

Archives
closed
LD
175
A40h
Th
62

A SURVEY OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY,
NORTH CAROLINA, 1954-1955

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Education
Appalachian State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by
Grace Glenn Hager
May 1957

A SURVEY OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY,
NORTH CAROLINA, 1954-1955

by

Grace Glenn Hager

Approved by:

John G. Barden

Chairman of Thesis Advisory Committee

Chaparr Wilson

Director of Graduate Study

John G. Barden

Major Professor

J. L. Yoder

Minor Professor

A SURVEY OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY,
NORTH CAROLINA, 1954-1955

An Abstract of a Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Education
Appalachian State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by

Grace Glenn Hager

May 1957

A SURVEY OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY,
NORTH CAROLINA, 1954-1955

The relationship of the attendance issue to various school problems has created a need for statistical data relating to the factors of school attendance. The purpose of this study was to survey the school attendance in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina for 1954-1955 in an attempt to determine the status of attendance, to ascertain the organization for the administration of attendance, to derive major causes for non-attendance, and to score individual cases of perfect attendance and excessive absence.

Attendance records and reports and the personal data sheets of individual students were examined to secure the desired data. The student population of the white schools was surveyed. All students in grades one through twelve were included. For the special investigation of pupils with perfect attendance and excessive absence, all pupils were included whose personal data sheet classified them in one of these groups. The survey was made at the end of the school term, 1954-1955.

The survey disclosed the degree to which the educational facilities of the schools of this administrative unit were being used. The enrollment had reached an all time high of 14,202. The percentage of attendance was approximately

ninety-five per cent.

Definite policies and procedures for approaching attendance issues have been developed in Mecklenburg County. Co-operative efforts on the part of school personnel have enlarged the effectiveness of the school attendance service.

The leading causes for non-attendance were personal illness and work at home. Truancy was not an evident cause. The investigation of specific cases of perfect attendance and excessive absence revealed the distribution of major factors which may aid in the derivation of predominant causes or specific difficulties involving non-attendance.

An analysis of attendance is vital to the evaluation of the school attendance service. This study has been an initial attempt to discover factors which may influence attendance or non-attendance and to discover possible places in which the school attendance service may be improved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	The problem	1
	Nature of the problem	1
	Statement of the problem	2
	Importance of the study	2
	Delimitation of the study	3
	Definitions of key terms used	4
	Attendance	4
	Perfect attendance	4
	Non-attendance	4
	Excessive absence	4
	Sources of data	5
	Personal conferences	5
	Attendance records and reports	5
	Personal data sheets of pupils	6
	Procedures	6
	Groups studied	7
	Character of the administrative unit	7
	Organization of the remainder of the thesis	9
II.	REVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF	
	SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	10

UNIVERSITY RECORD

CHAPTER

PAGE

III. ORGANIZATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF

ATTENDANCE 15

Attendance personnel 15

Attendance records and reports 18

Attendance policies 19

IV. STATUS OF ATTENDANCE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY 20

Enrollment 20

Losses 21

Membership - average daily membership 21

Pupils present - average daily attendance 22

Pupils absent 22

Percentage of attendance 22

V. CAUSES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY . . 32

Causes classified contagion 33

Causes classified non-contagion 33

VI. INVESTIGATION OF SPECIFIC CASES OF

PERFECT ATTENDANCE AND EXCESSIVE ABSENCE 42

Chronological age 42

Grade-placement 43

Scholastic rating 44

Church membership 44

Club membership 44

Health 45

CHAPTER	PAGE
Economic status of the home	45
Marital status of parents	46
Education of the parents	46
VII. SUMMARY	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	70
APPENDIX	73

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Enrollment in the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	23
II. Losses in the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	24
III. Membership in the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	25
IV. Sum of Daily Membership in the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	26
V. Average Daily Membership of the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	27
VI. Sum of Pupils Present in the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	28
VII. Average Daily Attendance for the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	29
VIII. Percentage of Attendance for the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	30
IX. Sum of Pupils Absent in the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	31
X. Number of Days of Absence Classified as Caused by Contagion and Non-contagion	35
XI. Percentage of Absence Classified as Caused by Contagion and Non-contagion	36

TABLE

PAGE

XII.	Absences Caused by Contagion in the White Schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	37
XIII.	Number of Days of Absence Due to Influenza, Cold, and Other Causes	38
XIV.	Percentages of Absence Due to Influenza, Cold, and Other Causes	39
XV.	Number of Days of Absence Due to Work at Home, Trips and Visits, and Other Causes	40
XVI.	Percentages of Absence Due to Work at Home, Trips and Visits, and Other Causes	41
XVII.	Number of Pupils with Perfect Attendance and Excessive Absence for Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955	47
XVIII.	Percentages for Perfect Attendance and Excessive Absence	48
XIX.	Chronological Age of Pupils with Perfect Attendance	49
XX.	Chronological Age of Pupils with Excessive Absence	50
XXI.	Grade-placement of Pupils with Perfect Attendance	51
XXII.	Grade-placement of Pupils with Excessive Absence	52

