

A STUDY OF DROP-OUTS IN THE MANUAL TRAINING

HIGH SCHOOL, MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA

By

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Bachelor of Science

Langston University

Langston, Oklahoma

1942

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
July, 1952

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HIGH SCHOOL, MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA

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PREFACE

Sincere appreciation and gratitude is expressed to my mother and father, Rev. & Mrs. L. G. Hibler for the guidance and help given me thus far, as well as making it possible for me to complete the work required for the Master's Degree; also to my children, Adam W. Herbert, Jr. and Tamashia Herbert, who have been so considerate of the fact that the writer has been extra busy this fall trying to complete this study.

The writer wishes to express her deepest appreciation to her advisor, Dr. Elsa B. Bate, for giving helpful advice as well as time and effort throughout the period of graduate study, and writing of this paper. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Millie Pearson, Head of the Home Economics Education Department, for her suggestions.

To the many offices and people who sent me studies on drop-outs and information about where I could find the same, the writer also expresses thanks.

The writer is grateful to Mr. L. R. Kirkpatrick, Principal of Manual Training High School, for permitting such a study to be made of his school, and for the many suggestions offered by him.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the United States it is generally believed that education is the underpinning of self-government and the ladder by which people of all types and races may climb to positions of highest usefulness in the Republic. It is further believed that education is dynamic and ever changing.

The general educational program is being challenged by the ever changing conditions in the world today. Youth are asking themselves this question. Is it our duty to remain in school during these times? The schools are wondering if they should accept the responsibility for all youth in their respective communities.

In August 1940¹⁸, the late President Roosevelt, in a letter to the youth, advised all American Youth³⁸ not to interrupt their education. *Solo* is,

We must have well-educated and intelligent citizens who have sound judgment in dealing with the difficult problems of today. We must also have scientists, engineers, economists, and other people with specialized knowledge to plan and build for national defense as well as for social and economic progress. Young people should be advised that it is their patriotic duty to continue the normal course of their education, so that they may be well prepared for greatest usefulness to their country. They will be promptly notified if they are needed for other patriotic services.¹

Although this statement was made over ten years ago, it might well be directed to our youth of today. Thus, it appears that it is our duty to see that all the children of all the people share to the greatest extent possible in our twelve-

¹John W. Studebaker, "Youth's Duty to Remain in School," School Life, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C. Vol 26 No. 9 (June 1941), p. 257.

year public school program.

In our schools a great army of young people is marching on year by year into adult life. It is not easy for these youth to make places for themselves in this chaotic world.

Within the United States we have people living on different economic and social levels, as well as with different religious beliefs, physical structures and degrees of emotional control. Regardless of these elements of differences, an effective program for the nation must consider every child in light of these conditions.

It is a matter of general belief in America that the democratic form of government and the preservation of cherished freedoms depend on the capacity and freedom of individual citizens to exercise informed and intelligent judgment at the polls. Americans believe that this capacity and the protection of this right depend upon the level of education of all the people.

Because of this belief, all states have accepted the principle of universal, publicly supported, compulsory education of children with defined age limits. These limits are usually set at the ages of seven and sixteen or the completion of the schooling offered in the elementary schools. Many states require the completion of high school or the attainment of the age of sixteen.¹

The first compulsory education law in the United States of America was enacted by the Massachusetts Colony in 1642. It was this law and many similar laws which followed in other colonies and states which made it compulsory to provide schools, but did not make school attendance compulsory. The first compulsory school attendance law was passed in 1852 by Massachusetts. All states at present have some type of compulsory attendance laws for pupils between certain ages. The last state to adopt a compulsory attendance law was Mississippi in 1918.

Five states require their youth to attend school regularly until they are sixteen years of age. Oklahoma is one of these.

¹Ross B. Fugmire, Oklahoma's Children and Their Schools. University of Okla. Press Co., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1950, p. 35.

The people in general believe that their constituted rights and freedoms can be solidly sustained only by a literate and educated citizenry. They have learned through experience, and the fact has been confirmed by research, that education is somehow related to their economic well-being. There is abundant evidence that standards of living; productive capacity in industry, business and agriculture; advancement in science, invention and general culture are related to the level of education and skill of the people. It is known that improvement and progress in the economic and cultural welfare of a people are directly dependent, more upon the cultivation of innate human capacities through education than upon the prevalence of material resource. It is known that there is a direct relationship between the level of education of a people and their average per capita income regardless of the extent of available material resources.¹

It is understood that the success of a farmer is determined by the extent to which he studies and solves problems peculiar to his farm, and then adapts its uses to the requirements of the community in which he lives. When the farmer's crop fails, it presents a challenge to the farmer. In a similar fashion the success of the school is judged by the extent to which it enables students to study and solve real life problems; and when students drop out before graduation, the school is challenged to find the reason or reasons for these drop-outs and to make the changes necessary to interest and enable students to remain in school.

During the year 1936-1937 there were 98,746 students enrolled in the first grades of the state of Oklahoma. Only 63 percent of this number enrolled in the second grade in 1937-1938. This reduction in number continued through all but one of the succeeding years and grades until 1947-1948 there were enrolled in the twelfth grade, 26,656 young people or 23 percent of the original group. In twelve years this was a reduction of 77 percent. The schools of Oklahoma had "crop failures" during these twelve years. The loss of 77 percent of Oklahoma's children is a challenge to the schools as well as to the citizens of Oklahoma.

¹Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Education, An Investment in People, (Washington, 1944), p. 20.

Dillon says:

We cannot, as citizens charged with the responsibility of preparing youth for citizenship and effective living, console ourselves by believing that those youth who leave our schools prematurely constitute a group who cannot profit from further education. We cannot with any degree of moral conviction, continue to sacrifice these youth to perpetuate an archaic system of educational planning.¹

The constitution of Oklahoma states that there shall be a public-school system whereby all children of the state may be educated. The public schools were not created for just the bright student or the rich. Education is supposed to be the heritage and the responsibility of all the people. Therefore, the extent to which educational opportunities are taken advantage of becomes a valuable factor. Our youth who do not take advantage of these opportunities because of the lack of educational opportunities and facilities in their immediate areas, or who do not attend where there are educational opportunities, bring about problems. When illiteracy among people capable of learning is present, it shows a serious evidence of failure in one of the community's major responsibilities. This type of inadequacy is always reflected in community affairs, both civic and vocational. The vote of the uneducated man is just as important as that of the educated man.

On a whole, the schools, as well as citizens, have displayed too little concern for the way in which its young people struggle through the transitions from school to work and for helping them to make good on the job. If the school is to meet the needs of the individual and the demands of society it must provide agencies whereby each individual will be studied.

A late estimate based on the Federal census indicates that there are in the United States, in 1950, 1,741,000 youth from 12 through 17 years of age who are not in school, despite some evidence that elimination from school is currently decreasing somewhat; unless the federal trend is sharply checked,

¹Harold J. Dillon, Early School Leavers, National Child Labor Committee, New York, Publication No. 401, (October 1949), p. 10.

it is estimated that the figure quoted for 1950 could increase to 2,504,000 by 1960. It seems evident that consideration should be given to all youth up to the age of 18 years not now receiving educational services.¹

Caswell, in his book The American High School, states that America spends about \$2½ billion dollars a year for education, public and private, for children and youth. He further states that,

Even with this tremendous amount of investment, we still fall short of reaching our goal of free public education for all. Educational opportunity is not equal, and education is still reserved for the middle and upper classes and for those with academic ability. . . .

Today only about four out of each ten people have been graduated from high school, and according to the 1940 census, our present level of education is about 8.8 grades completed. Only seventy-five percent of youth between the ages of 15 and 17 and twenty-seven percent of those of ages 18 to 19 were in school. Elimination from grades 9-12 of the secondary school steadily increases. Youth lost interest, the school fails to attract them, the curriculum becomes less adapted to their needs, the pull of the world of work and play lure them and the cost of staying in school grows greater.²

Ross Puggire says, "Quitting before finishing high school is a serious loss to those who quit, and to the community. In most cases, it is due to the weaknesses in the schools themselves."

