the population composition of a school had considerable influence on later aspirations for further education. The two explanations offered were: (1) divergent educational standards and scholastic development and (2) peer group influence and motivation. The divergence consisted of structural characteristics of the formal educational system due to variations in local control and informal social pressures brought on by the size of the community. Different peer group subcultures were determined to have differential effects on motivation to attend or not attend college. Boyle (p. 630) concluded: "The influence of high school appears to be fairly similar for both sexes, with smaller communities having a weaker effect than large cities on aspiration levels."

Meyer (1970) studied the school social status or family status and school quality or organizational resources as they related to

students' decisions to attend college. He found that: "Schools with higher status are more likely to foster college attendance, but they are also more likely to foster the student's doubts about his ability to do academic work" (p. 59). In the final analysis a larger supportive effect of school status on college attendance was found than had previously been reported in research.

A national sample was used by Mayeske and Beaton (1975) to document the extent and magnitude of the results of school outcomes as they served as a measure of good or bad schools. Qualifying all these results was the fact that schools were found to differ in two extremely important areas: (1) resources and (2) kinds of students they get; both of which directly affected any or all outcomes. The results were worth outlining at some length:

1. Schools produced more learning and fostered greater motivation in higher socioeconomic strata, where both parents were in the home and were white or Oriental-American.

2. At the 12th grade the distinguishable influence of the school was greater than the student's social background.

3. The longer a student stayed in school, the more common influence of school's characteristics and student's social background occurred.

4. Schools that performed well on one achievement outcome tended to perform well on other achievement outcomes.

5. School variables most heavily involved were those concerned with actual characteristics of school personnel, not physical facilities, program or expenditures.

Jencks and Brown's (1975) study found that high school characteristics that boosted performance in one area were not especially likely to boost performance in other areas. Among the high schools in their Project Talent longitudinal study, the estimated effectiveness varied dramatically according to the measure of success the school emphasized. The study was designed to attempt to predict what would happen to each student in the sample if he/she attended a typical school. Results suggested that to boost the average student's educational attainment, neither "Socioeconomic desegregation nor infusion of traditional resources is likely to help" (p. 321).

A systematic relationship did, however, exist between effectiveness in boosting attainment levels and per pupil expenditures, starting teacher salary, percentage of teachers holding master's degrees, average years in the profession and average class size. This effectiveness was thought to increase students' life chances, but was transitory and decreased the longer a student had been out of school. Only .7 percent of total attainment variance was explained in the five year follow-up part of the study by high school quality. However, high schools that were unusually effective in increasing amount of education a student attained were also more effective than average in boosting student's occupational status.

A more recent study conducted by Pascarella, Walberg, Haertel and Junker (1981, p. 37) found that the quality of the high school classroom environment had ". . . a unique and positive association with students' plans to continue their formal education." Student demographics, school performances and affective measures and quality of the instructional process were the independent variables measured in

this national sample of older adolescents. Six of the nine demographic, individual academic achievement and class morale variables were significantly and positively associated with students' plans to graduate from college.

A final important aspect of the high school was the curriculum studied by its students. The National Longitudinal Study (NLS) (1976) of the Class of 1972 has provided a wealth of information about post-high school activities of its members. According to the report based on the First Follow-Up Survey Data (NLS, p. 1): "The placement of students within the high school curriculum is a very important factor in determining who goes to college." Of the sample enrolled in 1974 in two to four year colleges, 68 percent had been enrolled in a college preparatory program. General programs contained another 27 percent, and 15 percent participated in a vocational-technical high school program. College attendance was, however, found to be strongly related also to ability, as measured on four aptitude tests. In the top ability level, 7 out of 10 (70 percent) were enrolled in college, contrasted with 17 percent of the lowest level.

Burkheimer and Jafee (1978) also designed a study using NLS data to ascertain reasons for college non-attendance, particularly among the 22 percent of students who had been in the top quarter of academic ability and had not attended college by 1976. It was assumed that college attendance of highly able, as well as other students, was a result of ". . . direct and indirect influence of social background, academic credentials, life values, educational aspirations and marital status" (p. 7). From the data used, there was a substantial difference between the high ability group who did not go on to college

(talent loss group) and the high ability group that did; however, the results also suggested that similar factors were associated with college going regardless of ability levels, only not to the same extent. Compared to college attenders, regardless of ability level, non-attenders had poorer academic credentials, higher rates of early marriage, lower educational expectations and lower socioeconomic status. Sex, life values or race/ethnicity were not consistent in all ability categories with college attendance. The conclusion was reached that where differences existed in the effects of variables on college attendance, differences were similar for all ability levels and were merely "quantitative rather than qualitative" (Burkheimer and Jafee, 1978, p. 38).

The curriculum to which a student was assigned explained differences within rather than between schools. Assigning an individual to a college preparatory curriculum may have given him an attainment advantage, but assigning a larger number of students to this curriculum did not increase the school's overall level of attainment.

Alexander and Ecklund (1975) have conducted a number of studies concerning factors which influence aggregate differences in educational attainment between schools. In a study of contextual effects, it was found that if individual ability and status characteristics were held constant, students received a "benefit" from attending a high school characterized by a high status-low ability student body. Benefits received were college preparatory curriculum, involvement with college-oriented peers and increased actual attainment.

A second study (Alexander and Eckland, 1974) found that in addition to those characteristics already studied, sex had a direct,

unmediated depressant effect on actual educational attainment. For females, educational attainment "disability" was not changed by controls on a large number of pertinent variables such as ability, status background and curriculum enrollment. Female outcomes were consistently more dependent on social class origins than were male outcomes. The suggestion was made that sex differences be looked at in an historical design to ascertain changes in attainment that may have occurred since this study, due to societal changes.

In both studies, after consideration of the effects of type of school on attainment, it was found that the overall quality of school attended altered the eventual attainment by less than half a year. The evidence also indicated that a white student with a given test score and family background was not more likely to end up with greater attainment if he attended a middle-class high school rather than a working-class school. In the same analysis, students tended to end up with the same amount of schooling regardless of school per pupil expenditures.

Youth in Transition Studies

The Youth in Transition Project, started by Bachman and Kahn in 1965, was funded primarily through the U.S. Office of Education (Bachman et al., 1971). Volumes III and VI of these studies were those pertinent to this study and discussed here.

The basis for Volume III was that by the time a boy entered the tenth grade, many signs were already present to indicate whether or not he had a greater than average chance of becoming a dropout. From this the authors stated that "Dropping out is symptomatic of something

gone wrong" (p. 1). The study found it useful to contrast three groups on a continuum of attainment: the dropouts at one end, those who entered post-high school education at the other end, and between them were graduates who had not continued their education.

The longitudinal research design enabled the researcher to examine a variety of personal backgrounds, abilities, attitudes and behaviors that predisposed a student to dropping out. These measures were accessed at several points in time to ascertain the consequences of dropping out. A noticeable limitation of the study was its use of male students only, with a sample consisting of 2,213 tenth grade boys from 87 public high schools. Data were collected in 1966, 1968 and 1969, with overall non-response rates being higher for dropouts than for stayins.

The first group of factors on which data were collected related to dimensions of family background. Among these factors, the following relationships were found to influence level of educational attainment:

1. The higher the socioeconomic level of a student's background, the more likely that student was to enter college.
2. The larger the student's family, the lower the level of eventual educational attainment.
3. College entrance was less frequent for those students having lived in homes of less than two parents.
4. Lower attainment was evidenced in families in which a high level of parental punitiveness existed.
5. Jewish religious preference characterized higher attainment levels.

6. In integrated schools, black attainment rates were identical to white student level of attainment.

7. Community size showed no relationship to level of attainment. Of these relationships, the researchers noted that what appeared to be "effects" of other background variables may be attributed to socio-economic level.

A second group of factors was related to intelligence and verbal skills. Measures of general aptitude, intelligence, reading comprehension and verbal skills were correlated with dropping out and college entrance. Those individuals who tested as being brighter and more skilled were less likely to drop out and more likely to enter college.

Putting these first two groups of factors together accounted for 24 percent of the total variance in educational attainment. Bachman et al. (p. 26) concluded that: "The impact of family background on educational attainment occurs largely through academic skills as intervening variables."

The third set of factors examined was attitude and behavior data of the tenth grade boys. School performance before tenth grade was examined for signs of early school failures; indicators were failing a grade, history of lower grades and self-concept of school ability. The conclusion reached by Bachman et al. (1971, p. 58) was that "Nothing predicts to future success better than past success." This set of factors accounted for 26 percent of the variance in attainment.

There also was the indication that those who found high school less of a struggle tend to go on to college. Related to attitude toward school were the data that showed those who placed the highest

value on academic achievement were most likely to be the students who continued in school. Significant too were those who actually engaged in rebellious behavior while in school, with about 45 percent eventually dropping out completely. Combining the three groups of factors already discussed, 34 percent of the variance in educational attainment of the groups was explained.

The final set of factors dealt with a number of personal characteristics. Those tenth graders in the study who expressed the greatest need for self-development reached the highest levels of educational attainment. The feelings of little personal control and low self-esteem were other factors having a relationship as predictors.

As the researcher moved up the scale of social values (honesty, kindness, etc.), there occurred a gradual decrease in the proportion of students dropping out. On an interpersonal aggression scale, dropouts scored highest with 1.9, with college-bound and high school graduates scoring 1.4 and 1.5, respectively. These scores did not, however, indicate as strong a difference as the researcher had expected. A final "person" variable measured was occupational aspirations. Those with the highest aspirations proved most likely to enter college. Adding this last group of factors to the previous ones brought the total variance accounted for to 38 percent and led to the conclusion that the 14 factors discussed had contributed to the explanatory power of the differences between the three continuum groups.

In the final analysis of their research, Bachman et al. (1971) stated that the difficulties experienced by dropouts were predictable by the start of the tenth grade, and there was little evidence to

support that fact that dropping out made matters worse. The problems seemed to outline a mismatch ". . . between some individuals and the typical school environment" (p. 171). Special notation was also made of the substantial range of similarities between dropouts and stayins who did not go on to college. The three-way continuum proved to be more "predictable" than any two-way classification of dropout versus college entrant.