TABLE

PAGE

XXIII.	Scholastic Rating of Pupils with	
	Perfect Attendance	53
XXIV.	Scholastic Rating of Pupils with	
	Excessive Absence	54
XXV.	Church Membership of Pupils with	
	Perfect Attendance	55
XXVI.	Church Membership of Pupils with	
	Excessive Absence	56
XXVII.	Club Membership of Pupils with	
	Perfect Attendance	57
XXVIII.	Club Membership of Pupils with	
	Excessive Absence	58
XXIX.	Health Rating of Pupils with Perfect	
	Attendance	59
XXX.	Health Rating of Pupils with	
	Excessive Absence	60
XXXI.	Economic Status of the Home of Pupils with	
	Perfect Attendance	61
XXXII.	Economic Status of the Home of Pupils with	
	Excessive Absence	62
XXXIII.	Marital Status of the Parents of the Pupils	
	with Perfect Attendance	63

TABLE

PAGE

XXXIV.	Marital Status of the Parents of Pupils	
	with Excessive Absence	64
XXXV.	Education of Parents of Pupils with	
	Perfect Attendance	65
XXXVI.	Education of Parents of Pupils with	
	Excessive Absence	66

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School attendance is an integral part of the educative process. The task of insuring educational opportunities to all children of school age is a great responsibility which requires extensive, resourceful planning on the part of the school attendance service. It is difficult to realize how interwoven the attendance issue is with a wide variety of other school problems. No longer can the school look upon attendance problems as independent and isolated and fail to see their relationship to the home and school environment. Attention should be directed to an impartial and objective examination of local attendance and its implications applied to the strengthening of the educational opportunities of the child. This study was the outgrowth of the realization that an understanding of local attendance factors may aid in promoting the effectiveness of the school program.

I. THE PROBLEM

Nature of the problem. The relationship of the attendance issue to various school problems has created a need for statistical data relating to the factors of school

attendance. An analysis of school attendance provides a basis for evaluating a specific problem such as continuous absenteeism. Such an analysis must include an investigation of individual cases in pupil attendance in order to derive true relationships and thus initiate probable solutions.

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was (1) to determine the status of attendance in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, for 1954-1955; (2) to ascertain the organization for the administration of attendance; (3) to derive the major causes for non-attendance; and (4) to score individual cases of perfect attendance and excessive absence.

Importance of the study. The importance of regular school attendance as a prerequisite to good learning is well known. Compulsory school attendance is the legal means by which the forces for public education have sought to insure for all children an opportunity for instruction. Considerable expense is involved in making school opportunities available to all children of compulsory school age. It is the responsibility of school personnel to insure the continual attainment of the people's aims. The manner in which the attendance issue is approached often conditions the attitudes of many children and parents toward the school.

Bonds between the home and the school may be strengthened when the problem of attendance is not isolated but is viewed in its full relationship to both. This problem is not solved with the enforcement of the law or the orderly collection of attendance records. These records, however, when properly employed, may provide information for an intelligent approach to a specific attendance situation. With the assistance of school and community agencies related to the existing situation, an attack upon the problem may be initiated; therefore, there is no substitute for an analysis of local attendance. The present study was made to analyze the attendance in Mecklenburg County, to provide a basis for evaluating the local situation, and to aid in the initiation of probable solutions to cases of continuous non-attendance.

Delimitation of the study. Attendance can best be studied in terms of the individual but can best be organized and administered in terms of the school. The writer recognizes that not all relative factors were considered. No doubt, factors were omitted which would have been equally valuable but, because of their seemingly indirect relationship, were excluded. The selection of the specific factors was made with the idea of determining the major agents of attendance or non-attendance. Attempts were made to select factors that could be measured and interpreted objectively.

The writer did not attempt to determine trends in this study, because comparative data were not available for the derivation of trends.

II. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS USED

In the absence of authoritative delimitation of the key terms used in this study, a poll was taken of the opinions of the classroom teachers in the Mecklenburg County Schools to derive the meanings. The following definitions have been determined.

Attendance. Attendance is defined as the act of being present at school. A child must have been in school for at least one-half of the school day in order legally to be counted present.

Perfect attendance. Perfect attendance is interpreted as attendance in school for the full 180 days of the school year.

Non-attendance. Non-attendance is defined as the act of not being present at school. A child who was not in school for at least one-half of the school day was counted as a non-attender, or as being absent.

Excessive absence. Excessive absence is interpreted

as absence in excess of twenty days. Twenty days was established by the poll taken of the opinions of the teachers. Ninety and two-tenths per cent of these teachers reported that they thought twenty days or more should be regarded as excessive absence.

III. SOURCES OF DATA

The material presented in this study was obtained from the following sources: (1) personal conferences, (2) attendance reports and records, and (3) personal data sheets of pupils.