The Colorado Commission has issued a statement in relation to the drop-out situation in the United States today. They state that:

It is generally recognized that secondary education is not now meeting the needs of youth who are eligible to attend our secondary schools. There are many data now available to substantiate this assumption. At a time when at least 90 percent could afford to remain throughout high school, only eighty percent of our youth enter the ninth grade and still more significant, only 50 percent remain to graduate from high school. Although but 30 percent of our high school graduates enter institutions of higher learning, the secondary curriculum is still largely a college preparatory curriculum. When further consideration is given to the fact that, although three out of ten graduates of high school enter college, only about 12 percent of youth of college age

¹Why Do Boys and Girls Drop Out of School, and What Can we do About it? Work Conference on Life Adjustment Education, Chicago, Circular No. 269, p. 36.

²H. L. Caswell, et al, The American High School, Harper & Brothers Publishers, (New York, 1946), p. 26.

are in college, the extreme emphasis given to college preparation in our high schools becomes even more significant questionable.¹

The Colorado Commission further states that if secondary education is for all youth, then the program of instruction must be based upon the needs of all youth. The majority of the schools establish their curricular programs to satisfy students of average mental ability, thus failing to meet the needs of those who deviate considerably from that average.

Much thought has been given to the status and function of the secondary school and a number of studies made in an effort to analyze the needs of youth. One educator in his plea for more functional secondary education curricula, says:

Curricula which meet the need of a small group only, such as those going to college, cannot be justified at the expense of those who have no intentions of continuing their formal education beyond high school. Research Studies have shown that the pattern of subjects pursued on the high school level has little relationship to success to college.²

The writer believes that education should do four things. It should:

1. Help the student acquire a broad scope of useful information and understanding.
2. Help the student to be constructively critical, that is, to have the desire and the capacity for analyzing problems carefully, the skill to locate reliable information, to interpret it objectively and to suspend his judgment until all pertinent facts have been evaluated.
3. Help the student acquire a true concern and respect for others; to follow and respect the conventional manners and morals of his society; to accept the democratic process as the means for settling individual and group problems; to have an appreciation and respect for the problems of the minority groups; and accept the fact that every individual has the right to make a free choice in deciding upon his political, spiritual and social philosophies.
4. Help each pupil to be personally well adjusted emotionally, and mentally healthy; to be free from undue fears, doubts, mental conflicts, feelings of inadequacy, suspicions, hatreds, and envy; to face personal

¹G. R. Douglas, Education for Life Adjustment, The Ronald Press Company, (New York, 1950), p. 37-38.

²Ibid., p. 38.

problems with confidence and courage and to meet both success and failure with poise; and to establish satisfactory relationships with adults and fellow students.

It seems likely that, were the staffs of the schools to study the children and use whatever device available to determine their needs, interests, abilities, and aptitudes; and then guide or lead them into those offerings of the school that would help them to the greatest extent, that the number of drop-outs in our schools would decrease appreciably.

The writer believes that the school should help the individual develop basic understandings which will enable him to recognize, face and solve his own problems of living. Education is only worthwhile as it helps the individual to live a satisfying life in an ever-changing world.

Below are listed five major aspects of living thought most important by the writer:

1. Economic - It is important for every person to be trained in such a manner that he can be economically secure, and be in position not only to provide for the bare necessities of life; but also in position to afford some of life's comforts and luxuries.
2. Emotional - The intelligent person should be well balanced emotionally to the extent that he may not become exceedingly depressed when the breaks in life may go against him, nor become over-elated in times of prosperity.
3. Physical - An enlightened person observes the rules of health and realizes that a strong body is essential to complete happiness.
4. Social - The truly educated person gets along well with others. He does not tend to dominate the lives of others about him nor does he permit domination of his life.
5. Spiritual - True education is not the memorization of isolated facts; but rather the recognition that knowledge fits into a total scheme that was created by the Supreme Being.

Society must provide an adequate educational program which will enable all or most youth to meet all or most of their needs. Such education, in

turn, will help them to find their places in the adult world.

One way in which investigators have sought to evaluate the success of the school has been through studies of "school leavers." Such studies have aimed at finding, among other things, the ages in which, and the grades in which, most "drop-outs" occur, and the reasons for them. In many investigations suggestions have been made for reducing the numbers of "drop-outs." Such studies have been very fruitful, and the findings and recommendations reported in them are stimulating. A review of selected studies is presented in Chapter II. In the light of these findings about "early school leavers," educators should be able to understand some of the causes of the "crop failures" of our schools.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

The problem of school leavers is not a new problem. As early as 1872 men of the nation were made conscious of the problem of early school leavers by a speech which W. T. Harris, Superintendent of Schools in St. Louis, Missouri, delivered before the National Education Association. The causes of elimination, according to Superintendent Harris, were "the worthlessness of some parents, pecuniary urge, and defective grading."¹

Since that time many studies have been made in an effort to find out why young people leave school. Selected studies have been reviewed and are reported in the subsequent pages, followed by a summary of the findings common to many of them.

Dubois High School Study

Lucas undertook this investigation to discover what happens to the graduates and early school leavers of the Dubois High School of Summit, Oklahoma. By means of interviews, telephone calls, letters and questionnaires, 111 graduates and 35 school leavers were studied. These students were enrolled in grades eight through twelve and dropped out or graduated sometime during the ten year period 1940-1950.

This study revealed that 63 percent of the early school leavers failed

¹W. T. Harris, "Early Withdrawal of Pupils From School, It's Causes and It's Remedies," National Education Association Journal Proceedings, 1872, pp. 200-273.

one or more grades in school. The same percentage missed more than 40 days of school per year. The most frequent reasons given for dropping out were: "Was failing," "Could learn more out of school," and "School offered no trades." Fifty-five percent of the early school leavers were working at common labor jobs; 31 percent were employed as farmers or farm laborers; eight percent were truck drivers. Most leavers had held three or four jobs. Some had held as many as eight jobs. Twenty percent of the leavers studied were married or had been married.

Most students dropped out of the Dubois High School while they were enrolled in grade nine. Drop-outs in grades eight, nine and ten accounted for 64 of the 85 leavers. This is in line with the report which appeared in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Journal, which states that,

Several studies showing the age and grade at which most pupils drop out have been made by individual high schools, state departments of education, and other groups. Usually the pattern indicates that most drop-outs occur in the tenth grade followed by the ninth and eleventh grades in order.¹

Lucas feels that the curriculum of Dubois High School needs to

be altered materially if it is to meet the needs of the students enrolled. An unjustifiably large proportion of the students enrolled fail the grades and courses offered. Retardation and failure to see any application of the training they are receiving seems to account for most drop-outs.²

The Oklahoma City Study

During the year 1937, in Oklahoma City, a study was undertaken to discover the percentage of boys and girls eliminated from the city schools, the grade attained, and the reasons for dropping out. There were 187 individual

¹National Association of Secondary School Principals Journal, V. 34, Number 174 (December 1950), p. 191.

²Corrine P. Lucas, Graduates and Leavers of the Dubois High School, Muskogee, Oklahoma, p. 49-51, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1951.

cases studied. Tenth grade losses were found to be greatest. It was thought that this resulted from the practice of grouping junior high school students according to their educational level. This practice was not followed in the senior high school.