The Youth in Transition Volume VI (Bachman et al., 1974) follow-up study done in 1974 measured the transition of its sample from graduate or dropout in 1969 to their current status. Of the respondents, 94 percent had a high school education, with two-thirds of the group having continued their education beyond high school, while 22 percent completed a bachelor's degree. It was estimated by researchers that the true percentage of those not graduating was actually 10 percent, even though only seven percent could be accounted for. The study sample had a disproportionate loss in this group, which was felt to be a direct result of the characteristic nonresponsive nature of the dropout group. For the most part, the researchers felt that the group responding had largely completed the transition to an independent life apart from their parents.

The difference between the transition study reported in Volume III and that in Volume VI is in the length of the study. Where Volume III predicted attainment for 19 year olds, Volume VI related tenth grade factors to attainment of 23 year olds. Many of the earlier relationships which still existed were expanded to more complete and detailed outcomes.

The previously used three categories were expanded to include: (1) dropouts, (2) high school graduates, (3) some college and (4) college graduates. The study ". . . sought to understand the extent to which factors which appear as differences 'after' various levels of educational attainment have been reached are actually present as differences by the start of high school" (p. 20).

The following relationships were found in Youth in Transition Volume VI (Bachman et al., 1974):

1. All of the top socioeconomic level category received a high school diploma, with 50 percent graduating from college.
2. More than half of the boys with six or more siblings failed to obtain any post-high school education. Less than one-fourth of those with two or fewer failed to obtain any.
3. This study was not well suited to analysis of race as a predictor.
4. Only 1 percent of the highest ability group became high school dropouts and 58 percent graduated from college, compared to 30 percent and 2 percent, respectively, for dropouts. Numbers 1-4 accounted for 36.8 percent of the total variance of the study.
5. Of those held back, 58 percent ceased their education with high school graduation or less, compared to 25 percent of those who were never held back.
6. No variable had a stronger correlation with educational attainment than did the differences in being an "A" or a "D" student. Two-thirds of those receiving A's graduated from college, while 30 percent of those with D's lacked a high school diploma and 39 percent did not go beyond high school attainment.

7. A college preparatory program in tenth grade was completed by 73 percent of those obtaining bachelor degrees. Numbers 1-7 accounted for 47.5 percent of the total variance of the study.

The more psychological factors of plans, values, and attitudes of tenth graders were also strongly related to eventual level of attainment. Self-concept of ability was again an additional predictor, while occupational aspirations were only moderately strong predictors of attainment. Other variables used in Volume III had no significance to attainment levels in Volume VI. Of all the variables considered there was a variance accounted for of 50.8, which is stronger than the 38 percent in Volume III. This led the researchers to conclude:

By knowing background, ability and a few indicators of success in school and attitudes toward schooling, all measured at the start of the tenth grade, we can do a rather good job of predicting educational attainment (p. 206).

This study sought to contribute to the field of literature reviewed by looking specifically at the relationship of students' perceptions of school characteristics and level of educational attainment. Characteristics chosen for this study were those which had been shown in this review to have value in the study of level of educational attainment, yet had not been sufficiently researched to answer all pertinent questions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Outlined and discussed in this chapter are the methods used in this study. The selection of study participants, methods of data collection and treatment of the data are explained.

Study Participants

Participants in this study consisted of all members of the senior classes of 1978 through 1982 in six Oklahoma school districts. Therefore, participants consisted of those students who had graduated or had been a part of those graduating classes, as reported by school officials. The six school districts represented were in close proximity (three adjoining counties) in western Oklahoma. None of the districts was closer than 25 miles to a city with a population greater than 25,000, and all relied mainly on agricultural and oil industries as sources of income. Within 50 miles of these districts was located at least one four year, bachelor and graduate level institution, and in some cases a two year college.

These school districts were participants in a larger study conducted by the College of Education Office of Extension, Oklahoma State University. The larger study was in partial fulfillment of House Bill 1816, Curriculum Review, mandated by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. It consisted of a Follow-Up Study of graduates, as well as

a Community Attitude of Schools Survey. Objectives of the graduate study were outlined by administrative members of each district and staff of the College of Education Extension Office. These objectives included:

1. Discovering what graduates were currently doing.
2. Discovering whether or not post-secondary education was attempted.
3. Ascertaining those high school experiences considered to have been most and/or least beneficial.
4. Obtaining graduates' suggestions about changes in school experiences.

Districts represented were: Geary, Greenfield, Kingfisher, Okeene, Seiling and Watonga.

The years 1978 through 1982 were chosen because of the recency of high school attendance and graduation. The range of five years was selected so that study participants would have been out of high school for varying amounts of time and would thus have had more than one opportunity to attempt or complete post-secondary educational attainment.

Selection of Data to be Collected

Information concerning graduates' perceptions and levels of educational attainment was obtained by a mailed Follow-Up Study Questionnaire. This Questionnaire was designed to meet the requirements of the before mentioned larger study. A committee of experts consisting of faculty of the Applied Behavioral Studies Department, Curriculum and Instruction Department and Educational Administration Department of the College of Education, Oklahoma State University, evaluated the

proposed questionnaire to ensure that it met overall study objectives. The questionnaire was also evaluated by the superintendent of each district to ensure that it met study objectives for that school.

The Follow-Up Study Questionnaire (Appendix A) consisted of two parts. The first part requested respondents to provide information on student characteristics and level of educational attainment. The second part requested opinions of respondents to a variety of high school experiences.

While the larger study used only Follow-Up Questionnaire responses, this research incorporated additional data on individual school districts obtained from school records supplied by each district. School superintendents and/or counselors provided curriculum offerings and enrollment figures for each of the five years included in this research. The Data Center of the Oklahoma State Department of Education also made available reports containing average daily attendance (ADA) records, number of teachers employed and average years of experience and racial composition of each district.

Data Collection

Data consisting of two parts was collected between March and October of 1983. Part one collected information from graduates which would provide data for examination of the research questions of this study. Part two added information on individual schools which would provide a better understanding of research findings.

Part one: An explanatory letter signed by the district's school superintendent (Appendix C), a questionnaire (Appendix A) and a stamped return envelope were mailed to each student identified by

school officials as a graduate of 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981 or 1982. The initial address used for each graduate was also supplied by the district. When possible, married names of female graduates were used. Area newspapers printed news releases (Appendix B) provided by the researcher which explained the studies and encouraged responses from graduates and the community. A total of 1,355 questionnaires were mailed in the initial step of data collection.

When returned, questionnaires were coded by district, graduation year and individual student. Non-respondents were identified and sent a second letter (Appendix D) and questionnaire. This second mailing was sent to non-respondents after attempts at address correction to help achieve a wider response rate were completed.

Part two: The researcher contacted the superintendent in each of the six districts. Each district supplied accreditation reports for school years 1977-78 through 1981-82. From these reports, curriculum offerings for each of the five years for that district were collated. Additional data was also collected from Oklahoma State Department of Education Data Center reports. This information included ADA, number of students in grades 10-12, numbers of teachers considered secondary teachers, average years of teaching experience and racial composition of the school and graduating class.

Analysis of Data

Data collected in this study were to answer or provide information for the research questions given in Chapter I. For this study, responses to Question Five of the information section of the Follow-Up Questionnaire were used to place respondents in the appropriate

attainment level group. Level of educational attainment consisted of the following categories:

Group 1: No attendance after high school graduation.

Group 2: Attendance at a two year trade or vocational institution.

Group 3: Attendance at a four year bachelor and graduate level institution.

Based on Follow-Up Questionnaire Opinion section categories, graduates' perceptions were divided into three sections. Response possibilities were assigned numerical values so that means for each item and mean of means for each section could be calculated. Responses were grouped according to designated attainment group and a group mean was derived for each of the questions 12 through 40.

Responses to the individual questions 12 through 20 yielded mean scores which indicated the level of felt gains on each one of a variety of high school characteristics. Values assigned ranged from 1 (A Great Deal) to 5 (None). Means for all questions in this section were combined to obtain an attainment group mean of means for amount of felt gains. The range was 9 (A Great Deal) to 45 (None). Interpretation of these means was used to answer Research Question One.

Responses to questions 21 through 28 yielded a mean score for perceptions of each of the items concerning adequacy of courses offered. Values assigned to response possibilities ranged from 1 (No) to 3 (Undecided). Attainment group mean of means were calculated, with range possibilities of 8 (No) to 24 (Undecided). These means were used to answer Research Question Two.

Responses to questions 29 through 40 each yielded an attainment group mean score indicating emphasis changes perceived by graduates on a number of high school characteristics. Values ranged from 1 (Less Emphasis) to 3 (More Emphasis). Attainment group mean of means calculated ranged from 12 (Less Emphasis) to 36 (More Emphasis). These means were used to answer Research Question Three.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the data collected for this research. It contains an analysis of respondents, combined item responses and examinations of data to answer research questions. To understand better the districts included in the study, descriptions of these districts and their curriculum offerings are also given.

Description of Respondents

Presented in Table I is a description of those high school graduates who responded to questionnaires in this study. The 645 respondents were divided among the five graduating classes totaling 139 from 1978, 134 from 1979, 119 from 1980, 124 from 1981 and 129 from 1982. The percentage of respondents to mailed questionnaires was 47.1 percent for 1978, 44.2 percent for 1979, 44 percent for 1980, 42.3 percent for 1981 and 47.1 percent for 1982, with a total response rate of 44.9 percent of all graduates for the years included in the study.

Respondents consisted of 50.9 percent males and 49.1 percent females. Approximately 96.3 percent of those responding identified themselves as White, with one percent identified as Black and 2.2 percent as American Indian. Shown in Table II is the ethnic composition of each of the six districts. Comparisons of these percentages

and response rates by ethnic group show a wide difference in respondents and overall school ethnic composition.