Personal conferences. Personal conferences were employed to secure information about the organization for the administration of attendance. Conferences were scheduled with J. W. Wilson, Superintendent of the Mecklenburg County Schools; Dr. E. C. Corkey, County Doctor; Mrs. Jeanette Harkey, Visiting Teacher; and Miss Kate Freeman, Secretary of Records.

Attendance records and reports. Statistical attendance records and reports as compiled in the county school office from the individual schools were examined to secure the data in regard to the enrollment, losses, membership, pupils present, pupils absent, average daily membership,

average daily attendance, percentage of attendance, and the report of absences due to contagion.

Personal data sheets of pupils. Personal data sheets for pupils were distributed to the schools during the last month of the school year. This questionnaire was completed by the homeroom teachers of the pupils. The purpose of this inquiry was to obtain data concerning special cases classified as pupils with perfect attendance and pupils with excessive absence. Factors considered on the questionnaires concerned: grade-placement, chronological age, scholastic rating, health, club membership, church membership, education of the parents, marital status of the parents, and the economic status of the home. These data sheets were also examined to determine the causes for non-attendance which were not caused by contagious diseases.

IV. PROCEDURES

The survey was made at the end of the school year, 1954-1955, without previous announcement. This was done so as to get a true picture of the local situation. The personal data sheets were distributed during the last month of the school year. The personal conferences were held throughout the school year surveyed. The tabulation of the attendance records and reports was completed in the summer

following the school year surveyed.

V. GROUPS STUDIED

The Student population in the white schools of Mecklenburg County was the group studied. All students in grades one through twelve were included. For the special investigation of pupils with perfect attendance and excessive absence, all pupils were included whose personal data sheet revealed that they would be classified in one of these groups.

The records of the students were analyzed according to the major school district to which they belonged -- East, North, and West.

VI. CHARACTER OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

Mecklenburg County is located in the piedmont section of North Carolina. The county seat is Charlotte. Mecklenburg County has three major geographic divisions -- eastern, northern, and western. The eastern section is suburban, the northern section is rural, and the western section is industrial and suburban. The Chamber of Commerce lists the major occupations in the suburban areas as manufacturing, services, transportation, and professions. Farming and dairying are listed as the major occupations of the rural areas, but a goodly portion of the population also engages in various

occupations in the city.

The administrative unit of Mecklenburg County Schools maintains for its organization the three main district divisions -- East, North, and West which relatively coincide with the three geographic divisions of the county. The number of students in each section varies -- East, 5,992; North, 3,803; and West, 4,407. (The city of Charlotte school system is not included in this study.)

There are twenty-seven schools in the unit. Each division has as its center, a senior high school; and in the East and West divisions there is a junior high school also. The East has eleven elementary schools; the North has five elementary schools; and the West has six elementary schools.

The majority of the students are transported from home to school by the school bus system. Students who live within one and one-half miles of a school are not permitted school bus service. In the main, however, parents transport these students through car pools. Bus operation is seldom interrupted. The only disruption was caused by icy roads or heavy snowfall.

The Mecklenburg County Administrative Unit has a positive school program of individualized instruction for the student population.

VII. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THESIS

A study of related studies is presented in Chapter II. The organization for the administration of attendance is described in Chapter III. The status of attendance is presented in Chapter IV. The causes for non-attendance are discussed in Chapter V. Chapter VI deals with an investigation of specific cases of perfect attendance and excessive absence. A summary of the study is presented in Chapter VII.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

About 1850, tabulation of school attendance began in the United States. Since that time, school personnel have noted trends with respect to school attendance. The trends are fairly definite. Heck states that there have been moderate increases in school attendance since 1870.¹ Since 1920 there has been an enormous increase in average daily attendance, percentage of attendance, and the number of days attended by those children enrolled. This noticeable departure may be attributed to the introduction of compulsory attendance laws in many states. Monroe emphasizes that at present a majority of states have well developed legislation which make attendance obligatory for the entire term during which school is in session.²

School personnel are constantly working in an endeavor to improve school attendance. In order to bring

¹Arch O. Heck, Administration of Pupil Personnel (New York: Ginn and Company, 1929), p. 108.

²Paul Monroe (ed.), A Cyclopedia of Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), I, pp. 284-295.

about an improvement in attendance, causes for non-attendance must be known. Lawson concluded that non-attendance was due largely to lack of provision in the statutes definitely defining which children must attend school and the penalty for non-attendance.³ Lawing reported, in 1934, that lack of enforcement of provisions in statutes for attendance was still listed as a chief cause.⁴

Most early investigations reported illness to be the major cause for absence. A study made by Abbot and Breckenridge showed that illness caused forty-eight per cent of all absences in Chicago Schools.⁵ Heck's findings in 1934 agreed with the previous study.⁶ Henderson's investigations claimed illness again as the major cause.⁷ Personal illness while one of the leading causes of pupil absence in both city and rural schools does not, according to Reavis, account

³W. S. Munroe (ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p.918.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Louise Henderson, "A Study of Absence on Account of Sickness Among High School Girls", School and Society, 36: 797-800, December 17, 1932.

for as large a proportion of the total absence in rural schools as it does in urban schools.⁸ Long, however, studying the causative factors of absence in a rural school in North Carolina, found illness to be the leading cause.⁹ Marksbury stated that many pupils who reported absence due to illness, were not ill.¹⁰ In almost every case of absence that was followed immediately by a thorough investigation, the child was not ill. She stated that either the parent had misled the child or the child the parent.