This study revealed that many reasons for leaving school stemmed from the home situation. The parents of 27.2 percent of the students were not interested in education and many of these children had been found to change schools frequently. The principal reasons for leaving school were reported as: (1) financial needs at home, (2) ill health, (3) marriage (4) lack of interest, (5) desire for money, (6) lack of ambition, (7) parents not interested, (8) poor choice of subjects, (9) joined the army, and (10) unclassified.¹

New York Study

Burge found, in his study of 245,000 employed boys of New York State, that the reasons given by the boys for leaving school were not real reasons, but were excuses to get out of school. The attitude of parents, teachers, and society in general towards the boys who drop out of school was such as to make them feel that they were "flunkers," "quitters," and "slackers." Hence they sought a plausible excuse for leaving school. These boys did not wish to be known as "quitters" and "slackers" and, it is not surprising that they sought to eliminate themselves from a situation which brought to them censure and criticism. Whatever the real reasons were why the boys dropped out of school, the fact remains that they did. Very few of them attended night school

¹W. N. Heller, Elimination from Capitol Hill Senior High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Unpublished Thesis, Department of Education, University of Oklahoma, 1937, p. 57.

and others frankly said they had no desire to attend college.¹

Aaron Goff Study

Aaron Goff made a study in which he came to the conclusion that the large number of veterans who have returned, and are returning, to schools proves that many drop-outs are educable and that maturation factors and experience do change attitudes toward education. Goff says:

The schools must make every attempt to bring the drop-out back to school, two, five, ten or even fifteen years later. This may indicate the need for supplementary secondary schools, other than traditional evening school, organized for adult, accelerated education, and designed to attract the persons who dropped out, and to facilitate their completion of the high school work.²

John F. Delaney Study

Delaney, in his article on "That Vacant High School Seat," says:

If the average drop-out ratio established in Chicago is a criterion for the United States, three million American students forsake higher educational training each four-year term. In Chicago alone in the last full four year term, of the 17,952 freshmen who entered high school only 10,415 merited diplomas, while 7,177 students dropped out--41 percent.³

Of the 379 drop-out cases studied 234 students were between the ages of sixteen and seventeen while 115 students were between the ages of 17 and 18, and 30 students were eighteen or older.

Study of New York City Schools

According to this study made of New York City Schools, truancy is a symptom of disturbance in the child and calls for understanding and treatment of the underlying cause or causes. The fault could be in the school in an

¹Howard O. Burdge, Our Boys, A Study of the 245,000 Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen Year Old Employed Boys of the State of New York Military Training Commission, Bureau of Vocational Training, J. R. Lyons, 1921, p. 345.

²Aaron Goff, Education, Vol. 70 No. 5 (January, 1950), pp. 330-332.

³John F. Delaney, "That Vacant High School Seat," American School Board Journal, Vol. 121 (November, 1950), pp. 22-23.

unsatisfactory curriculum, for example, or "the uninterested teaching of those adults who do not like to teach."¹ A large group of truants are children "subjected to rejecting, inconsistent, unloving, or over protecting parents who are themselves the products of similar backgrounds."² A much smaller group suffers from mental disease of greater or less severity, calling for careful diagnosis and treatment.

The New York School committee's major recommendation calls for a "broad, well integrated plan for dealing with all adjustment problems, with initial responsibility for detecting, and attempting to provide for adjustment problems,"³ entrusted to the classroom teacher. The committee believed counseling should be considered an important part of the educational program.

Minneapolis Public Schools Study

This study was undertaken to see what happened to 683 students who were in school in June 1950 and failed to return in September. Three hundred seventy-one had withdrawn for reasons which seemed valid or which were beyond the control of the school. The remaining 312 students were out for reasons which seemed questionable and which the school felt required further investigation.

In this study many students listed as "Left City," "Transferred to other schools," or even "Armed Forces," were students who found an unsatisfactory experience in school.

This study was a combined effort of the counselor-clerk-Parent Teacher Association of Minneapolis Public Schools. Every effort possible was made to

¹Marion Robinson, "When Children Skip School," The Survey, (November 1949), p. 606-607.

²Ibid., p. 607.

³Ibid., p. 607.

identify and encourage those drop-outs who could profit by a continued school experience.¹

Ohio, Indiana and Michigan Study

Why do students leave school before finishing? One answer to this important question is found in Harold J. Dillon's study on "Early School Leavers." Dillon examined the records of 1,360 students who had withdrawn voluntarily from high schools in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. He found no reason for the excessive number of drop-outs. The family background of those who left school showed nothing that might have influenced them. The proportion of drop-outs from broken homes was not abnormally high, nor were the students handicapped by frequent changes of residence.

On the other hand, there were certain characteristics which distinguished children who left school. They showed a regression in attendance in scholarship for several years before dropping out. The majority were grade-repeaters, beginning in the elementary school in 70 percent of the cases. Only about one-fourth of them participated in extra-curricular activities.

The majority, fifty-four percent, left school at sixteen years of age and another twenty-six percent at seventeen years of age. Most of those who quit did so before they completed the second year in high school.

The youngsters were asked to list their reasons, in order of importance, for leaving school. Some of the more frequent reasons given were: (1) "preferred work to school;" (2) "was failing and did not want to repeat the grade;" (3) "disliked a certain teacher;" (4) "disliked a certain subject;" (5) "was not interested in school work," and (6) "could learn more out of

¹Minneapolis School Counselor-Clerk-Parent Teacher Association, "Summer Drop-Out Survey," Minneapolis, Minnesota Public Schools (1951).

school than in school."

Dillon cites these specific facts regarding youth who leave the public school before graduating; he does not advocate revolutionizing the programs offered. Rather he suggests that schools gradually move toward a better and more functional program. He states:

1. Fairly consistent regression in scholarship from elementary to junior to senior high school.
2. Frequent grade failures in the elementary school.
3. High frequency of grade or subject failure in the junior and senior high school.
4. Marked regression in attendance from elementary to junior to senior high school.
5. Frequent transfers from one school to another.
6. Evidence of a feeling of insecurity or "lack of belonging" in school.
7. Marked lack of interest in school work.

While it will take time and planning to meet the needs of each individual student in our school systems, every school, with a little extra effort, can initiate some changes in the present program to serve a greater number of youth more adequately than it is now doing. Success in holding more youth in school becomes even more important when job opportunities diminish, since those who do not complete high school have a particularly difficult time getting any foothold in a falling labor market.¹

Dillon also states that "Educational programs of the right kind, adequately supported, are the most economical and effective measures that can be taken to conserve our human resources."

The Maryland Youth Study

In 1936, the American Youth Commission was forced with the necessity of identifying the major needs of the school youth population. The commission made a study of 13,523 youths, aged eighteen to twenty-four, in the state of Maryland. In attempting to ascertain the true conditions, field representatives under the direction of Howard M. Bell went directly to the youths themselves and, by means of personal interviews, obtained first hand information and opinion.

¹ H. J. Dillon, Early School Leavers, National Child Labor Committee, New York. Publication No. 401, (October 1949), p. 88.

Six major aspects of the young person's status and needs were investigated; home life and marriage, youth in school, youth at work, youth and the church and the attitudes of the youth.

Bell mentions that the father's occupation had a great deal to do with the length of stay in school. He stated:

While only four out of every twenty youths whose fathers were professional-technical workers left before high-school graduation, eighteen out of every twenty whose fathers were unskilled laborers left before high-school graduation.¹

The study reported that 54.0 percent of the youth gave economic reasons as the chief reason for leaving school, and 24.6 percent stated that lack of interest in school was the chief reason for leaving. Attitude toward high school was given by 13.2 percent, while 3.2 percent gave poor health as a reason.²

The study revealed that almost twice as many youth who received vocational guidance stayed in school than those who did not receive such guidance. For both the employed and unemployed groups, the proportion of those who asserted that schooling had been of great economic value to them was substantially higher among those who had not received helpful guidance at all. For the employed youth who had received no guidance, the percentage who felt the same way was only twenty-six.

The Minnesota Study

The first major study to deal with the problem of drop-outs from the standpoint of rural areas, exclusively, was that reported by Ekstrom. He used data obtained from farm youth who had graduated from the eighth grade in schools of Minnesota counties between 1944 and 1945, and from questionnaires

¹Howard M. Bell, Youth Tell Their Story, American Council on Education, Washington, 1938. p. 64.

²Ibid., p. 61.

returned by 41.6 percent of the drop-outs contacted. It was found that drop-outs were members of large families and that many of them followed a pattern set by older siblings. Distance from school and transportation difficulties correlated highly with the number dropping out. Ekstrom concluded that farm youths drop out before, or soon after, entering high school because: they lack the encouragement of parents and other adults in the community; they find it difficult to attend school because of distance or lack of transportation; and because personnel in the elementary schools fail to orient pupils to high school.¹

Louisville, Kentucky Study

One of the main purposes of this study by the United States Department of Labor was to stimulate public understanding and awareness of youth-employment problems and to explore methods by which fact-finding in this field can contribute to social action in the community and to national policy for improved employment opportunities and projects for young people.