TABLE I
DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

Description	Number	Percentage
<u>Year Graduated</u>		
1978	139	21.6
1979	134	20.8
1980	119	18.4
1981	124	19.2
1982	129	20.0
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	328	50.9
Female	317	49.1
<u>Race</u>		
White	621	96.3
Black	9	1.0
American Indian	14	2.2
Other	1	0.1
<u>Education After High School</u>		
No attempts	175	27.1
Trade, vocational, two year institution	130	20.2
Four year, bachelor, graduate institution	340	52.7
<u>Academic Major*</u>		
Biological Sciences	35	8.4
Business	147	35.4
Education	86	20.7
Engineering	32	7.7
Humanities and Fine Arts	16	3.9
Physical Sciences and Mathematics	16	3.9
Social Sciences	13	3.1
Other academic fields	70	16.7
<u>Served in Military</u>		
No	620	96.2
Yes	25	3.8

TABLE I (Continued)

Description	Number	Percentage
<u>Vocational Areas*</u>		
Office/clerical	35	21.5
Computer technology	19	11.7
Mechanical and engineering technology	41	25.2
Health services	17	10.4
Public services	17	10.4
Other vocational areas	34	20.9
<u>Doing Now (All That Apply)**</u>		
Working for pay at full-time job	253	29.6
Working for pay at part-time job	130	15.2
Taking vocational/technical courses	24	2.8
Taking academic courses at two year college	22	2.6
Taking academic courses at four year college	237	27.7
Serving in the military	11	1.3
On temporary lay-off or unemployed	35	4.1
Homemaker	100	11.7
Other	43	5.0
<u>Held a Job During High School</u>		
Yes	470	72.9
No	175	27.1
<u>Number of Jobs Since High School</u>		
None	36	5.6
1	181	28.2
2	198	30.7
3	101	15.6
4	59	9.2
5	70	10.8
<u>Work Experience (As Many as Apply)**</u>		
Held a regular part-time job	411	36.1
Held a full-time job	418	36.7
Earned money by selling goods/services	110	9.6
Started own business	63	5.5
Supervised work of others	119	10.4
No work experience	19	1.7

*Optional question not answered by all respondents.

**Respondents could indicate more than one answer.

TABLE II
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF GRADUATES*

District	White	Black	American Indian	Other
Geary	82.3	6.7	8.5	2.4
Greenfield	95.6	0	0	4.4
Kingfisher	91.6	4.2	4.2	0
Okeene	100.0	0	0	0
Seiling	88.5	0	11.5	0
Watonga	84.7	9.7	5.6	0
Total	88.7	5.1	5.6	0

*Percentage of ADA.

**Percentage of combined ADA.

To learn attainment levels, respondents were asked about participation in educational endeavors after high school graduation. No attempts were indicated by 27.1 percent of the respondents. Attendance at a two year trade, vocational or non-degree granting institution was indicated by 20.2 percent. Fields of study at these two year institutions which did not usually lead to a bachelor's degree included office and clerical (21.5 percent), computer technology (11.7 percent), mechanical and engineering technology (25.2 percent), health

services (10.4 percent), public services (10.4 percent) and other vocational areas (20.9 percent).

Attendance at a four year, bachelor or graduate level institution was indicated by 52.7 percent of the total respondents. As noted earlier, four year bachelor or graduate level study was available within 50 miles of each district. Academic fields selected for study which usually led to a bachelor's degree included Business (35.4 percent), Education (20.7 percent), Biological Sciences (8.4 percent), Engineering (7.7 percent), Humanities and Fine Arts (3.9 percent), Physical Sciences and Mathematics (3.9 percent), Social Sciences (3.1 percent) and other academic fields (16.7 percent).

To gain an understanding of curriculum needs by examining experiences since graduation, two questions were included on the questionnaire. The first question asked graduates what they were currently doing. They indicated participation in more than one activity regardless of full or part-time status. Working for pay at a full-time job was most often cited by 29.6 percent of the respondents. Taking academic courses at a four year college was ranked second with 27.7 percent, followed by working for pay at a part-time job with 15.2 percent and homemaker with 11.7 percent. Other specified and unspecified activities received five or less percent of the total responses.

The second question asked graduates to describe all the areas of post-secondary work experiences in which they had participated. Equal numbers indicated they had held either regular part-time (36.1 percent) or full-time jobs (36.7 percent). Supervising the work of others had been done by 10.4 percent. Approximately 9.6 percent had earned money by selling goods and/or services, while 5.5 percent had

started their own businesses. As indicated by the number of responses to this question, most participated in more than one type of work experience and may have had experience in all five areas. Only 1.7 percent indicated no work experience of any type.

An additional 3.8 percent had served in the military; about one-third of this number (1.3 percent) being currently enlisted. None of these graduates fell under mandatory draft or draft registration requirements, and the 24 participants were all members of the all-volunteer armed forces.

Work experiences during high school was requested as a measure of activity involvement during these years. While no measure of minimum or maximum credits in school was taken, 72.9 percent of study respondents indicated they had worked for pay while still in high school. Specified types of work included both summer and year-round jobs, as well as agriculture and service (sales, nursing) related.

Perceptions of High School Curriculum

The combined responses of all attainment groups to items in Part Two of the Follow-Up Study Questionnaire indicated the overall perceptions of respondents to specific curriculum characteristics. The three categories were analyzed by attainment group in the research questions section of this chapter.

Responses to questions 12 through 20 were perceptions of the amount all graduates felt they gained from specific school experiences (Table III). Response categories ranged from "A Great Deal" to "Undecided." Mean scores for each item indicated a range of 1.98 for Language Arts to 2.46 for College Preparation. Based on values assigned,

TABLE III
 PERCEPTIONS OF AMOUNT GAINED FROM HIGH SCHOOL
 EXPERIENCES ITEM RESPONSES

Item	A Great Deal		A Fair Amount		A Very Little		Nothing		Undecided		Mean*
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Language Arts Courses	148	23.2	370	57.9	107	16.7	13	2.0	1	.2	1.98
Mathematics Courses	158	24.8	299	46.9	156	24.5	19	3.0	6	.9	2.08
Social Studies Courses	122	19.2	315	49.7	175	27.6	18	2.8	4	.6	2.16
Science Courses	134	21.0	270	42.3	190	29.7	36	5.6	9	1.4	2.24
Vocational Courses	216	35.0	154	25.0	105	17.0	111	18.0	31	5.0	2.33
Extra Class Activities	206	32.7	220	34.9	120	19.0	79	12.5	5	.8	2.14
Athletics	227	36.1	139	22.1	108	17.2	144	22.9	11	1.7	2.32
College Preparation	79	13.0	273	45.0	167	27.5	73	12.0	15	2.5	2.46
Work Preparation	105	16.8	278	44.5	183	29.3	48	7.7	11	1.7	2.33

*Values assigned: A Great Deal = 1; A Fair Amount = 2, A Very Little = 3; Nothing = 4; Undecided = 5.

the lower the mean the more positive the response and the greater the perceptions of amount gained. Athletics received the highest number of "Great Deal" responses; it also received the highest number of "Nothing" gained responses (22.9 percent). Language Arts courses received the highest number of "Fair Amount" responses (57.9 percent) and lowest number of "Nothing" (2.0 percent) and "Undecided" responses (.2 percent), College Preparation (27.5 percent) and Social Studies courses (27.6 percent) received almost equal percentages of "Very Little" responses.

Table IV shows the item responses to questions 21 through 28 which concentrated on perceptions of the adequacy of courses offered in a school. Response possibilities were: "No," "Yes," and "Undecided." Mean scores, based on assigned numerical values, ranged from 1.26 for English Grammar/Composition to 1.81 for Foreign Language. Responses all ranged in the "No" category, with Vocational Training ($\bar{X} = 1.61$) and Foreign Language ($\bar{X} = 1.81$) tending the strongest toward "Yes." Vocational Training (11.1 percent) and Foreign Language (8.9 percent) also received the highest percentages of "Undecided" responses. English Grammar/Composition (3.1 percent) and Science (3.3 percent) received the lowest percentages of "Undecided" responses.

Individual items in the last category of questionnaire items (Table V) concentrated on a variety of characteristics of high school and changes in emphasis graduates perceived needed to be made. Presented in Table V are combined responses for all graduates for each of the three answer possibilities and a mean score for each item. Mean scores were based on assigned numerical values for each response possibility. While all response means were within the "No Change"

TABLE IV
 PERCEPTIONS OF ADEQUACY OF CURRICULUM
 OFFERINGS ITEM RESPONSES

Item	No		Yes		Undecided		Mean*
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Mathematics	465	72.5	149	23.2	26	4.1	1.31
Physical Education	477	74.4	136	21.2	28	4.4	1.30
Art/Music	436	68.1	164	25.6	40	6.3	1.38
Foreign Language	177	27.6	407	63.5	57	8.9	1.81
Science	467	72.6	153	23.7	21	3.3	1.30
Social Studies	462	72.6	140	22.0	34	5.3	1.33
English Grammar/Composition	491	76.8	128	20.0	20	3.1	1.26
Vocational Training	321	50.4	245	38.5	71	11.1	1.61

*Values assigned: No = 1; Yes = 2; Undecided = 3.

TABLE V
 PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN EMPHASIS OF HIGH
 SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS ITEM RESPONSES

Item	Less Emphasis		No Change		More Emphasis		Mean*
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Variety of courses offered	22	3.5	191	30.4	415	66.1	2.63
Quality of instruction	14	2.2	262	41.5	355	56.3	2.54
Counseling/guidance services	18	2.9	232	36.8	381	60.4	2.58
Library/learning center	29	4.6	327	51.5	279	43.9	2.39
Special help for students	20	3.2	227	35.7	388	61.1	2.58
School rules and regulations	146	23.1	321	50.7	166	26.2	2.03
Discipline	61	9.6	377	59.5	196	30.9	2.21
Promotion policy/practice	39	6.4	390	64.1	179	29.4	2.23
Assignment of grades/marks	48	7.6	437	69.3	146	23.1	2.16
Laboratory/special equipment	17	2.7	213	33.8	400	63.5	2.61
Athletic/recreation facilities	146	23.1	317	50.1	170	28.9	2.04
Vocational training	24	3.8	271	43.3	329	52.7	2.49

*Values assigned: Less Emphasis = 1; No Change = 2; More Emphasis = 3.

range, several tended more strongly toward "More Emphasis" or "Less Emphasis."

School rules/regulations ($\bar{X} = 2.03$) and Athletic/recreational facilities ($\bar{X} = 2.04$) received almost identical mean scores and showed the highest tendency toward "Less Emphasis" of all the items. Quality of courses offered ($\bar{X} = 2.63$) and Laboratory/special equipment ($\bar{X} = 2.61$) averaged the highest and were most strongly indicated as needing "More Emphasis." Individual items indicated most often as needing "More Emphasis" were School rules/regulations (23.1 percent) and Athletic/recreational facilities (23.1 percent). Receiving the highest percentages of "No Change" responses were Assignment of grades (69.3 percent) and Promotion policy/practice (64.1 percent). The Variety of courses (66.1 percent) offered was indicated most often of all items as needing "More Emphasis"; it was followed closely by Laboratory/equipment (63.5 percent), Special help for students (61.1 percent) and Counseling/guidance services (60.4 percent).

Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to provide additional information on why high school graduates do or do not participate in post-secondary educational attainment. Three research questions were proposed, the answers to which would provide this added information. Mean scores on a variety of curriculum characteristics of the high school attended were calculated according to level of post-secondary educational attainment. Attainment or participation levels designated were:

Group 1: No attendance after high school graduation.

Group 2: Attendance at a two year trade or vocational institution.

Group 3: Attendance at a four year bachelor or graduate level institution.

Question One: Does participation in post-secondary education vary according to perceptions of graduates on the amount gained from high school experiences?

Responses to Follow-Up Study Questionnaire items 12 through 20 were used as indicators of variances in perceptions of amount gained from high school curriculum areas. By using designated response values, a mean for each attainment group was calculated. The higher the mean score the less gain that was perceived by graduates. All three groups perceived that they had gained approximately the same only from Language Arts courses (Table VI). Groups 2 and 3 perceived that they had gained less than Group 1 from Mathematics courses. Groups 1 and 3 perceived that they had gained close to the same amounts but less than Group 2 from Social Studies courses. Group 1 perceived that they had gained a great deal less from Science courses and College Preparation than had the other two groups. Group 3 perceived that they had gained less than perceived gains of the other groups from Vocational courses and Work Preparation. This same group felt that they had gained more from Extra Class activities, Athletics and College Preparation than had been perceived by the other groups. Group 2 tended to fluctuate between agreement with Groups 1 or 3 on questionnaire items 16 through 20. Only Social Studies courses, from which Group 2 perceived they had gained "A Fair Amount," was their mean score noticeably different.

TABLE VI
 PERCEPTIONS OF AMOUNT GAINED FROM HIGH SCHOOL
 EXPERIENCES BY LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT

Area	Attainment Groups		
	X_1	X_2	X_3
Language Arts Courses	2.01	1.98	1.98
Mathematics Courses	2.0	2.12	2.11
Social Studies Courses	2.16	2.02	2.21
Science Courses	2.51	2.19	2.13
Vocational Courses	2.0	1.98	2.64
Extra Class Activities	2.26	2.28	2.03
Athletics	2.44	2.46	2.21
College Preparation	3.04	2.40	2.23
Work Preparation	2.11	2.28	2.47
Mean of Means	2.28	2.19	2.22

The mean of means for all curriculum areas (questions 12 through 20) followed no pattern. Group 1 perceived that they had gained over-all the least, followed by Group 3 and Group 2.

Question 2: Does participation in post-secondary education vary according to perceptions of graduates on the adequacy of curriculum offerings?

Graduates' responses to Follow-Up Study Questionnaire items 21 through 28 were used to provide measures of perceived curriculum adequacy. Means, by attainment groups, were calculated using assigned numerical values of answer possibilities (Table VII). The higher the mean score, the closer offerings came to being perceived as adequate. With the exception of Vocational Training, Group 3's mean was higher in all areas than were means for Groups 1 and 2. The pattern established was Group 1 perceptions the lowest, followed by Group 2 and then Group 3's means. Group 2's mean was the highest for Vocational Training adequacy of course offerings.

The mean of means for each attainment group followed the same pattern. Group 1 perceived offerings overall as being the least adequate, Group 2 perceived them as slightly more adequate and Group 3 perceived offerings as being the most adequate.

Question 3: Does participation in post-secondary education vary according to perceptions of graduates on changes in emphasis on high school characteristics?

Graduates' responses to Follow-Up Study Questionnaire items 29 through 40 (Table VIII) provided a measure of perceived curriculum emphasis changes needed to be made. Attainment group means were calculated using assigned numerical values to responses with the higher the mean the "More Emphasis" needed.

All attainment groups perceived Discipline emphasis to be the same. The groups were similar in response means also on Assignment of grades, Promotion policy/practice and Library/learning center facilities. Means on variety of courses and Quality of instruction both showed an increase in emphasis from Group 1 through Group 3. A

decrease in perceptions of the emphasis needed occurred from Group 1 through 3 on Special help for students, School rules/regulations, Athletic/recreation facilities and Vocational Training. Group 2 means were the highest of the attainment groups on "More Emphasis" for Counseling/guidance services and Laboratory/special equipment.

TABLE VII
PERCEPTIONS OF ADEQUACY OF CURRICULUM
OFFERINGS BY LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT

Area	Attainment Groups		
	X_1	X_2	X_3
Mathematics	1.22	1.29	1.37
Physical Education	1.29	1.27	1.31
Art/Music	1.34	1.33	1.42
Foreign Language	1.79	1.77	1.84
Science	1.23	1.22	1.38
Social Studies	1.27	1.28	1.37
English Grammar/Composition	1.15	1.28	1.31
Vocational Training	1.60	1.63	1.60
Mean of Means	1.36	1.38	1.45

TABLE VIII
 PERCEPTIONS OF EMPHASIS CHANGES OF HIGH SCHOOL
 CHARACTERISTICS BY LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT

Item	X_1	Attainment Groups X_2	X_3
Variety of courses offered	2.50	2.61	2.70
Quality of instruction	2.43	2.55	2.59
Counseling/guidance services	2.53	2.60	2.59
Library/learning center facilities	2.37	2.38	2.41
Special help for students	2.66	2.62	2.52
School rules/regulations	2.10	2.05	1.99
Discipline	2.22	2.22	2.21
Promotion policy/practice	2.20	2.20	2.25
Assignment of grades	2.14	2.16	2.16
Laboratory/special equipment	2.50	2.66	2.64
Athletic/recreation facilities	2.15	2.14	1.93
Vocational training	2.62	2.61	2.37
Mean of Means	2.37	2.40	2.36

The mean of means of needed changes in emphasis followed no pattern by attainment group. Group 3 was the lowest, followed closely by Group 1 and then Group 2.

Description of Districts

Data collected from the six districts involved in this study and from the Oklahoma State Department of Education Data Center provided a basis for understanding each district's curriculum. A more detailed picture of grades 10 through 12 in each of the districts is given in Appendix E. The total number of students in grades 10 through 12, number of graduates and number of secondary and vocational teachers and counselors are represented.

The number of teachers remained approximately the same in all districts except Seiling. Seiling maintained the lowest pupil-teacher ratio due mainly to an increase in number of teachers and a high number of vocational instructors. Not included in the figures but informative are statistics concerning the average number of years of teaching experience for secondary teachers in these districts. Over the five year span studied, the average years of experience for the secondary teachers increased only one year or less for all districts except Kingfisher, which increased three years.

The number of graduates generally did not follow the same trends as did the overall ADA for grades 10 through 12. With few exceptions, the graduating class was the smallest of the three classes included in the ADA and it also had decreased in number from the year before. Enrollment in grades 10 through 12 had decreased over the five year period for all districts, while only Greenfield and Watonga had experienced any real decrease in number of graduates. The percentage of graduates to overall ADA ranged from 17 percent to 38 percent. No consistent patterns emerged over the five year period in any district.

Course Offerings

Courses offered by each district were collected by the researcher from information supplied by the superintendent of each district. Appendix F illustrates what courses were offered and the number of times they were offered within the five years of this study for grades 10 through 12. Courses are not divided in the figures by grade level such as Algebra I or II and Biology I or II, but are listed by variety of offerings. This information provided another basis for understanding perceptions of graduates' feelings about curriculum offerings.

All districts offered basic units in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies each year. These may have varied in the type of course taught or number of units offered due to student demand and/or availability of certified instructors. Kingfisher (57 courses) and Watonga (47 courses) were the largest schools and offered overall the greatest variety of courses. Geary (53 courses) did offer more courses than did Watonga, but fewer of the courses were taught for the complete five years of the study. Kingfisher had a greater variety of Language Arts (10 courses) and Social Studies (9 courses) and was the only district to have offered more than one Foreign Language course. Okeene and Seiling, with the same total number of offerings (43 courses), were somewhat different in areas of concentration. Okeene had the greatest variety of Mathematics (10 courses) of any of the districts. Seiling's emphasis was more on Vocational Education (5 courses) and Fine Arts (6 courses).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

This research was designed to address the questions of whether or not perceptions of graduates of their high school experiences influenced their post-secondary educational attainment. By so doing, additional areas of potential school evaluation and points of needed change which have an impact on educational attainment could be better understood.

Graduates' perceptions were classified into these three areas: felt gains from high school experiences, adequacy of curriculum offerings, and suggested changes in emphasis in various high school characteristics. Graduates were categorized into one of three educational attainment levels: high school graduation as the highest level; attendance at a two year trade or vocational program as the highest level; or, attendance at a four year bachelor or graduate level program as the highest level attained.

Graduates included in this study consisted of all members of the senior classes of 1978 through 1982 in six Oklahoma school districts. The districts were in close proximity in western Oklahoma and were participants in a larger follow-up study of graduates. Of the 1,355 graduates, 645 (44.9 percent) responded with usable questionnaires in either the first or second mailing.

Information concerning graduates' perceptions and level of attainment was obtained by this mailed Follow-Up Study Questionnaire. The first part of the Questionnaire provided information about respondents and their post-secondary educational endeavors. The second Questionnaire part requested opinions of respondents to a variety of high school characteristics and experiences.

Additional data were compiled from school district files and reports available through the Data Center of the Oklahoma State Department of Education. This data provided supplemental information about the individual districts and broadened the basis for understanding graduates' perceptions of high school experiences.

Findings

The response rate to the mailed Follow-Up Study Questionnaires was ample, considering that many of the Questionnaires had to be passed on by parents to children no longer living at home. Graduates were willing to answer questions, sometimes including their own written remarks concerning areas of special interest to their educational attainment. Respondents were not only evenly divided between males and females, they were also evenly divided among the five graduating classes. Nearly all study respondents were White; other ethnic groups represented were Black and American Indian.

Classification of respondents according to ethnic origin did not match their distribution among the combined class memberships. While 96 percent of the respondents were White, Whites constituted only 88.5 percent of the graduating classes. Other groups were: Black, making

up 1 percent of respondents and 5 percent of the graduates; and American Indian, with 2.2 percent and 6 percent of the graduates.