Heck, in a second study in 1936, claimed that social problems produced poor attendance.¹¹ This investigation presented parental and home conditions as major causes for absence. He also introduced as a causative factor the failure of the school to adapt its program to a child's needs. This latter faction was further emphasized by Kirkpatrick and Lodge, who listed retardation and failure as causes.¹²

⁸G. H. Reavis, Factors Controlling Attendance in Rural Schools, Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1920.

⁹Robert P. Long, "Causative Factors of Absence in the Newell School" (unpublished Master's thesis, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, 1949).

¹⁰Munroe, loc. cit.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²M. E. Kirkpatrick and Townsend Lodge, "Some Factors in Truancy", Mental Hygiene, 19: 610-619, October, 1935.

Investigations show that repeated pupil absences are commonly caused by several factors rather than a single one. Gardner stated that absence is rarely due to one cause.¹³

Not only are school personnel concerned with the problem of how well children attend school, and the causes for non-attendance, but also with the way or ways a school can improve attendance. Methods of improving attendance have followed two general procedures. The first has been the legalistic approach which follows specific activities on the part of school personnel to determine immediately why a child is absent. These forceful methods have influenced negative attitudes in children and parents concerning school and school personnel. Investigators have noted a trend in favor of the second approach, the case study technique. Noall found that students came to appreciate the school and improve in their work after consultations and visitations through a total pupil personnel program.¹⁴ Schultz also studied personal visitations and found them to produce excellent results.¹⁵

Probably the greatest handicap to the attendance service has been inaccuracies in reporting and recording

¹³Munroe, op. cit., p.919.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

attendance data. Heck calls attention to the lack of uniformity in terms.¹⁶

School attendance has been approached mainly with regard to the causes for non-attendance. Major collective causes of absences have been ascertained for one school, several schools, or an entire state. The present study is an attempt to analyze the attendance of one ^{school} administrative unit to ascertain the utilization of the school facilities by the children. The study does not depart from the general trend of previous studies except to make an investigation of specific cases of perfect attendance and excessive absence.

¹⁶ Munroe, loc. cit.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ATTENDANCE

School attendance as required and prescribed by state law must be administered locally. The success of an attendance program is dependent to a large extent on the provisions established for the organization and administration of attendance services. The examination of the organization for the administration of attendance in Mecklenburg County was concerned with (1) attendance personnel, (2) attendance records and reports, and (3) attendance policies.

I. ATTENDANCE PERSONNEL

Superintendent. The superintendent of schools, as the head of the administrative unit, is responsible to the state of North Carolina for the administration of attendance. He, of course, must accept the direction of the School Board concerning specific policies and procedures. The degree to which he is able to delegate responsibility to persons in the field who are trained to work with this service and the facilities which are available determine his effectiveness.

Principal. The school principal is the administrator to whom the greatest responsibility has been delegated. This official must provide explanations for the violations

of the law within his school or district. He must also be able to substantiate the information reported by the teachers and others within his attendance unit. The principal is responsible for report forms from the central office and state. These reports must be completed at regular intervals and presented in the central office on specified dates. The principal must know his attendance situations and resources in order to bring his students the profits of the educational facilities provided for them.

Teacher. The teacher is required to maintain registers provided by the state for enrollment and attendance information. The teacher is asked to make visits in the home of his students and to observe the needs of his students. The teacher must require an excuse from a student upon his return to school after an absence. The excuse must be filed and kept for the school year. The teacher is asked to determine the cause of unexcused absences as soon as possible following an absence. The findings of this investigation should be made to the principal.

County Doctor. Mecklenburg County has a county physician who co-operates in the analyzing of health conditions of the students. If the cause of absence is primarily one of ill health, then constructive means can be

employed to erase or improve these conditions. All students are given physical examinations.

County dentist. The county also maintains the full services of a dentist. An examination of the reports of the County Health Department reveals that the dentist makes regular visits to the students. The dental office is located in a mobile unit.

School nurse. Fifteen nurses were assigned to specific schools for the year, 1954-1955. Although they were primarily concerned with the physical health of the students, they were available at all times to assist the teachers and the students whenever a need arose.

Visiting teacher. The visiting teacher, the official attendance officer, was concerned not only with enforcing the laws but also with investigating the reasons for absence and with attempting to remove the cause of absence. The Parent-Teacher Association provided financial assistance for the care of physical needs of underprivileged students. This fund was under the supervision of the visiting teacher. The visiting teacher also had the assistance of psychologists, psychiatrists, and guidance specialists from the Mecklenburg County Mental Health Clinic.