Field work was begun in Louisville, Kentucky in January 1949, and completed in April. Five hundred twenty-four boys and girls, from 14 to 19 years of age, who lived in Louisville, Kentucky, were interviewed. These young people were out of school, and working or seeking work in the spring of 1947 and were selected at random from the school census records. Over one-half of the group were girls, 443 were white and 81 were negroes. Divided according to age at the time of interview; 113 were fourteen or fifteen years of age; 217 were sixteen or seventeen years of age; 194 were eighteen or nineteen years of age.

¹George F. Ekstrom, "Why Farm Children Leave School," School Review, LIV (April 1946), pp. 231-237.

The educational level was found to be lower among the younger group of out-of-school youth. Slightly less than half (47.5 percent) of the 217 sixteen and seventeen year-olds had completed as much as the ninth grade. Four-fifth (82.3 percent) of the 113 children who were fourteen or fifteen years of age when interviewed had dropped out of school without completing more than the eighth grade and nearly one-third (31.0 percent) without completing more than the seventh grade.¹

Usually the decision to leave school came as a result of complex pressures involving educational maladjustment, economic need, the need and desire for independence, and various other factors.²

Two hundred and nine of the 438 non-graduates said that dissatisfaction with some aspect of school itself was their principal reason. Economic need--either pressure to contribute to family or self-support or lack of funds for essential personal needs--was named by 85, and attraction of the job and the status of wage earner by 51 as the principal reason for leaving. When both principal and contributory reasons were considered, it appeared that for two-thirds of the non-graduates, dissatisfaction with school was a major factor in the decision to leave, and that one-third of them, economic need was a factor.³

Although the school appeared to be responsible for a high proportion of the drop-outs, less than half of the non-graduates had consulted a school official before deciding to leave school. Even fewer had received assistance from the school in finding a job.⁴

¹Hunting a Career, Bureau of Labor Standards, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington 26, D. C. (1949) p. 7.

²Ibid., p. 7.

³Ibid., p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

Children who dropped out in the eighth grade appeared to have more difficulty in finding and holding jobs than did those with a better educational background.

National Child Labor Committee Study

A questionnaire was sent in February 1951, to school superintendents in 226 cities inquiring about high school drop-outs in their communities. This included practically all cities over 50,000 and a few smaller cities in low population states. The total number of replies from the 131 cities was 187. In some cities a separate answer sheet was sent for each school.¹

Of the 187 who replied, slightly over half (96) reported a noticeable increase in the number of students dropping out of school. Forty-six stated that the increase began in the fall of 1950 and thirteen of this number reported that it had become more marked since Christmas; thirty-seven reported that it had started since Christmas; the others did not reply on this point.²

A number of the superintendents commented that the number of drop-outs was not yet "serious" or "alarming." On the other hand, among those who reported there had been no increase, several stated that there probably would have been many more drop-outs had special measures not been instituted to counteract the trend the preceding fall. Others expressed the belief that the rate would increase as job opportunities opened up.³

Several superintendents reported that seniors were not dropping out of school, but were making every effort to finish their work creditably, possibly

¹Ibid., p. 8.

²"High School Drop-Outs in 1950-51," National Child Labor Committee, New York, (April 1951).

³Ibid., p. 2.

with student draft deferment in mind.¹ More boys than girls were leaving school.

Although the increase in employment opportunities was listed most often as of first importance in school-leaving, expectation of the draft was mentioned frequently as one factor in the situation. Economic need came third, primarily as a contributing cause--but the total number mentioning this was relatively high. A few commented that at present price levels, any upset in the family economy due to the illness of a working member, or for other causes, would force a child to leave school.²

Among "other reasons," lack of interest and general restlessness, insecurity and "tension" were most frequently mentioned. A considerable number commented on the fact that more girls were dropping out of school to marry. Several stressed the unrest of parents as well as of children.³

The West Virginia Study

This study entitled "Improving the Holding Power of the Public Schools" was a report on a three year study conducted by the West Virginia Education Association, made to find out the reasons why boys and girls quit school.

The findings of this study lead those making it to conclude that out of every one-hundred boys and girls who come up through the lower elementary grades in West Virginia, ninety-five reach the sixth grade, eighty-six the seventh grade, and seventy-six the eighth grade; and that sixty-four out of every hundred manage to reach the first year in high school. These findings also led them to expect that one-half will remain in school until the tenth grade and only forty-two percent until the eleventh. By the time graduation

¹Ibid., p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Ibid., p. 5.

comes, only thirty-five out of each one hundred are expected to still be on hand to receive their diplomas.

If the program in the junior high school is to challenge pupils to continue their education, all must have experiences which will make them participants in, rather than observers of, school life.¹

"Many students leave school because they are unable to perform tasks in the grades in which they find themselves. Therefore, the type of instruction given to a pupil should be based upon his ability and interest rather than upon a set pattern of subject matter."²

Canadian Study

This study is about the products of the Canadian schools. It deals with pupils who graduated from the secondary schools and pupils who dropped out of school before qualifying for graduation. The findings indicate that of one hundred Canadian children starting school, only twenty-two finish high school and only three graduate from college.

About thirty-five percent of the pupils who enter Grade VII complete secondary school.³ The remainder drop out, largely in Grades VIII, IX, and X. There is no simple direct answer to the question why so many pupils leave school without acquiring more education. Different factors are involved, and these are often interrelated. There are personal reasons, such as parents' attitude of indifference; there are economic reasons; and there are reasons related to the school, such as lack of interest, repetition of grades, and unsuitability of curriculum. Of all these reasons, those related to the school

¹"Improving the Holding Power of the Public Schools," West Virginia Education Association, Charleston, West Virginia, p. 17.

²Ibid. p.17.

³McCull, A. G. "Practical Education in Canadian Schools." Canadian Education, IV (March 1949), pp. 41-42.

are most important; that is, these reasons contribute to dropping out more than the other reasons.¹

Seward Study

This was a study, or rather a "follow up," of a group of pupils who had attended Seward Elementary School. The study was made by following the 159 pupils whose names appeared on the finishing list from the eighth grade. The progress of all the pupils was traced through the Minneapolis Public Schools, and the cumulative record cards of all of those who graduated from high school or who dropped out before graduating were studied in detail.

Information about eighty-one graduates and forty-five pupils who dropped out before graduation forms the basis for most of the study.

Neither intelligence level, nor proficiency as readers, seemed to be a significant factor in determining graduation or non-graduation. A number of the intellectually well equipped left school early while an equal number of individuals with poor reading skills and low I.Q.'s graduated as scheduled.

The ninth grades, wherein many of the students were average, began to accumulate additional failures. One-third (45) of the entire group (126) dropped out of school before graduation. Of the ones who stayed to finish, one-third (24 individuals) of this group failed at least one subject. Those who dropped out in many cases had serious problems of adjusting to school requirements before they finally left.

Those graduates and drop-outs went out of high school with no clear-cut vocational plans.

¹A. G. McColl and J. D. Ayers, Two Years After School. Toronto: The Canadian Research Committee on Practical Education (1951), pp. 52-54; A. G. McColl and J. A. Keddy, Your Child Leaves School, Toronto: The Canadian Research Committee on Practical Education (1950), pp. 54-55.

When children who accept sixteen as the proper age for leaving school drop out shortly after arriving at the age and when they fail to exert the effort necessary for success in school subjects during their last months in schools, one is hardly justified in calling them cases of educational maladjustment or in heaping blame upon their teachers for having failed to hold them longer in school. There is justification, however, for inquiring how the school may better serve these children by providing training that they can recognize as having usefulness in terms of their own system of values.¹

Ellsworth Collings, Professor of School Supervision of University of Oklahoma in an article "Why They Leave School" states that a study of Oklahoma's children and their schools reveals "facts of grave concern to school people and citizens of this state." These facts show, among other things, he believes, a weakness in the holding power of Oklahoma schools."²

Mr. Collings reports a recent study by the citizens and school people of Durant, Oklahoma in which it was found that sixty-five percent of the boys and girls there dropped out before completing the twelfth grade of the high school. The boys and girls did not like the traditional curriculum set-up of subject matter which they seldom used in their out-of-school life, and the only way to escape it which they found was by dropping out. They felt that time, effort and money was spent on the twenty percent who expected to enter college. This meant that the eighty percent who went into skilled occupations and non-skilled jobs were forced to look out for themselves because high school curriculum was set up in a traditional pattern of college preparatory subjects. They felt that that was why their boys and girls were quitting school, and believed that a flexible curriculum was needed which would meet the needs and interests of all the boys and girls.