Findings of this research are based on interpretation of data collected in order to answer the given research questions. When asked to respond to the amount of felt gains from areas of high school experiences, the three attainment groups were inconsistent in their answers. Overall, the group that had no post-secondary attainment (Group 1) was the least positive, yet they were followed closely by the four year institution attenders (Group 3) and finally by the two year attenders (Group 2). However, the two groups (1 and 3) at the end of the attainment scale used for this study were opposites in the areas from which they felt they had gained the most or the least.

The non-attenders felt they had particularly gained the least from Science courses and College Preparation courses. It may have added to their decisions not to attend college that they perceived themselves as only being "Very Little" prepared for the experience. The four year attenders, and to a lesser degree the two year attenders, perceived that they were better prepared for college, with a rating of "Fair Amount." The four year attenders perceived that they had gained the most from Extra Class Activities and the basic courses of Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. Possibly because they had gone on to college, they perceived their least gains from Vocational courses and Work Preparation.

When areas are considered individually, post-secondary educational attainment does seem to vary according to gains perceived from College Preparation and Work Preparation courses. Also influential are felt gains from Vocational and Science courses.

Attainment groups followed a more consistent pattern when responding to perceptions of adequacy of curriculum offerings. Those participating in post-secondary education were more positive about the adequacy of offerings than were those who had not participated. This was particularly true in the areas of Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and English. On this basis, the groups' educational attainment can be said to vary according to perceptions of the adequacy of curriculum offerings.

The final items were based on perceptions on a variety of characteristics of the high school attended. The results were once again less conclusive. While the two extreme attainment groups (1 and 3) were almost identical in their overall responses, on individual items the results were somewhat different. In the areas of student rights or responsibilities and promotion or grades, graduates' responses were almost equal, with the strongest tendency of all items to show "Less Emphasis" needed. This de-emphasis of rules could be attributed to the age of study respondents and their striving to gain independence. Yet it needs to be remembered that students have responded most favorably to those decisions in which they have felt to be a part.

Wide differences were noted between the groups in the amount of emphasis on change in the areas of Variety of Courses, Quality of Instruction and Laboratory Equipment. The four year attender group's perceptions were more clearly indicating "More Emphasis" than were the other two groups. This same group's perceptions centered on the "Less Emphasis" side on Athletic Facilities and Vocational Training; more than was true of the other groups. Therefore, the conclusion reached on the final research question is that perceptions do vary by

attainment in the areas of curriculum offerings, instruction, special help for students, school rules, laboratory equipment and vocational training.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to ascertain whether or not participation in post-secondary educational attainment varied according to perceptions of high school experiences. In describing the districts combined in this study, a number of differences were obvious. They were not all the same size, ranging from below 50 students in grades 1 through 12, to over 300 students. They employed varying numbers of teachers with different average years of teaching. Even with these differences, mean scores of perceptions did not vary enough between schools to prevent a combined analysis forming a much stronger basis to answer research questions.

Examination of courses offered by each district showed that basic courses offered were the same. Judging the adequacy of curriculum offerings is therefore difficult. All these schools offered more courses than required by the Oklahoma State Department of Education for graduation, yet none was perceived by graduates as offering enough courses in any area. The high response rate of those who went on to post-secondary education, either two or four year institutions, may have accounted for the negative responses. This study did not try to deal with questions about the actual adequacy of the content of courses being offered. Simply because a course was offered did not make it adequate; neither did a course not offered make an entire curriculum inadequate.

Graduates' responses, though not entirely consistent, tended strongly to indicate that, yes, participation in post-secondary education did vary by perceptions. Non-attenders responded that they had gained less from College Preparation courses and they were the least positive of all groups in the adequacy of curriculum offerings. In curriculum emphasis, non-attenders noticeably indicated a greater need for counseling services, special help for students and vocational training.

Respondents classified as attenders at four year bachelor or graduate level institutions presented a different profile. They perceived strong gains from activities and less gains from non-academic than academic classes. The group perceived that they had gained little from Vocational courses, yet offerings in this area were close to being perceived as adequate. The four year attenders had the greatest needs in course variety and special equipment; these are areas which would have helped in post-secondary efforts.

Recommendations for Immediate Practice

It was stated in Chapter I that schools have become the primary formal vehicle for educating today's society. To accomplish this at more than a minimum level, schools should constantly be evaluating their philosophies and programs. The high school graduate has been shown to be a valuable asset and resource in the development of an evaluation plan. It was hoped that this study would point out opinions that graduates have about their high school's characteristics and their experiences there.

Curriculum offerings outlined here, as well as differences between districts, need to be considered as important relevant factors. These findings were contingent on how graduates felt about curriculum in their schools and not necessarily on what their curriculum actually was. However, graduates have been shown to be a valuable evaluation resource which school districts need to include in curriculum review processes. In so doing, strong areas needing to be continued and weak areas needing to be improved could be identified and, where necessary, changed.

If schools want to increase attainment levels still further for those with the potential to go to college, they need to increase course offerings, quality of instruction and the availability of special equipment. For other, perhaps less academically oriented students, the need seems to be concentrated on counseling and special services. Improvement of their image of themselves and their high school experiences can help to increase their willingness to participate in post-secondary activities.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study clearly showed that further research using graduates could provide additional information about traits of schools. Compulsory attendance has provided a wealth of populations which can be divided by sex, race, income, aptitude and many other variables. Responses can be gleaned which would help schools evaluate the areas and ways their curriculum could be designed so that more students could achieve maximum secondary and post-secondary attainment levels. Also, an aid in evaluation would be to learn why graduates choose to

enter the work force immediately following high school or choose to participate in post-secondary education.

On this basis, the researcher recommends a number of areas that could be studied which would add to this research as well as achieve additional purposes. Expansion of follow-up studies of high school graduates could be conducted in several ways, including:

1. Using schools with larger ADA's.
2. Comparing schools of the same size in different geographic regions.
3. Conducting in-depth case studies of one district's graduates.
4. Conducting in-depth studies of individual students in a cross-section of attainment levels.
5. Doing a longitudinal study of graduates to evaluate whether or not perceptions change.
6. Comparing perceptions of graduates of different years.
7. Expanding the amount of information requested from respondents to include more specific school aspects.

Along with these recommendations concerning graduates, it would be helpful to curriculum evaluation efforts to collect responses from teachers and school administrators on the same questions. Schools could also compare perceptions of community members, board members and parents with those of graduates to gain an understanding of how curriculum is viewed and accepted by those outside the school.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

HIGH SCHOOL
FOLLOW-UP STUDY

Dear Former Student:

Public Schools are constantly looking for ways to improve their educational offerings and this time we are asking for your help. Please take some time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the postage paid envelope to Oklahoma State University.

The purpose of this student follow-up study is to find out not only what has happened to you since high school, but also how well your high school prepared you for those experiences. The fact that you are working, married, in college or vocational school is important in our efforts to plan new and better school programs. By returning this questionnaire, filled out, you will be assisting us in this important evaluation effort. All of the information provided will be absolutely confidential.

Thank you for your answer, opinions and time.

1. What year did you last attend high school?(Please check one)

1973	1978
1974	1979
1975	1980
1976	1981
1977	1982

2. Your sex? (Please check one)

male
 female

3. Your race? (Please check one)

White	American Indian
Black	Other (specify)

4. What is the highest level you have attempted or completed?(Please complete one)

less than a high school diploma
 high school diploma or equivalency _____ year received
 two-year college diploma _____ year received?
 bachelor's degree _____ year received?
 graduate degree _____ year received?

5. Have you received further education after high school?(Check all that apply)
- No
- Vocational or trade school
- Business or banking college
- Junior college
- 4-year college or university
- other (please specify) _____
6. What is (was) your major field of study? (Please check one)
- Academic fields (usually leading to at least a bachelor's degree)
- biological sciences
- business
- education
- engineering
- humanities and fine arts
- physical sciences and mathematics
- social sciences
- other academic fields (specify _____)
- Vocational areas (usually not leading to a Bachelor's degree)
- office and clerical
- computer technology
- mechanical and engineering technology
- health services
- public services
- other vocational areas (specify _____)
7. Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Armed Forces?
- no yes
8. What are you doing now (check all that apply)?
- working for pay at a full-time job
- working for pay at a part-time job
- taking vocational or technical courses
- taking academic courses at a two-year college
- taking academic courses at a four-year college
- serving in the military
- on temporary lay-off or unemployed
- homemaker
- other (specify _____)
9. Did you hold a job during high school?
- no yes (specify _____)
10. How many jobs (positions) have you held since high school?
- 0 3
- 1 4
- 2 5 or more

11. Please indicate your work experience by checking as many items below as apply.

- held a regular part-time job (example waitress, sales clerk)
 held a full-time
 earned money by selling goods or services
 started my own business
 supervised the work of others
 no work experience at all

NOW FOR AN "OPINION" SECTION

PLEASE CONSIDER THE REMAINING QUESTIONS IN TERMS OF YOUR EXPERIENCES SINCE YOU LAST ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL.

At the high school I attended I gained:

- | | A
Great
Deal | A
Fair
Amount | A
Very
Little | None | UD | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 12. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | from the language arts (English, Speech)courses. |
| 13. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | from the mathematics courses. |
| 14. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | from the social studies (History Government)courses. |
| 15. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | from the science courses. |
| 16. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | from the vocational courses. |
| 17. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | from the extra class activities (clubs, student council). |
| 18. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | from athletics. |
| 19. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | that prepared me for college. |
| 20. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | that prepared me for working. |

Do you feel your high school offered enough courses in these subjects?

- | | YES | NO | UNDECIDED |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 21. Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Physical Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Art/Music | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Foreign Language | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Science | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. Social Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. English Grammar/Composition | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. Vocation Training | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Listed below are a number of characteristics of your high school. Please indicate changes you feel need to be made.