II. ATTENDANCE RECORDS AND REPORTS

Register. The state requires a systematic report of attendance. A special register is provided for this purpose. These registers are maintained by the teachers. One sheet is devoted to the record of each child, and his days of attendance or non-attendance are recorded thereon. A blue sheet is provided for the combined attendance report of a class. The reports of all classes are combined into a school report, and these reports into a county report. These reports are submitted at the end of each school month and at the end of the school year. A cumulative report summarizes the attendance data for the whole year.

Census cards. Census cards are maintained. Two are filed; one in the central office and one in the school which the pupil attends. An inactive census file is also maintained. This file carries the withdrawals -- drop-outs and transfers.

Organization reports. The county maintains reports and records of attendance presented as organization reports. These are a combined record of the individual reports of schools and school districts. These records are permanently filed.

III. ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The administrators require enforcement of attendance policies. Teachers record and report the absences of pupils. Excuses are required upon the day the student returns to school. However, teachers are required to make immediate attempts to determine why a child is absent. Many times this means a home visit, telephoning the home, or inquiring of siblings.

Should absences persist, the case is directed to the visiting teacher. An immediate visit is made to the home. Health conditions are checked carefully. If no logical cause for absence exists, the parents or guardian are told to return the child to school. Should a visit not be effective, a notice is sent to the home. If absence continues, a formal summons is issued. The final step is court action.

CHAPTER IV

STATUS OF ATTENDANCE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY

The attendance reports compiled according to (1) enrollment, (2) losses, (3) membership, (4) pupils present, and (5) pupils absent, present data which disclose the status of attendance in Mecklenburg County for 1954-1955. The tabulations of these factors are presented in subdivisions of the local administrative unit.

I. ENROLLMENT

As shown in Table I, page 23, 14,202 white children were enrolled in the Mecklenburg County schools during the year, 1954-1955. Enrollment was interpreted as the number of pupils, boys and girls compiled separately, classified according to original registration in the schools of the county, pupils received from different administrative units in North Carolina, and pupils received from another public school in another state. Because of the duplication factor, pupils transferred from a grade within the administrative unit were omitted from this tabulation. The enrollment varied in the districts. There were more boys enrolled than girls.

II. LOSSES

The losses for the year as presented in Table II, page 24, indicate that 1,537 students dropped out of school during the year. Loss was defined as transfers to schools outside the administrative unit and permanent withdrawals from the public schools. More boys withdrew than girls. The West had the greatest number of losses. This loss may be explained through the closing of three textile mills in the area.

III. MEMBERSHIP

Enrollment minus losses constituted membership. The membership for Mecklenburg County for 1954-1955 is listed in Table III, page 25. The total membership was 12,665. This membership represented approximately eighty-nine per cent of the enrollment. The sum of the daily memberships is listed in Table IV, page 26. The sums were necessary to compute the average daily membership. The sum of the daily memberships divided by the number of school days revealed the average daily membership. The average daily membership is given in Table V, page 27. The average daily membership was 12,925.

IV. PUPILS PRESENT

A pupil was recorded present if he was in attendance at least one-half of the school day. Table VI, page 28, indicates the sum of pupils present. 2,201,879 was the sum of pupils present. This sum divided by the number of school days in the school term reveals the average daily attendance. The average daily attendance was 12,233, as indicated in Table VII, page 29. The average daily membership and the average daily attendance are used to obtain the percentage of attendance which is presented in Table VIII, page 30.

V. PUPILS ABSENT

The sum of the pupils absent as given in Table IX, page 31, was 124,721. The East had the greatest number of absences.

VI. PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE

The percentage of attendance for Mecklenburg County was ninety-four and forty-six hundredths per cent, as is disclosed by Table VIII, page 30. The girls had ninety-four and twenty-eight hundredths per cent, while the boys had ninety-four and sixty-five hundredths per cent.

TABLE I
ENROLLMENT IN THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY,
1954-1955

Enrollment	Boys	Girls	Total
East	3,169	2,823	5,992
North	1,681	2,122	3,803
West	2,515	1,892	4,407
Total	7,365	6,837	14,202

TABLE II
LOSSES IN THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY,
1954-1955

Losses	Boys	Girls	Total
East	306	169	475
North	66	446	512
West	489	61	550
Total	861	676	1,537

TABLE III

MEMBERSHIP IN THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY,
1954-1955

Membership	Boys	Girls	Total
East	2,863	2,654	5,517
North	1,615	1,676	3,291
West	2,026	1,831	3,857
Total	6,504	6,161	12,665

TABLE IV

SUM OF DAILY MEMBERSHIP IN THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG
COUNTY, 1954-1955

Sum of Daily Memberships	Boys	Girls	Total
East	522,590	493,759	1,016,349
North	288,910	265,859	554,769
West	397,286	358,196	755,482
Total	1,208,786	1,117,814	2,326,482

TABLE V

AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP OF THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG
COUNTY, 1954-1955

Average Daily Membership	Boys	Girls	Total
East	2,903	2,743	5,646
North	1,605	1,477	3,082
West	2,207	1,990	4,197
Total	6,715	6,210	12,925