The Denver Colorado public schools around 1932 realized that the large

¹Eve Snyder, "The Boys and Girls Who Finished the Eighth Grade at Seward," in 1944, Minneapolis Public Schools (January 13, 1949), p. 10.

²Ellsworth Collings, "Why They Leave School," The Oklahoma Teacher. Vol. 33, No. 1 (September, 1951), pp. 20.

number of boys and girls dropping out was unhealthy to their community and proceeded to study the problem and make plans for improving the situation. As a result of this study according to Collings, Denver schools lose only nine percent of their boys and girls before completing the high school program.

The Denver survey asking, "Why do pupils refuse to stay in high school?" found this answer--"Because we are offering them a sling-shot education in a hydrogen-bomb age." The average high school still doles out virtually the same courses that it did 70 years ago, with emphasis on preparation for college. Then only 70,000 persons reached secondary schools each year, most of them on their way to college and professional courses. Today, with six millions crowding our high schools, only one out of four expects to go to college. By adhering to an out-dated curriculum most schools are force-feeding boys and girls information they will never need, denying them education for the kinds of jobs they will have, and driving them from desks through sheer boredom.¹

Having found a partial solution the Denver system reports:

The secret of success in Denver schools lies in the individual guidance teachers give to youngsters. Half of the faculty members are also counselors. Each counselor takes the responsibility for 30 teen-agers from their sophomore years until they graduate. The counselor studies individual interests of students, tests their aptitudes and then helps them to elect courses that will be most rewarding. The counselor helps the country boy who loves farming to reason with ambitious parents who insist that he shall be a doctor; shows a talented girl determined to be a beautician that her fine scholastic record and her way with children indicate that she would be more useful and happier as a teacher. Counselors see to it that no one is pressed into a mold but that each is helped to make of himself a creative human being in the field for which he best is suited.²

Collings feels that enough time, money and effort is not being devoted to programs planned to meet the needs of boys and girls who do not go to college. He emphasizes that belief in the following statement:

Large numbers of defeated, disillusioned young people, ripe for political agitation, are a threat to democracy. Our schools today are not meeting this danger. Unless they do a better job of holding power they are not going to meet it tomorrow.

What we need to do, above all, is to provide individual boys and girls counseling and guidance; first, in knowing their own individual interests and needs; second, in planning programs around the individual interests and needs of the boys and girls; and third, in carrying forward these programs to successful conclusion. Equality of opportunity for all boys and girls then will prevail in our schools. And this is democracy of learning, growth and development.³

¹Ibid., p. 21.

²Ibid., p. 21.

³Ibid., p. 21.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

A review of the findings of the studies and investigations on "early school leavers" reported in the preceding pages appears to warrant the following summary statements:

1. Most drop-outs occur in the tenth grade followed by the ninth and eleventh grades in order, with the majority of the early school leavers being sixteen years of age.
2. Most drop-outs failed one or more grades in school, as well as one or more subjects, with educational maladjustment playing an important part.
3. Most drop-outs were irregular in attendance before finally dropping out and had evidenced considerable dissatisfaction with school.
4. Many drop-outs are educable.
5. The school's failure to do a complete job for all of its students is apparent.
6. Only a small percentage of drop-outs were found to have participated in extra-curricular activities.
7. A large number of drop-outs have difficulty, later, in holding jobs.
8. More boys than girls are leaving school.

CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Approximately ten percent of the total population of the United States are negroes. These negroes have been a part of the National citizenship since the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the constitution of the United States in 1866. A large portion of these people live in the southern part of the United States. Since World War II a number of the negroes from these southern states have migrated to various other sections of the United States. In general most people will agree that the educational facilities available to them have not been of the best. Knight points out that:

With adoption of a policy of separate schools for the whites and the negroes, long a practice in the southern states, an additional educational burden was placed on the all-too-slender educational resources of that part of the country. Although considerable progress has been made in the solution of this problem, achievements in the education of the negro have been distinguished, and many inequalities and discriminations against them still exist.¹

However Knight goes on to state that:

Great progress has been made by the negroes, despite their manifold handicaps. The greatest progress during the period from 1866 to 1936 appears in education. In 1866 about ten percent of the negroes were literate; in 1936 about ninety percent were literate. Enrollment in negro public schools increased from 100,000 to about 2,500,000; the value of the negro property devoted to higher education increased from \$600.00 to \$65,000,000. During this period (1866 to 1936) some 132 negroes received the degree of Ph.D., 155 were elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and 100 were elected in Who's Who in America.²

¹Knight, Edgar W., Education in the United States. Ginn & Co. Boston, Massachusetts, 1941.

²Ibid.

Knight further states that fewer than seventy percent of negro children now attend school; fewer than ten percent finish high school; the curriculum courses of study are generally traditional and are not related to the real needs of the negroes. Negro educators are becoming increasingly concerned with ways in which they can contribute to the education of negro youth.

During the past few years it has been observed that the number of students dropping out of Manual Training High School in Muskogee, Oklahoma appears to be increasing; and that some of these students who drop out do not make well adjusted citizens. Many of these students have the ability to finish the high school requirements. Were it possible to keep these students in school until graduation, they would be given a fuller opportunity for development and more security for making satisfactory adjustments in the various areas of living. Educators in this school are concerned about this situation and would like to take steps to improve it.

Although it is possible that causes of drop-outs in this school may be very similar to those reported in other studies, it is also possible that there are some causes which may be different; if not in kind, then perhaps, in degree. Manual Training High School is a school attended by negro youth, and, to date no study has been made to find out how many boys and girls have dropped out, the reasons for withdrawal, and what becomes of them once they have dropped out. It was believed that the findings of such a study might be useful in many ways, that they might serve:

As a basis for community understanding of the situation as a whole and guide citizens in attacking the problem in an intelligent manner.

To provide valuable insight into what a guidance program might do.

To assist the administrators and teachers in planning curriculum offerings.

To provide insight into the ways in which the "holding power" of Manual Training High School might be increased.

Statement of the Problem

This study was made in an attempt to ascertain some of the reasons why students withdrew from the Manual Training High School in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and to make suggestions for revising the school program in order to alleviate the "drop-out" problem; the hypothesis being that when causes of, or reasons for, drop-outs are known, it will then become possible to prevent many of them.

Limitations of Study

This study was limited to enrolled students who withdrew from Manual Training High School of Muskogee, Oklahoma during the school years of 1947-1952.

Brief Description of Manual Training High School

Manual Training High School serves the negro clientele of the city of Muskogee and suburban areas. It is centrally located in the northwest section of the city. Students coming from the suburban areas are transported by bus.

This high school includes grades seven through twelve and employs thirty-seven staff members. There are twenty-three class rooms. The Agriculture, Industrial Arts, Home Service, Cosmetology and Auto Mechanic departments are all housed in quarters outside the main building. The Home Economics and Barbering departments are housed in the main building.

Description of the City in which School is Located

Muskogee, Oklahoma, an area comprising about 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, is located in the eastern part of the state of Oklahoma. It is near major highways, airways, and railways which make direct connection with all the large industrial areas in the United States.

It is situated in a farming area and, due to the lack of industries, the

economic status of the community is relatively low. The Katy Shop, the Compress and Domestic Service furnish the chief sources of income. This is supplemented, to a small degree, by the payroll from the Veterans Hospital, the Institute for the Deaf, Blind and Orphan, the Girls Training School, and the State Hospital for the Insane. The latter three are located at Taft, Oklahoma, a suburban community.