- | | LESS
EMPHASIS | NO
CHANGE | MORE
EMPHASIS |
|--|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| 29. Variety of courses offered | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 30. Quality of instruction | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 31. Counseling or guidance services | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 32. Library or learning center facilities | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 33. Special help for students needing it | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 34. School rules and regulations | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 35. Discipline | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 36. Promotion policy or practice | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 37. Assignment of grades or marks | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 38. Laboratory or special equipment | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 39. Athletic or recreational facilities | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 40. Vocational training | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | | | |
| 41. Were there any subjects offered at your high school which you <u>didn't</u> take, but needed later? | | | |
| | | | |
| 42. Were there any subjects <u>not offered</u> at your high school which you later needed? | | | |
| | | | |
| 43. Generally, which school experiences (classes, teachers, activities, other) have you found to be the most helpful since high school? | | | |
| | | | |
| 44. Generally, which school experiences (classes, teachers, activities, other) have you found to be the least helpful since high school? | | | |
| | | | |
| 45. Looking back to the days you spent in high school, what one aspect of the school would you change? | | | |

APPENDIX B

NEWS RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

The school districts of Geary, Greenfield, Kingfisher, Okeene and Watonga have joined together to contract with Oklahoma State University to conduct two surveys which they believe will help them plan more effectively for the continued improvement of the quality of the education in their communities.

One survey will be a follow-up of the graduates of the high schools of the communities for the last five years. The superintendents of the districts hope to be able to track their graduates and find out what they are doing now, whether they pursued any post-secondary education following high school, how successful they have been with their further education, which aspects of their high school education have been most and which least beneficial to them in their work, etc. The other survey will be in the form of a questionnaire distributed to a sample of the population in each community. The questionnaire will ask citizens for their opinions and attitudes regarding the mission, appropriate goals and quality of the elementary and secondary education offered in their schools.

The staff of OSU's College of Education are in the process of designing the questionnaires for approval by the superintendents and their boards of education. The OSU staff also will supervise the distribution of the questionnaires, receive and tabulate the results and analyze the data. A final report for each community will both summarize and interpret the responses. Each report will be presented to the appropriate superintendent and board of education at a public meeting at which OSU personnel will be available to answer questions.

The school district surveys are supported by a special grant from the State Department of Education. Ultimately, each superintendent intends to use the data from his community's graduates and citizens to review the curriculum of the schools. The opinions of past graduates, parents of students and non-parent members of the school districts will help the superintendents, teachers and administrators of each individual community to continue to improve the quality of the education provided for their children.

APPENDIX C

FIRST LETTER TO GRADUATES

FIVE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF
_____ HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dear Former _____ Student:

As a recent student of _____ High School, your help is needed. _____ Public Schools are currently in the process of evaluating their high school programs and there are questions for which only you have the answers. Your valuable experiences during and since high school can provide the basis from which future students can profit.

It will only take a few minutes of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. Let us know what you are doing, what you have done since high school and your opinions about your school experiences. All of the information that you provide will be absolutely confidential; individual names will not be associated with individual answers. If there are questions you would rather not answer, simply do not answer those questions.

When you have completed this questionnaire, place it inside the enclosed envelope. The postage has already been paid. Your response will go to Oklahoma State University, who is helping with this study.

Thank you for your interest and support of this _____ school project.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX D

SECOND LETTER TO GRADUATES

FIVE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF
_____ HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dear Former _____ Student:

You recently received a questionnaire as part of a follow-up study being conducted by the _____ Public Schools. If you have not already completed and returned the questionnaire, please take a few minutes to do so now. For your convenience, another copy of the questionnaire is being sent with this second request.

It will only take a few minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire. Let us know what you are doing, what you have done since high school and your opinions about your school experiences. Again, all of the information that you provide will be absolutely confidential. If there are questions you would rather not answer, simply do not answer those questions.

When you have completed this questionnaire, place it inside the enclosed envelope. The postage has already been paid. Your response will go to Oklahoma State University, who is helping with this study.

Thanks once again for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX E

DISTRICT SIZE FIGURES

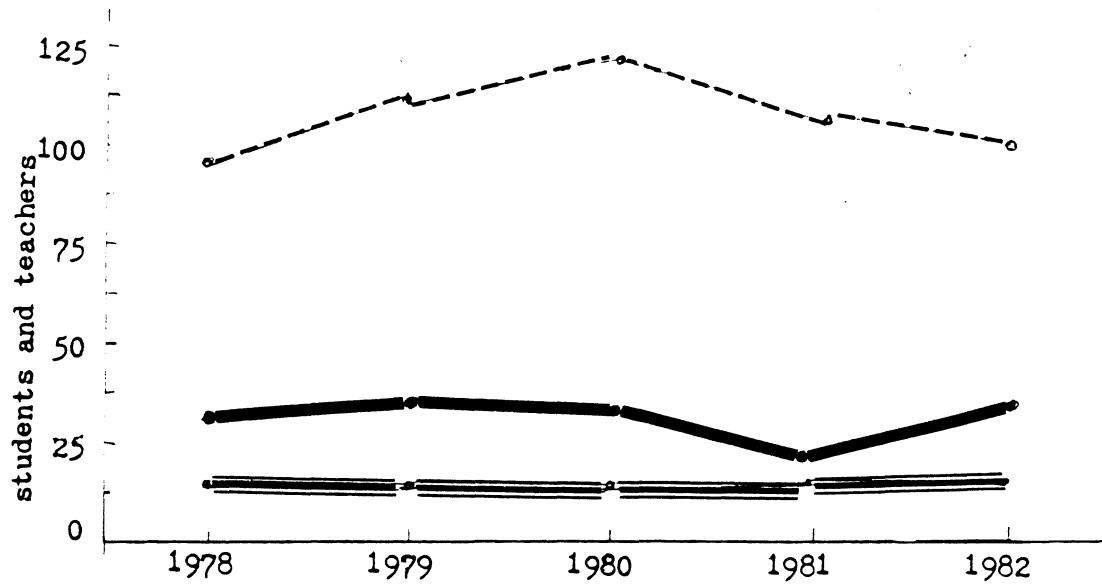


Figure 1. Geary School Characteristics



Figure 2. Greenfield School Characteristics

Note--Legend for Figures 1-6 is the following:

- - - Number of Students, Grades 10-12
- _____ Number of Graduates
- ===== Number of Secondary-Vocational Teachers and Counselors