TABLE VI

SUM OF PUPILS PRESENT IN THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG
COUNTY, 1954-1955

Sum of Pupils Present	Boys	Girls	Total
East	493,117	467,046	960,163
North	272,850	251,687	524,537
West	377,939	339,240	717,179
Total	1,143,906	1,057,973	2,201,879

TABLE VII

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE FOR THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG
COUNTY, 1954-1955

Average Daily Attendance	Boys	Girls	Total
East	2,740	2,595	5,335
North	1,516	1,398	2,914
West	2,099	1,885	3,984
Total	6,355	5,878	12,233

TABLE VIII

PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE FOR THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG
COUNTY, 1954-1955

Percentage of Attendance	Boys	Girls	Total
East	94.35	94.75	94.55
North	94.4	95.0	94.7
West	94.01	94.2	94.1
Total	94.28	94.65	94.46

TABLE IX

SUM OF PUPILS ABSENT IN THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF MECKLENBURG
COUNTY, 1954-1955

Sum of Pupils Absent	Boys	Girls	Total
East	29,473	26,713	56,186
North	16,060	14,172	30,232
West	19,347	18,956	38,303
Total	64,880	59,841	124,721

CHAPTER V

CAUSES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY

To improve the school attendance service, predominant causes of absence, if known, can become a basis for an intelligent attack on the problem of non-attendance. An analysis of the absences for Mecklenburg County was obtained from the Contagion Report and the personal data sheets of the pupils. The causes of absence are classified (1) contagion and (2) non-contagion. The Contagion Report, filed each school month, presented a breakdown of absences due to communicable diseases. The personal data sheets were examined to determine the causes of absence which were classified non-contagion.

The number of absences classified according to contagion and non-contagion are listed in Table X, page 35. As Table XI, page 36, indicates, seventy-five and eight-tenths per cent of the absences were filed as contagion. Twenty-four and two-tenths per cent were recorded as non-contagion. Over fifty per cent of the non-contagion absences were recorded in the East.

Table XII, page 37, presents the contagion report with the number of cases listed with the number of days of absence.

I. CAUSES CLASSIFIED CONTAGION

The report of absences caused by contagion was examined for the major causes of personal illness. The major causes as submitted in this report were influenza and cold. The number of days of absence due to influenza, cold, and other causes are listed in Table XIII, page 38. As indicated in Table XIV, page 39, sixty-six and five-tenths per cent of the absences were due to influenza, while twenty-seven and four-tenths per cent were due to cold. The causes classified as other were mainly childhood diseases as measles, mumps, and chicken pox.

II. CAUSES CLASSIFIED NON-CONTAGION

The personal data sheets were examined for the major causes of absence not reported as contagion. The major causes of absence submitted were work at home and trips and visits. The number of absences due to work at home, trips and visits, and other causes are listed in Table XV, page 40. As indicated in Table XVI, page 41, forty-nine and nine-tenths per cent of the absences were due to trips and visits. Other causes which accounted for nineteen and five-tenths per cent of the absences were listed as illness in the home, appointments with doctor, inclement weather, and lack of transportation.

The accuracy of the reporting of the causes of absence may be challenged. Personal illness or another reason may have been submitted in place of the true cause because of the ease in obtaining approval of such an excuse. Many teachers in recording reasons for absence stated in numerous cases their doubt concerning the truthfulness of the excuse given for absence.

Only major causes have been considered. These causes affected a greater percentage of the student population, and they were, therefore, considered to be the most important.

TABLE X

NUMBER OF DAYS OF ABSENCE CLASSIFIED AS CAUSED BY CONTAGION
AND NON-CONTAGION

Absences	Contagion	Non-contagion	Total
East	39,683	16,503	56,186
North	24,847	5,385	30,232
West	29,766	8,537	38,303
Total	94,296	30,425	124,721

TABLE XI

PERCENTAGE OF ABSENCE CLASSIFIED AS CAUSED BY CONTAGION AND
NON-CONTAGION

Absences	Contagion	Non-contagion	Total
East	31.7	13.2	44.9
North	20.1	4.1	24.2
West	24.0	6.9	30.9
Total	75.8	24.2	100

TABLE XII

ABSENCES CAUSED BY CONTAGION IN THE WHITE SCHOOLS OF
MECKLENBURG COUNTY, 1954-1955

Contagion	Number of Cases	Number of School Days Lost
East	35,354	39,683
North	19,311	24,847
West	23,057	29,766
Total	77,722	94,296

TABLE XIII

NUMBER OF DAYS OF ABSENCE DUE TO INFLUENZA, COLD, AND OTHER CAUSES

Cause	Influenza	Cold	Other
East	26,454	10,947	2,282
North	16,564	6,823	1,460
West	19,844	8,196	1,726
Total	62,862	25,966	5,468

TABLE XIV

PERCENTAGES OF ABSENCE DUE TO INFLUENZA, COLD, AND OTHER CAUSES

Cause	Influenza	Cold	Other
East	28.0	11.6	2.4
North	17.5	7.2	1.6
West	21.0	8.6	2.1
Total	66.5	27.4	6.1