Civic, social, fraternal and religious organizations contribute to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the people in the community. The facilities for recreation and leisure time are not entirely adequate. The city maintains a public library and two parks. The recreational facilities available in these parks are: baseball grounds, bandstands, play ground equipment, golf courses, swimming pools, picnic grounds and tennis courts.

Definitions

"Drop-out" is a term which refers to an individual who has left school before graduation from the twelfth grade. In the event this youngster returns to school he ceases to be a drop-out. Some of the students included in this study as "drop-outs" may have moved to another city and may not necessarily be identified as a "drop-out" in the particular city in which he now resides. Other terms which are used interchangeably with "drop-out" are "early school leavers" and "school quitters."

Method of Carrying out the Study

In attempting to achieve the two purposes set up in the statement of the problem the study was carried out, and will be reported, in two parts. The first part is concerned with finding out the causes for drop-outs; the second with recommendations for preventing them.

Determining Causes of Drop-Outs

In determining the causes of drop-outs several steps were taken. First, the school records were examined wherein the names of students dropping out of school over the five-year period, between the fall enrollment, 1947, and the close of this spring semester, 1952, were noted. The students who were in school at the close of school during each spring semester with the exception of those graduating, and who failed to reenter the succeeding year, were also obtained from the office of the school registrar. From the records in this office the following information was also procured:

1. Address and age of student.
2. Date student left school and classification at that time.
3. Subjects failed in.
4. Grades repeated.
5. Number of days students attended school.

The information obtained from the drop-outs directly was acquired by the interview-questionnaire technique. Good, Barr, and Scates describe a questionnaire as:

. . . a form which is prepared and distributed for the purpose of securing responses to certain questions. Generally these questions are factual, designed to secure information about conditions or practices of which the recipient is presumed to have knowledge. The questionnaire may, however, ask for opinions, and it may be used to afford an insight into the attitudes of a group.¹

In preparing the questionnaire used in this study provision was made for entering information pertinent to the drop-out situation procured from those sources mentioned above; and included items revealed by the school records as well as information volunteered by the young people. Causes of, or reasons for, dropping out of school were emphasized and the questionnaire contained 19

¹Carter V. Good, A. S. Barr, Douglas E. Scates. The Methodology of Educational Research, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., (New York, 1936), p. 324.

possible reasons with a space for additional ones. (See Appendix)

The questionnaire was not given to the student. However the items appearing in the questionnaire were used to guide the interview and the information acquired was later placed in its proper place on the questionnaire form. This information was summarized and tabulated and has been reported in Chapter IV. Data was obtained on 452 students, 236 boys and 216 girls. The numbers of students of each sex enrolled in the six respective grades is reported in Table I of Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The data obtained by means of interviewing, and studying the records of the students who dropped out of Manual Training High School during the period from September 1947 to June 1952 were analyzed with the view to answering the following questions:

1. What percent of the total enrollment during the years studied dropped out of school?
2. What percent of the mean enrollment dropped out of school each year?
3. In what grades were the losses greatest?
4. What relation existed between the attendance records of the students and the eventual withdrawal from school?
5. What reasons were given for dropping out of school?

From information cited in Table I it can be seen that 452 students dropped out of high school during the five year period studied. Inasmuch as the total enrollment for this period was 3851 it follows that the percent of students lost prior to graduation was 11.74 percent. Although the percent of loss was greatest during the school year 1948-49, in general it was very similar from year to year.

Table I. The Number and Percent of Students Dropping out of Manual Training High School During a Five Year Period.

	Entire Five Years	1947 1948	1948 1949	1949 1950	1950 1951	1951 1952
Total Enrollment	3851	752	791	781	809	718
Total Number of Drop Outs	452	79	100	79	91	75
Percent of Loss	11.74	10.51	13.91	10.11	11.25	10.44

Table II reveals that more students eliminated themselves during the ninth and tenth grades, and fewer withdrew from the twelfth grade, than from any other grades. Approximately one-third of the students dropped out before the ninth grade. About fifty-eight percent of this group of students dropped out before reaching the tenth grade. Over three-fourths had withdrawn before the eleventh grade. Only six percent dropped out during the senior year. The peak of the drop-outs came earlier in this school than in previous studies reported.

From this table it was calculated that, of the 452 students studied, two percent more boys than girls withdrew from school during the five year period. Only in the eleventh grade did the number of girl drop-outs exceed the boys.

Table II. Distribution of Drop-Outs During the Years 1947-52.

Grade	Boys		Girls		Total	
	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Number	Percent
7	42	9.9	38	8.4	80	18.3
8	40	8.9	32	7.0	72	15.9
9	65	12.1	53	11.7	118	25.8
10	46	10.1	42	9.9	88	20.0
11	29	6.4	40	8.9	69	15.3
12	14	3.3	11	2.4	25	5.7
Total	236	50.7	216	48.3	452	99.0
Mean	47.2		43.2		90.4	

It was possible to interview and obtain attendance records on only 351 of the 452 students who dropped out during the five year period studied. The data reported in Table III shows the total number of days students attended during the years in which they withdrew from school.

Table III. School Attendance Records of Early School Leavers for the Year in Which They Dropped Out.

Days Attended	Boys		Girls		Total	
	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Number	Percent
160-180	4	1.2	4	1.2	8	2.4
141-160	12	3.6	7	2.1	19	5.7
121-140	10	3.0	8	2.4	18	5.4
101-120	18	5.4	13	3.9	31	9.3
81-100	12	3.6	28	8.4	40	12.0
61- 80	13	3.9	25	7.5	38	11.4
41- 60	28	8.4	25	7.5	53	15.9
21- 40	25	7.5	26	7.8	51	15.3
1- 20	33	9.9	40	12.0	73	21.9
Total	155	46.5	176	52.8	331	99.3

Fifty percent of the boys and girls attended only from one to sixty days. Over 75 percent of these leavers missed 30 days or more of school the year they dropped out. It is realized that these figures are not too meaningful because the dates of dropping out are not recorded here. Were such dates available it would be possible to figure the percentage of time the students attended school in the school year immediately preceding final withdrawal. Such data would have more meaning. However, it has been commonly observed that when a student's attendance is irregular he frequently becomes a drop-out.

Below are cited some of the reasons stated by students as to why they were absent. A number of these reasons apparently could have been corrected or handled differently by the parents and guardians concerned.

1. "Had to pay bill for mother."
2. "Had to keep baby."
3. "It was raining and didn't have proper clothing."
4. "I was working."
5. "Had to attend to business."
6. "Had to stay home while mother was at work."
7. "Had to stay with small children while mother was away."
8. "Had to help mother with the washing."
9. "Over slept."
10. "Didn't feel like coming to school."
11. "I have no reasons."
12. "Had to stay with small children while mother worked."

Tables IV and V show reasons for drop-outs in relation to age and sex. In Table IV it can be observed that the largest percentage of the boys dropped out because of lack of interest. Over two-fifths of the boys indicated this reason. The second reason in order of frequency was "moved out of town," with "went to armed forces" next in line. Six percent were committed to penal institutions. Two of these eleven boys were committed to the State Penitentiary, while the other nine were sent to the Boys Training School. Only a small percentage dropped out to get married, and to work.

It is impossible to know whether the students who moved out of town continued in school or not. When this group of students are disregarded the percent of boys who withdrew from school because of lack of interest increases to 57.26 percent. This is the largest single reason for dropping out of school on all age levels with the exception of age 17 when one more boy gave "going into the armed forces" as a reason. Of the number who volunteered to enter the armed forces, a small percentage were not interested in school, and may have used enlistment as a reason for, or excuse for quitting school.

Table IV. Causes for Boys Dropping Out of School.

Reasons Stated	Age									Total	Percent
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	over 19		
Lack of Interest		1	3	8	11	18	12	10	4	67	43.2
Moved Out of Town	1	2	4	4	8	9	5	4	1	38	24.5
Went to Armed Forces						2	13	6	5	26	16.7
Committed to Institutions	1	1	2	1	3			2	1	11	7.1
Got Married							3	2	1	6	3.8
To Work						1	1	3		5	3.2
To Look After Brother and Sister						1				1	.7
Illness						1				1	.7
Total	2	4	9	13	22	32	34	27	12	155	
Percent	1.3	2.6	5.8	8.4	14.3	20.6	21.9	17.4	7.7		

Table V shows the reasons why girls of different ages dropped out of high school during the five year period studied.