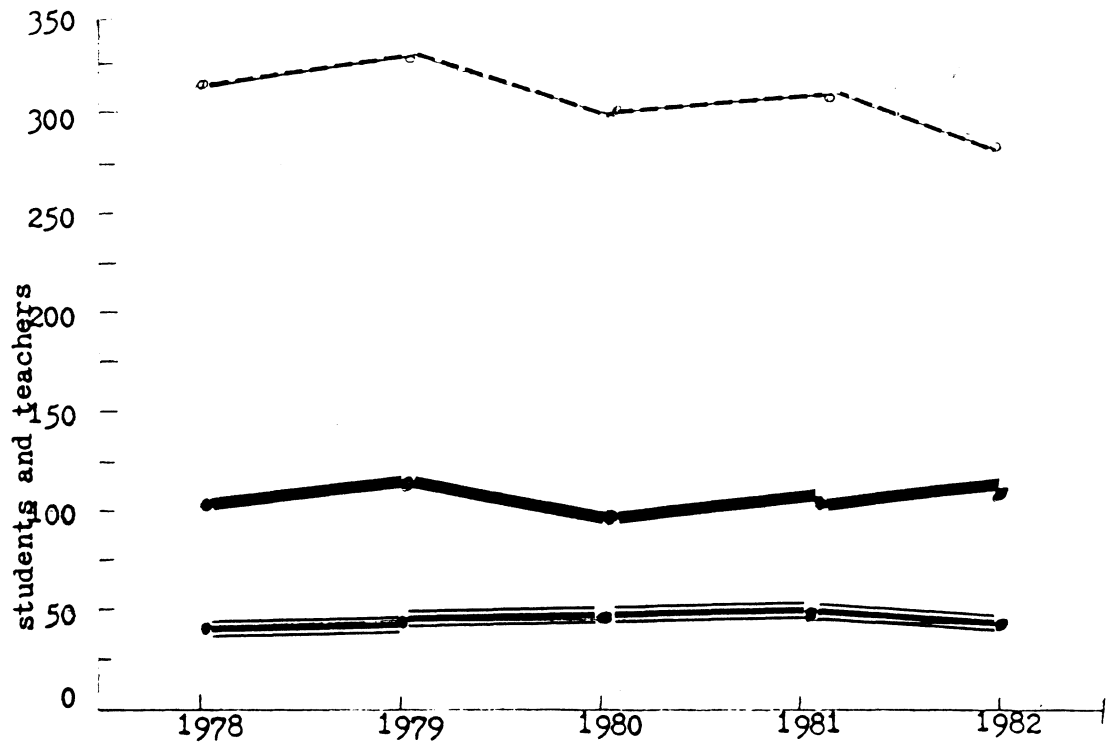


Figure 3. Kingfisher School Characteristics

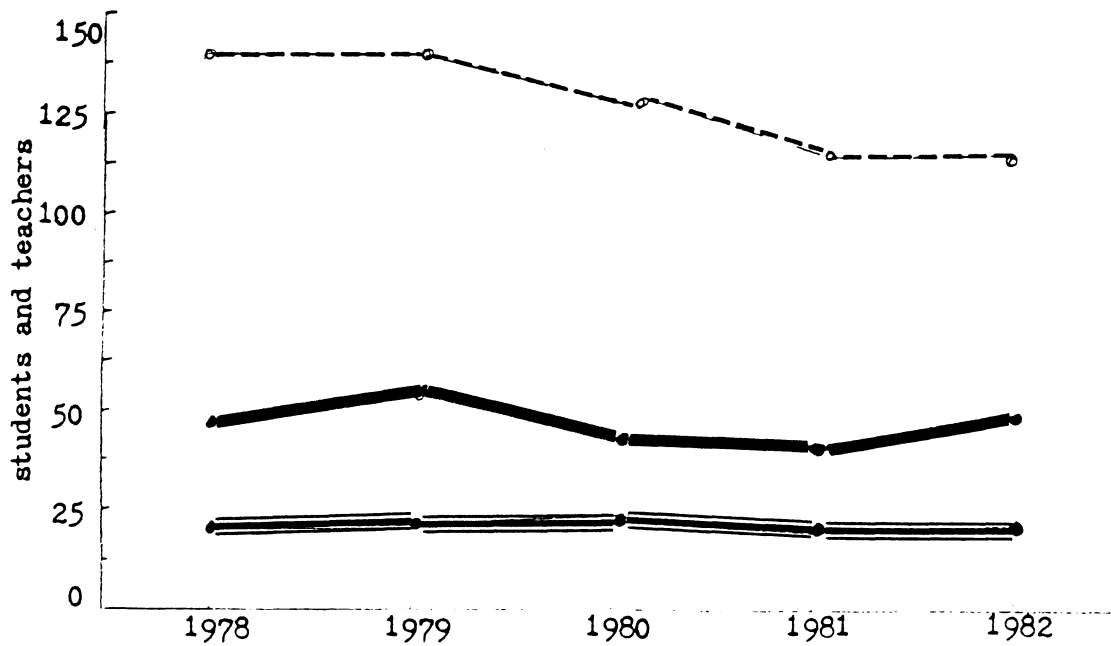


Figure 4. Okeene School Characteristics

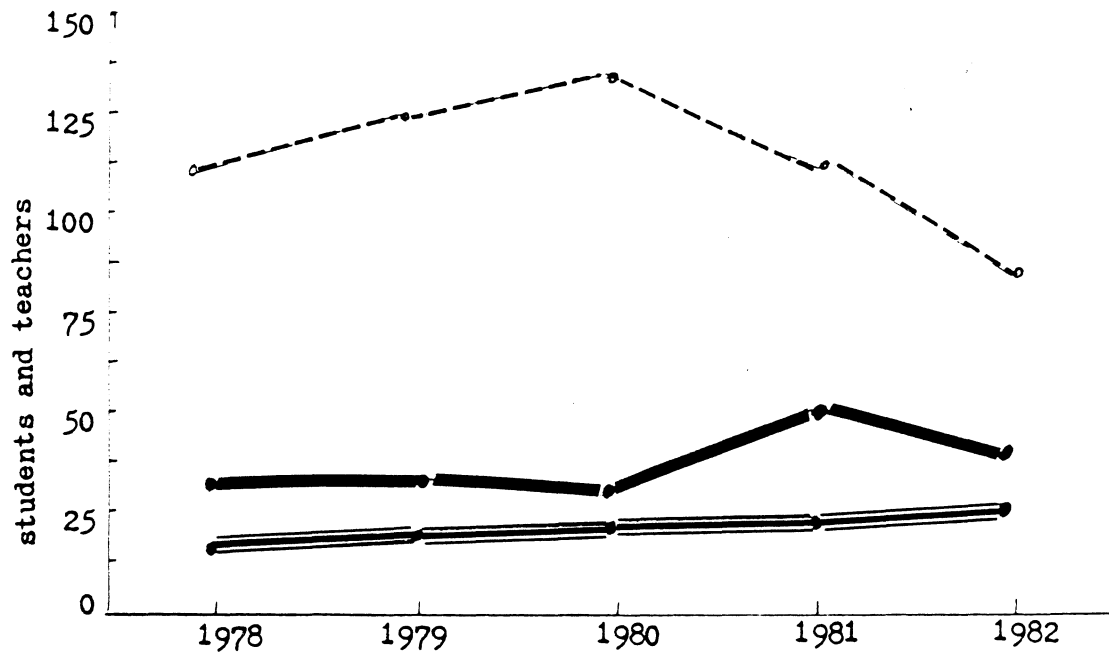


Figure 5. Seiling School Characteristics

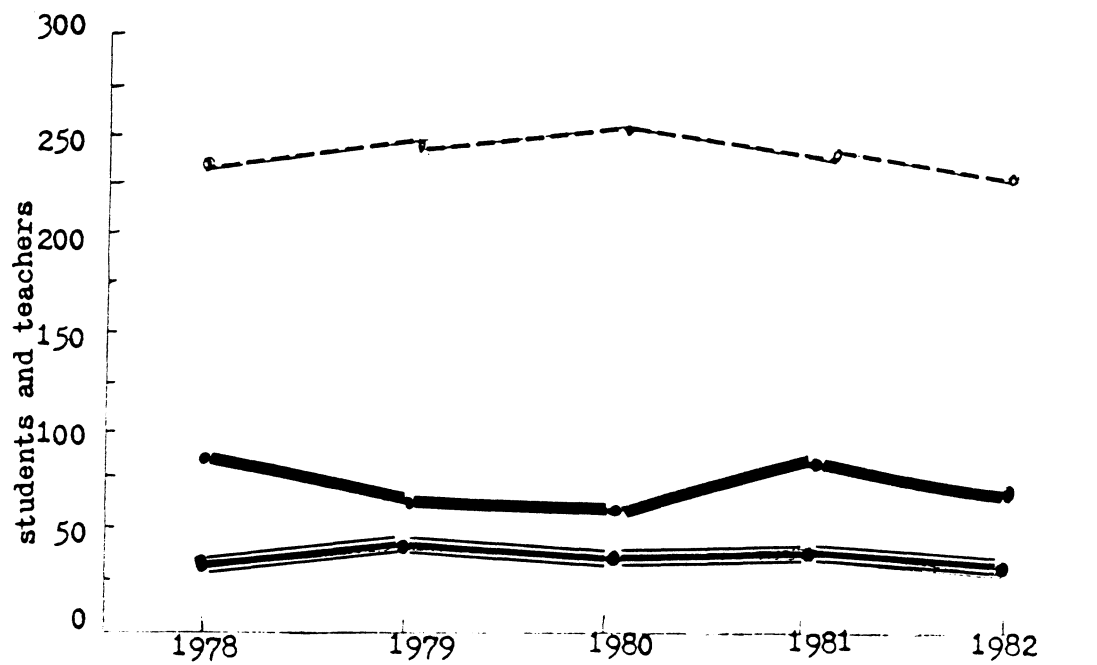


Figure 6. Watonga School Characteristics

APPENDIX F

DISTRICT COURSE OFFERINGS

Subject	*#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs
LANGUAGE ARTS		SCIENCE		FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
English	5	General	1	French	
Speech	5	Biology	5	Latin	
Journalism	1	Chemistry	3	Spanish	5
Debate		Earth		German	
Drama	3	Physics			
Reading	4	Physical	2		
Yearbook	2	Physiology		TOTAL Foreign Lang	1
Newspaper	2	Natural	2	PRACTICAL ARTS	
Creative Writing				Auto Mechanics	
				Crafts	
				Drafting/Design	5
		TOTAL Science	5	General Shop	4
		BUSINESS EDUCATION		Metal Work	
TOTAL Language	7	Accounting	5	Woodwork	3
MATHEMATICS		Shortband	2	Welding	
General Math	5	Typing	5	Mech. Drawing	
Algebra	5	Business Eng.		Electricity	
Plane Geometry	4	Business Math			
Solid Geometry		Business Law			
Trigonometry	2	Office Practice			
Analysis		Business Mach.			
Analytics	2	General Bus.	5	Gen. Agri.	
H.S. Math	2	Computer Prg.	1	Gen. Home Econ.	
Math Imp.	1	Clerical Prac	1		
				TOTAL Prac. Arts	3
		TOTAL Bus. Educ.	6	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	
TOTAL Mathematics	7	FINE ARTS		Agriculture	5
SOCIAL STUDIES		Art	2	Home Economics	5
OK Hist/Civics	5	Arts & Crafts	1	Family Living	5
American Hist.	5	Vocal Music	2	Agri Mechanics	5
World History	4	Instr. Music	5	CVET	
Modern History		Music Theory	3	COE	
Government		Music Appre.	1	CVE	
Geography				Cosmetology	
Democracy				Welding	
Sociology	3			Machine Shop	
Psychology	3	TOTAL Fine Arts	6	Electronics	
Career Exp.		HEALTH & SAFETY		Carpentry	
Economics	1	Driver Educ.	5	Auto Mechanics	
Current Events	2	Safety	4		
Consumer Ed	1	Health	2	Dist. Educ.	
Social Science	1	Physical Educ.	4	Ind. Co-op Tr.	
		Competitive Ath.	5		
TOTAL Social Stu.	9	TOTAL Health/Safety	5	TOTAL Voc. Ed.	4

*Number of years 1978-1982 course was offered

Figure 7. Geary Course Offerings

Subject	*#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs
LANGUAGE ARTS		SCIENCE		FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
English	5	General	4	French	2
Speech		Biology	4	Latin	
Journalism		Chemistry	1	Spanish	
Debate		Earth		German	
Drama		Physics			
Reading		Physical			
Yearbook	4	Physiology		TOTAL Foreign Lang	1
Newspaper	1	Botany	1	PRACTICAL ARTS	
Creative Writing		Zoology	2	Auto Mechanics	
				Crafts	
				Drafting/Design	-1
		TOTAL Science	5	General Shop	
		BUSINESS EDUCATION		Metal Work	
TOTAL Language	3	Accounting	3	Woodwork	1
MATHEMATICS		Shorthand		Welding	
General Math	4	Typing	5	Mech. Drawing	
Algebra	5	Business Eng.	4	Electricity	
Plane Geometry	3	Business Math			
Solid Geometry		Business Law			
Trigonometry	4	Office Practice	3		
Analysis		Business Mach.			
Analytics		General Bus.	3	Gen. Agri.	
H.S. Math	1			Gen. Home Econ.	4
				TOTAL Prac. Arts	3
		TOTAL Bus. Educ.	5	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	
TOTAL Mathematics	5	FINE ARTS		Agriculture	5
SOCIAL STUDIES		Art	3	Home Economics	
OK Hist./Civics	5	Arts & Crafts		Family Living	1
American Hist.	5	Vocal Music	2	Agri Mechanics	2
World History	2	Instr. Music		CVET	
Modern History		Music Theory		COE	
Government		Music Appre.		CVE	
Geography	2			Cosmetology	
Democracy	1			Welding	
Sociology	2			Machine Shop	
Psychology	1	TOTAL Fine Arts	2	Electronics	
Career Exp.		HEALTH & SAFETY		Carpentry	
Economics		Driver Educ.	5	Auto Mechanics	
		Safety			
		Health		Dist. Educ.	
		Physical Educ.	5	Ind. Co-op Tr.	
		Competitive Ath.	3		
TOTAL Social Stu.	7	TOTAL Health/Safety	3	TOTAL Voc. Ed.	3