TABLE XV

NUMBER OF DAYS OF ABSENCE DUE TO WORK AT HOME, TRIPS AND VISITS,
AND OTHER CAUSES

Causes	Work at Home	Trips and Visits	Other
East	5,321	8,692	2,470
North	4,179	82	1,124
West	5,723	531	2,283
Total	15,223	8,825	5,877

TABLE XVI

PERCENTAGES OF ABSENCE DUE TO WORK AT HOME, TRIPS AND VISITS,
AND OTHER CAUSES

Causes	Work at Home	Trips and Visits	Other
East	17.6	28.6	8.2
North	13.7	.3	3.7
West	18.8	1.5	7.6
Total	49.9	30.4	19.5

CHAPTER VI

INVESTIGATION OF SPECIFIC CASES OF PERFECT ATTENDANCE AND EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

The study of the personal data sheets disclosed the number of cases of perfect attendance and excessive absence. The personal data sheets were also examined for the following factorial analysis: (1) age, (2) grade-placement, (3) scholastic rating, (4) church membership, (5) club membership, (6) health, (7) economic status of the home, (8) marital status of the parents, and (9) education of the parents.

The number of cases of perfect attendance and excessive absence are presented in Table XVII, page 47. As indicated by Table XVIII, page 48, the perfect attendance cases accounted for nine and six-tenths per cent of the student population while the cases of excessive absence accounted for eight and nine-tenths per cent. The largest percentage of perfect attenders was discovered to be in the West, while the largest percentage of excessive absentees was discovered to be in the East.

I. AGE

In regard to the age factor, Table XIX, page 49, lists the distribution of the cases of perfect attendance. A

gradual increase is noted in the number of cases relative to each age until a peak was reached at age eleven. Ages ten and twelve were also high in number of cases. The distribution of cases of excessive absence according to the age factor is listed in Table XX, page 50. The greatest number of cases occurred at age seven, and the second greatest number occurred at age six. Childhood diseases are prevalent at these ages. This fact may give some reason for the distribution. The next increase of cases is indicated at ages eleven, twelve, and thirteen.

II. GRADE-PLACEMENT

The grade-placement data as entered in Table XXI, page 51, for the cases with perfect attendance indicates that the most cases of perfect attendance occurred in grade five with grade six only three cases under. The tendency in reference to these cases was for a gradual increase in number of cases as the level of grade placement increased. This was true up to junior high, then the cases began to decrease. As indicated by Table XXII, page 52, the leading number of cases of excessive absence occurred in grade two followed closely by grade one. Again childhood diseases may explain this distribution. Grade eight had a high number of cases.

III. SCHOLASTIC RATING

In regard to scholarship, the perfect attendance cases listed in Table XXIII, page 53, were classified predominately as "A" and "B". The cases of excessive absence, as indicated in Table XXIV, page 54, were centered in the classifications of "B", "C", and "D". Scholarship was determined by teacher judgement on the basis of grade ratings of the county pupil progress report. There is a noticeable absence of cases in column "F" for the perfect attenders.

IV. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Table XXV, page 55, indicates that 1,178 of the cases of perfect attendance were church members while twenty-eight were not. Table XXVI, page 56, shows that 920 cases of excessive absence were church members, while 142 were not. Church membership was based on the parents' statement that their child's name appeared on a church roll.

V. CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Club membership was considered as participation in organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Glee Club, 4-H club, Y Teen, Dramatics, and Athletics. The degree to which the cases of perfect attendance participated in these extracurricular activities is listed in Table XXVII, page 57.

1,140 cases were reported as participating. A marked difference existed with reference to the cases of excessive absence as presented in Table XXVIII, page 58. 350 reported participation, while 712 reported non-participation. These data were secured by the teacher from the student activity cards.

VI. HEALTH

The health rating for the pupil personal data sheets was taken from the health reports submitted by the county doctor in her physical examination of the students. Table XXIX, page 59, lists the cases of perfect attendance as having good or excellent health. Only three cases were listed as fair, and no cases were listed poor. Table XXX, page 60, lists the cases of excessive absence as good or fair. 109 cases were reported as having poor health.

VII. ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE HOME

The criteria for judging the economic status of the home was left entirely to the individual teacher. The teacher was to make his decision after a visit in the home. The teachers reported, as is indicated in Table XXXI, page 61, the majority of the cases of perfect attendance as coming from average homes. Table XXXII, page 62 discloses that the cases of excessive absence were reported as coming from average homes. The majority was not as large, however, as in the

cases of perfect attendance. Beyond this majority, more cases of perfect attendance were judged above average and more cases of excessive absence below average.

VIII. MARITAL STATUS OF THE PARENTS

The marital status of the parents in the home, as tabulated in Table XXXIII, page 63, for the perfect attenders, presents 1,191 of the 1,206 homes represented as unbroken. Fifteen homes were reported broken--death, divorce, or separation. Table XXXIV, page 64, discloses that of the 1,062 homes represented for the excessive absentees, 929 were reported unbroken, while 133 were reported as broken.