Table V. Reasons Girls Dropped Out of School.

Reasons	Age									Total	Percent
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	over 18		
Pregnant				8	10	13	23	6	1	61	34.7
Moved out of Town	1	5	4	3	5	10	6	4	2	40	22.7
Lack of Interest			1	2	4	13	11	13	4	58	21.6
Got Married					3	12	4	1		20	11.3
Committed to Institutions		1		4	2	1	1			9	5.1
Illness						2	1			3	1.6
To Work							2			2	1.1
Mental Illness					1				1	2	1.1
To Look After Brother and Sister							1			1	.6
Total	1	6	5	17	25	52	48	14	8	176	
Percent	.6	3.4	2.8	9.7	14.2	29.5	27.3	8.0	4.5		

From this table it can be seen that over one-third of the 176 girls who dropped out of school did so because they had become pregnant, with the largest number of pregnancies occurring at age 17. Over one-third of those who became pregnant were of this age. Fifty percent of these girls were younger, the youngest being fourteen.

Five percent or nine of the girls who dropped out were committed to institutions, four to the Orphan Home and five to the Girls Training School.

Over one-fifth of the girls who dropped out because of lack of interest. Like the boys, the age at which girls became the most disinterested was 16 years. It is also possible that the 11 percent who withdrew to get married may have done so either because of lack of interest in school or extra-marital pregnancy.

As in the case of the boys, the percentage of any one reason given would

increase if the number of students who moved out of town were disregarded. When this is done the percentage of students giving "lack of interest" as a reason for quitting school increases from 21 to 28 percent and "pregnant" increases from 34 percent to 45 percent. When the possibility that extra marital pregnancy may have been the reason for some of the early marriages, this reason gives cause for grave concern among educators.

Table VI reveals that during the years 1947-1952 the largest number of students terminated their schooling at the age of sixteen, with seventeen years of age being the next in order of frequency. The percentage for ages eleven through fourteen was relatively low. Of this group studied on an accumulative basis about fifty-six percent or over half of them dropped out of Manual High School between the ages of eleven and sixteen.

Table VI. Age Distribution of 331 School Leavers

Age	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Total	
					Number	Percent
11	2	.6	1	.3	3	.9
12	4	1.2	6	1.8	10	3.0
13	9	2.7	5	1.5	14	4.2
14	13	3.9	17	5.1	30	9.0
15	22	6.6	25	7.5	47	14.1
16	32	9.6	52	15.6	84	25.2
17	54	10.2	48	14.4	102	30.6
18	27	8.1	14	4.2	41	12.2
over 18	12	3.6	8	2.4	20	6.0
Total	155	46.5	176	52.8	331	99.2

GRADE FAILURE

The school records were rather incomplete in stating exactly as to whether a student had failed. However, in checking the permanent record cards of some of the "early school leavers," it appeared that the majority of the students

who left because of "lack of interest" had experienced grade failure. This alone should become an important factor for teachers and school administrators to become cognizant of. It also suggests an important lead as to ways of helping and encouraging some of the potential early school leavers to remain in school.

Of the 452 students in Table I, 107 or 23 percent had repeated grades or witnessed grade failure. The largest percent was in the seventh grade. The ninth grade was second in order of frequency with the tenth grade falling third. About twenty-five percent more boys witnessed grade failure than did the girls. Over half of this 107 had witnessed grade failure before entering the tenth grade. A very small percent were found repeating the eighth, eleventh and twelfth grades.

Table VII reveals the percentages of grade failures and repeaters.

Table VII. Grades Failed or Repeated by Early School Leavers

Grades	Boys		Girls		Total	
	Repeating	Percent	Repeating	Percent	Boys & Girls	Total Percent
7	27	25.2	17	15.7	44	40.9
8	3	2.7	2	1.8	5	4.5
9	18	16.8	12	11.1	30	27.9
10	12	11.1	5	4.6	17	15.7
11	5	4.6	1	.9	6	5.5
12	2	1.8	3	2.7	5	4.5

English and Mathematics were found to be the subjects more frequently failed by the "early school leavers." Few failed in history. The majority of these leavers had had some type of vocational training.

Table VIII was compiled to show the number remaining two, three, and four years later after entering the ninth grade. The data is not to be confused with Table I which showed the approximate number of drop-outs from

seven through twelve and included all students who enrolled each year. Three hundred fifteen boys who entered the ninth grade in four consecutive years were studied. Table VIII reveals that of the seventy-nine boys who entered high school in 1947-48 only thirty-seven percent remained to graduate; sixty-three percent of those entering the 9th grade dropped out during the four years.

Thirty-nine percent of the seventy-two who entered the ninth grade in 1948-49 were enrolled in school during their senior year. Sixty-one percent did not remain during the four year period.

Of the seventy-eight boys entering the ninth grade in 1949-50, fifty percent remained through a three year period with fifty percent dropping out before reaching the twelfth grade.

Eighty-six freshman boys entered the ninth grade in 1950-51; two years later seventy-one percent were found in school with twenty-nine percent dropping out.

Of the entire 315 boys studied who entered the ninth grade in 1947-48, 1948-49, 1949-50, 1950-51, only fifty-one percent remained in school with forty-nine percent dropping out two, three, and four years later.

Table VIII. Number Boys Enrolling in 9th Grade during 1947-51 and Number Remaining in School Two, Three, and Four Years.

Year	Grade	Enrollment	Remained in School				
			2 years later	3 years later	4 years later	Year	Percent
1947-48	9	79	-	-	29*	1950-51	37
1948-49	9	72	-	-	28	1951-52	39
1949-50	9	78	-	39	-	1951-52	50
1950-51	9	86	61	-	-	1951-52	71

*Graduated in 1951

Table IX was compiled to show the percentage of boys entering the seventh grade and remaining in school three and five years later. A total of 135 boys entered the seventh grade in 1947-48 and 1949-50. Of the seventy boys entering in 1947-48, five years later in 1951-52 forty-seven percent had eliminated themselves from school. Thirty-six percent of the boys entering the seventh grade in 1949-50 remained after a period of three years.

Table IX. Number Boys Enrolling in the 7th Grade who Remained in School Three and Five Years Later.

Year	Grade	Enrollment	Remained in School		
			3 years later	5 years later	Percent
1947-48	7	70	-	30	43
1949-50	7	65	48	-	74

Table X was compiled to show the number of girls entering the ninth grade and remaining in school, two, three and four years later. A total of 357 girls entered the ninth grade during the years 1947-48, 1948-49, 1949-50, and 1950-51. Only girls entering the ninth grade for these years were studied.

Table X reveals that of the seventy-three girls entering the ninth grade in 1947-48 only forty-eight percent remained to graduate in 1951, with fifty-two percent dropping out during the four year period.

Eighty-seven girls entered the ninth grade in 1948-49 and only forty-six percent of these girls were found in school four years later during their senior year in high school.

After a three year period, seventy-two percent of those entering the ninth grade in 1949-50 remained in school with only twenty-eight percent eliminating themselves.

Ninety-seven girls entered the freshman class in 1950-51; after a two year period, eighty-two percent of those entering in 1950-51 were found in

school with only eighteen percent dropping out.

Of the 357 girls studied who entered the ninth grade during the years 1947-48, 1948-49, 1949-50, and 1950-51, the average percentage remaining was sixty-three percent and thirty-seven percent dropping out.

The group of 357 girls included in the study in Table X who entered the ninth grade in four consecutive years beginning in 1947-48 shows that the holding power for girls was higher than for boys as shown in Table VIII of 315 boys. The holding power in comparison with boys was an average of thirteen percent higher for the girls.

Table X. Number Girls Enrolling in 9th Grade During 1947-51 and Remaining in School Two, Three, Four Years Later.