*Number of years 1978-1982 course was offered

Figure 8. Greenfield Course Offerings

Subject	*#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs
LANGUAGE ARTS		SCIENCE		FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
English	5	General		French	
Speech	5	Biology	5	Latin	
Journalism	2	Chemistry	5	Spanish	4
Debate	3	Earth		German	1
Drama		Physics	1		
Reading	5	Physical	5		
Yearbook	4	Physiology		TOTAL Foreign Lang	2
Newspaper		Science Survey	3	PRACTICAL ARTS	
Creative Writing	3	Photography	2	Auto Mechanics	
Biblical Lit	4	Multi Media	1	Crafts	
Voc. Eng.	4			Drafting/Design	1
Vocabulary	3	TOTAL Science	7	General Shop	
		BUSINESS EDUCATION		Metal Work	
TOTAL Language	10	Accounting	5	Woodwork	4
MATHEMATICS		Shorthand	4	Welding	
General Math	5	Typing	5	Mech. Drawing	4
Algebra	4	Business Eng.		Electricity	
Plane Geometry	5	Business Math	5		
Solid Geometry		Business Law			
Trigonometry		Office Practice	4		
Analysis	5	Business Mach.			
Analytics		General Bus.		Gen. Agri.	
H.S. Math				Gen. Home Econ.	
Consumer Math	5				
				TOTAL Prac. Arts	3
		TOTAL Bus. Educ.	5	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	
TOTAL Mathematics	5	FINE ARTS		Agriculture	5
SOCIAL STUDIES		Art	5	Home Economics	5
OK Hist/Civics	5	Arts & Crafts	2	Family Living	
American Hist.	5	Vocal Music	5	Agri Mechanics	4
World History	5	Instr. Music	5	CVET	
Modern History	2	Music Theory		COE	
Government	2	Music Appre.		CVE	
Geography	1			Cosmetology	5
Democracy				Welding	
Sociology				Machine Shop	
Psychology	5	TOTAL Fine Arts	4	Electronics	
Career Exp.	2	HEALTH & SAFETY		Carpentry	5
Economics		Driver Educ.	5	Auto Mechanics	5
Minority Hist	2	Safety		Health Careers	4
		Health		Dist. Educ.	
		Physical Educ.	5	Ind. Co-op Tr.	
		Competitive Ath.	5	Farmshop	1
				ICE	1
TOTAL Social Stu.	9	TOTAL Health/Safety	3	TOTAL Voc. Ed.	9

*Number of years 1978-1982 course was offered

Figure 9. Kingfisher Course Offerings

Subject	*#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs
LANGUAGE ARTS		SCIENCE		FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
English	5	General		French	
Speech	5	Biology	5	Latin	
Journalism		Chemistry	5	Spanish	5
Debate	2	Earth	2	German	
Drama	5	Physics	4		
Reading		Physical	5		
Yearbook	5	Physiology	4	TOTAL Foreign Lang	1
Newspaper	4	Geology	1	PRACTICAL ARTS	
Creative Writing				Auto Mechanics	
				Crafts	
				Drafting/Design	4
		TOTAL Science	7	General Shop	
		BUSINESS EDUCATION		Metal Work	
TOTAL Language	6	Accounting	5	Woodwork	5
MATHEMATICS		Shortband	5	Welding	
General Math		Typing	5	Mech. Drawing	1
Algebra	5	Business Eng.		Electricity	
Plane Geometry	5	Business Math			
Solid Geometry	5	Business Law			
Trigonometry	5	Office Practice			
Analysis	5	Business Mach.	5		
Analytics		General Bus.		Gen. Agri.	
H.S. Math	4			Gen. Home Econ.	
Consumer Math	1				
Pre-Algebra	4				
Comp Skills	2				
Prac Math	1			TOTAL Prac. Arts	3
		TOTAL Bus. Educ.	4	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	
TOTAL Mathematics	10	FINE ARTS		Agriculture	5
SOCIAL STUDIES		Art	5	Home Economics	5
OK Hist/Civics	5	Arts & Crafts		Family Living	
American Hist.	5	Vocal Music		Agri Mechanics	
World History	4	Instr. Music	5	CVET	
Modern History		Music Theory		COE	
Government		Music Appre.		CVE	
Geography		Ensemble	2	Cosmetology	
Democracy				Welding	
Sociology	5			Machine Shop	
Psychology		TOTAL Fine Arts	3	Electronics	
Career Exp.		HEALTH & SAFETY		Carpentry	
Economics		Driver Educ.	5	Auto Mechanics	
		Safety			
		Health		Dist. Educ.	
		Physical Educ.	5	Ind. Co-op Tr.	
		Competitive Ath.	5		
TOTAL Social Stu.	4	TOTAL Health/Safety	3	TOTAL Voc. Ed.	2

*Number of years 1978-1982 course was offered

Figure 10. Okeene Course Offerings

Subject	*#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs
LANGUAGE ARTS		SCIENCE		FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
English	5	General		French	
Speech	5	Biology	5	Latin	
Journalism	3	Chemistry	4	Spanish	5
Debate		Earth		German	
Drama		Physics	5		
Reading	1	Physical	3		
Yearbook	5	Physiology	2	TOTAL Foreign Lang	1
Newspaper		Computer Sci	1	PRACTICAL ARTS	
Creative Writing				Auto Mechanics	
World Lit	5			Crafts	
Communications	1			Drafting/Design	
		TOTAL Science	6	General Shop	
		BUSINESS EDUCATION		Metal Work	
TOTAL Language	7	Accounting	5	Woodwork	
MATHEMATICS		Shortband	3	Welding	
General Math	3	Typing	5	Mech. Drawing	
Algebra	5	Business Eng.		Electricity	
Plane Geometry	5	Business Math			
Solid Geometry		Business Law			
Trigonometry	5	Office Practice			
Analysis	2	Business Mach.			
Analytcs		General Bus.	2	Gen. Agri.	
H.S. Math				Gen. Home Econ.	
Consumer Math	3				
				TOTAL Prac. Arts	0
		TOTAL Bus. Educ.	3	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	
TOTAL Mathematics	6	FINE ARTS		Agriculture	5
SOCIAL STUDIES		Art	3	Home Economics	5
OK Hist/Civics	5	Arts & Crafts	2	Family Living	5
American Hist.	5	Vocal Music	5	Agri Mechanics	5
World History		Instr. Music	5	CVET	
Modern History		Music Theory	4	COE	
Government		Music Appre.	2	CVE	
Geography	1			Cosmetology	
Democracy				Welding	
Sociology				Machine Shop	
Psychology	5	TOTAL Fine Arts	6	Electronics	
Career Exp.	1	HEALTH & SAFETY		Carpentry	
Economics		Driver Educ.	5	Auto Mechanics	5
		Safety	5		
		Health	11	Dist. Educ.	
		Physical Educ.		Ind. Co-op Tr.	
		Competitive Ath.	5		
TOTAL Social Stu.	5	TOTAL Health/Safety	4	TOTAL Voc. Ed.	5

*Number of years 1978-1982 course was offered

Figure 11. Seiling Course Offerings

Subject	*#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs	Subject	#Yrs
LANGUAGE ARTS		SCIENCE		FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
English	5	General	2	French	5
Speech	5	Biology	5	Latin	
Journalism	1	Chemistry	5	Spanish	
Debate		Earth		German	
Drama	3	Physics	5		
Reading		Physical			
Yearbook	5	Physiology		TOTAL Foreign Lang	1
Newspaper	1			PRACTICAL ARTS	
Creative Writing				Auto Mechanics	
Communication	2			Crafts	
				Drafting/Design	
		TOTAL Science	4	General Shop	1
		BUSINESS EDUCATION		Metal Work	
TOTAL Language	7	Accounting	5	Woodwork	
MATHEMATICS		Shorthand	2	Welding	
General Math	1	Typing	5	Mech. Drawing	
Algebra	5	Business Eng.		Electricity	
Plane Geometry	5	Business Math			
Solid Geometry		Business Law	5		
Trigonometry		Office Practice			
Analysis		Business Mach.			
Analytcs		General Bus.	2	Gen. Agri.	
H.S. Math	5			Gen. Home Econ.	
Math IV	5				
				TOTAL Prac. Arts	1
		TOTAL Bus. Educ.	5	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	
TOTAL Mathematics	5	FINE ARTS		Agriculture	5
SOCIAL STUDIES		Art	5	Home Economics	5
OK Hist/Civics	5	Arts & Crafts		Family Living	2
American Hist.	5	Vocal Music	5	Agri Mechanics	
World History	3	Instr. Music	5	CVET	
Modern History		Music Theory		COE	5
Government		Music Appre.		CVE	5
Geography	1	Music Survey	1	Cosmetology	5
Democracy	1			Welding	
Sociology	3			Machine Shop	
Psychology	1	TOTAL Fine Arts	4	Electronics	
Career Exp.		HEALTH & SAFETY		Carpentry	5
Economics		Driver Educ.	5	Auto Mechanics	5
Consumer Econ.	3	Safety	1		
		Health		Dist. Educ.	
		Physical Educ.	5	Ind. Co-op Tr.	
		Competitive Ath.	5		
TOTAL Social Stu.	8	TOTAL Health/Safety	4	TOTAL Voc. Ed.	8

*Number of years 1978-1982 course was offered

Figure 12. Watonga Course Offerings

VITA

Martha New Albin

Candidate for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND LEVEL OF POST-
SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Brownwood, Texas, December 11, 1947, the
daughter of Rev. and Mrs. J. H. New.

Education: Graduated from Seiling High School, Seiling, Oklahoma,
in May, 1966; received Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational
Home Economics from Oklahoma State University in
1970; received Master of Science degree in Family Relations
and Child Development from Oklahoma State University in
December, 1979; completed requirements for the Doctor of
Education degree in Educational Administration and Higher
Education in May, 1984.

Professional Experience: Vocational Home Economics Teacher,
Laverne High School, Laverne, Oklahoma, 1970-72; Vocational
Home Economics Teacher, Maud High School, Maud, Oklahoma,
1972-75; Education Coordinator for Margaret Hudson Program
for School-Age Parents, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, Okla-
homa, 1976-79; Graduate Research Assistant, Family Study
Center, Oklahoma State University, 1979-80; Graduate Re-
search Associate, Office of Education Extension, Oklahoma
State University, 1981-83.

Honors: Recipient, Locke, Wright and Foster Fellowship for Po-
tential Leadership in Educational Administration, 1982.