Year	Grade	Enrollment	Remained in School				percent
			2 years later	3 years later	4 years later	year	
1947-48	9	73	-	-	34*	1950-51	48
1948-49	9	87	-	-	40	1941-42	46
1949-50	9	100	-	72	-	1951-52	72
1950-51	9	97	79	-	-	1951-52	82

*Graduated in 1951

Table XI was compiled to show the percentage of the girls entering the seventh grade and remaining in school three and five years later.

A total of 107 girls entered the seventh grade in 1947-48 and five years later forty-seven percent of them had withdrawn during this five year period. Thirty-three percent of the girls entering the seventh grade in 1949-50 dropped out after a period of three years.

Table XI. Number Girls Enrolling in the 7th Grade and Remaining in School Three, and Five Years Later.

Year	Grade	Enrollment	Remained in School		Percent
			3 years later	5 years later	
1947-48	7	107	-	56	53
1949-50	7	60	40	-	67

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was made in an attempt to ascertain the extent of and reason for, drop-outs in Manual Training High School, Muskogee, Oklahoma during the years 1947-1952. Summarizing statements of these findings are listed below:

1. The percentage of students who dropped out of Manual Training High School ranged from 10.11 percent in 1949-50 to 13.91 percent in 1948-49, with a mean loss of 11.74 percent.
2. On the whole two percent more boys dropped out than girls. However, boys withdrew earlier than girls because the number of girls who eliminated themselves during the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades was about one percent higher than that for the boys in those grades.
3. The largest percentage of students dropped out while in the 9th grade, with the 10th grade next in order of frequency.
4. The smallest percentage of drop-outs was in the 12th grade.
5. Thirty-four percent of the drop-outs in this study occurred before the ninth grade.
6. Over half of the drop-outs occurred before the 10th grade.
7. Fifty percent of the 331 drop-outs attended from one to sixty days, and over seventy-five percent missed thirty days or more the year in which they dropped out.
8. Forty-three percent of the 155 boys studied dropped out because of lack of interest in school. This percentage increases to 57 percent when the 24 percent who moved out of town are not considered as drop-outs.
9. Sixteen percent dropped out to enter the armed forces and six percent were committed to corrective or penal institutions.
10. Thirty-four percent of the 175 girls studied dropped out because they had become pregnant. When the twenty-two percent who had moved out of town are not considered as drop-outs this percentage increases to 45 percent.

11. Twenty-one percent dropped out of school because of lack of interest. When those who moved out of town are disregarded, this percentage increases to 28 percent.
12. More of the students eliminated themselves during the ninth and tenth grades than during any other year.
13. Fewer withdrew from the twelfth grade than any other year.
14. Approximately 53 percent of the students studied dropped out before reaching the tenth grade; and over three-fourths before reaching the eleventh grade. The percentages were approximately the same for each sex.
15. More boys dropped out of school at age 17 than at any other one age, and more girls at age of 16. Almost three fourths of the boys dropped out between the age range of 15 and 18 years and 71 percent of the girls between the age range of 15 and 17 years.
16. Almost one-fourth of the 452 students studied repeated grades or witnessed grade failure.
17. Fifty percent of grade failures were in the 7th grade; while twenty-seven percent were in the 9th grade.
18. About twenty-five percent more boys witnessed grade failure than did the girls.
19. Over half of the 107 students had witnessed failure before entering the 10th grade.
20. A very small percentage of students was found repeating the 8th, 11th and 12th grades.
21. English and Mathematics were found to be the subjects most frequently failed.
22. The majority of the early school leavers had taken some type of vocational training before dropping out.

Conclusions

The conclusions arrived at in this study are suggested below:

1. The drop-out problem concerns both boys and girls to an almost equal degree.
2. "Lack of interest" was the predominate reason for students dropping out of school; and this lack of interest appears to have become both more intense and extensive at ages sixteen and seventeen.

3. If a higher percentage of students are to remain in school, some effort must be made on the part of both parents and educators, early in the school years, to note and deal with the attitudes, feelings and behavior of students which may lead to withdrawal from school; and to provide the kind of school program which will interest them. In this connection it is further concluded that:
 - a. All teachers and administrators have an important role to play in helping to identify and to help with the drop-out problem.
 - b. There is a failure on the part of the school to adapt the curriculum to the wide range of interests and levels of all the students.
 - c. If the schools are to increase in holding power the teachers will have to feel the responsibility. It will have to become a part of their understanding, thinking, attitude, and appreciation.
 - d. The curriculum needs to be studied, altered and made more flexible to meet the needs, interests, and aptitudes of the students who continually fail and finally turn out to be drop-outs, as well as for students who terminate their education after completing high school.
 - e. The guidance services need to be expanded so as to study and meet the needs of all students. Along with the Achievement Tests and Personality Test administered, Aptitude and Interest Tests should also be administered to help students in planning their future.
4. The schools are not always to blame for drop-outs. The large percentage of extra-marital pregnancies lead one to conclude that they may be an outgrowth of the values held in the homes from which these young people come or in the society in which we live. However, it is possible that the schools can be instrumental in bringing about a reduction in the number of extra-marital pregnancies through education directed toward this end with both parents and young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and the conclusions arrived at in this study the following recommendations are made that:

1. The faculty of Manual Training High School read and study these findings and conclusions with the view to arousing their interest and stimulating them to do something to better the situation.
2. These findings be presented to the students in a simple way to interest them in understanding and doing something about their own problems.
3. Information on drop-outs be presented to the people of the community. It is believed such information would encourage Parent-Interest and cooperation in avoiding as many drop-outs as possible through more effective child guidance in the home; and would obtain public support for an expanding school program.
4. Departmental committees be organized to evaluate their program of offerings to judge the extent to which they are meeting the needs of the students.
5. Cumulative list of drop-outs be sent to teachers at the end of each nine week period. (The faculty is not aware of the large number of drop-outs each year because the registers are kept in the administrator's office and information on drop-outs is also kept in the office.)
6. The school provides adequate facilities and personnel for developing a good record system, and that pertinent data be recorded on cumulative cards about each individual student.
7. Good use be made of records.
8. Each student be counseled with upon first entering school and that a tentative program be made out for him and that adjustments be made in his program from time to time when necessary.
9. Interest tests be given to students starting in the 9th grade.
10. The curriculum be altered in terms of everyday needs of pupils.
11. Additional occupational information be provided in home-rooms, study rooms, and library.
12. Students be counseled in regard to the selection of their courses according to their needs, interests, and aptitudes.
13. Some type of personal recognition be given to all students.

- ✓ 14. Experiences be provided to meet the general needs, interests and abilities of all students.
15. Work experiences be provided.
16. Physical education be required of all students.
17. A study of this type be carried on jointly with the school and P.T.A.

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APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____ Address _____ Age _____

Date Student left school _____ Classification at that time _____

Do you feel you are where you want to be? _____

Present Occupation _____ Present Income _____

Degree of satisfaction _____

Causes for dropping out of school:

1. _____ Didn't like school.
2. _____ Was dissatisfied with grades.
3. _____ Did not get along with some of his teachers.
4. _____ Couldn't get the subjects that he wanted to take.
5. _____ Was afraid of failing.
6. _____ Wanted to seek new adventures.
7. _____ Was behind own age group. (over age for grade)
8. _____ Was discouraged by parents.
9. _____ Was discouraged by gang.
10. _____ Got married and had to begin earning a living for family.
11. _____ Got married and started a family.
12. _____ Had no definite goal in mind.
13. _____ Had to help parents.
14. _____ Was ill.
15. _____ Illness in family.
16. _____ Had no interest in school.
17. _____ Discipline--what happened?
18. _____ Financial conditions--actually needed to earn money.
19. _____ Lack of purpose and guidance.
20. _____ Other causes.

Vocation interested in while attending school _____

Vocation studied while in school _____

Help schooling gave _____

What student would like to do if he returned to school _____

Kinds of problems students has met since leaving school _____

VITA

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The content and form have been checked and approved by the author and thesis adviser. Changes or corrections in the thesis are not made by the Graduate School office or by any committee. The copies are sent to the bindery just as they are approved by the author and faculty adviser.

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