IX. EDUCATION OF THE PARENTS

The educational attainments of the parents in regard to formal education is reported on the basis of parents' statements. Table XXXV, page 65, presents the formal education of the parents of the perfect attenders. Examination of the table reveals that the greatest number of mothers had completed high school, while the greatest number of fathers had reached the junior high school level. The data for the excessive absentees appear in Table XXXVI, page 66. The greatest number of mothers reached the high school level, but the difference in this level and the junior high school level was negligible. In regard to the formal education of the fathers, the difference between high school and junior high school was negligible.

TABLE XVII

NUMBER OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE AND EXCESSIVE ABSENCE
FOR MECKLENBURG COUNTY, 1954-1955

Cases	Perfect Attendance	Excessive Absence
East	438	457
North	276	237
West	492	368
Total	1,206	1,062

TABLE XVIII
PERCENTAGES FOR PERFECT ATTENDANCE AND EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Cases	Perfect Attendance	Excessive Absence
East	3.4	3.8
North	2.1	1.9
West	4.1	3.2
Total	9.6	8.9

TABLE XIX
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Chronological Age	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
East	19	24	29	45	63	69	56	34	29	13	21	16	20
North	9	20	19	25	37	29	34	28	15	21	10	17	12
West	23	22	26	37	64	71	66	53	39	22	21	27	21
Total	51	66	74	107	164	169	156	115	83	56	52	60	53

TABLE XX
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Chronological Age	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
East	57	89	44	31	20	30	47	31	23	21	27	20	17
North	19	32	23	21	25	25	24	30	8	9	7	8	6
West	31	43	32	39	21	36	29	38	41	19	14	17	8
Total	107	164	99	91	66	91	100	99	72	49	48	45	31

TABLE XXI
GRADE-PLACEMENT OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Grade- placement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
East	24	27	35	41	69	71	43	37	29	18	23	21
North	13	21	20	36	39	27	31	26	17	19	15	12
West	31	29	37	45	67	74	59	44	39	19	27	21
Total	68	77	92	122	175	172	133	107	85	56	65	54

TABLE XXII

GRADE-PLACEMENT OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Grade- placement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
East	79	74	41	30	21	40	38	30	22	36	22	24
North	25	30	20	20	24	26	24	28	10	17	7	6
West	45	51	32	34	30	11	29	42	38	20	17	10
Total	149	155	93	84	75	77	91	100	40	73	46	39

TABLE XXIII
SCHOLASTIC RATING OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Scholastic Rating	A	B	C	D	F
East	155	185	87	11	0
North	109	142	15	4	0
West	233	128	118	13	0
Total	497	455	220	28	0

TABLE XXIV
SCHOLASTIC RATING OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Scholastic Rating	A	B	C	D	F
East	41	135	162	100	19
North	22	53	104	52	6
West	40	102	122	93	11
Total	103	290	388	245	36

TABLE XXV
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Church Membership	Yes	No
East	427	11
North	268	8
West	483	9
Total	1,178	28

TABLE XXVI
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Church Membership	Yes	No
East	425	32
North	185	52
West	310	58
Total	920	142

TABLE XXVII

CLUB MEMBERSHIP OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Club Membership	Yes	No
East	415	23
North	259	17
West	466	26
Total	1,140	66

TABLE XXVIII
CLUB MEMBERSHIP OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Club Membership	Yes	No
East	172	285
North	57	180
West	121	247
Total	350	712

TABLE XXIX
HEALTH RATING OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Health Rating	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
East	231	207	0	0
North	89	185	2	0
West	235	256	1	0
Total	555	648	3	0

TABLE XXX
HEALTH RATING OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Health Rating	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
East	42	328	150	37
North	6	95	111	25
West	10	157	154	47
Total	58	480	415	109

TABLE XXXI

ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE HOME OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Economic Status of the Home	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Low
East	68	360	8	2
North	10	259	5	2
West	123	353	15	1
Total	201	972	28	5

TABLE XXXII

ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE HOME OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Economic Status of the Home	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Low
East	33	292	96	36
North	6	108	80	43
West	8	210	107	43
Total	47	614	279	122

TABLE XXXIII

MARITAL STATUS OF THE PARENTS OF THE PUPILS WITH PERFECT
ATTENDANCE

Marital Status of Parents	Unbroken	Broken
East	433	5
North	273	3
West	485	7
Total	1,191	15

TABLE XXXIV

MARITAL STATUS OF THE PARENTS OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE
ABSENCE

Marital Status of Parents	Unbroken	Broken
East	408	49
North	201	36
West	320	48
Total	929	133

TABLE XXXV
EDUCATION OF PARENTS OF PUPILS WITH PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Education of Parents	Primary		Elementary		Junior High		Senior High		College	
	M*	F*	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
East	17	12	57	72	131	139	189	147	44	68
North	9	17	39	43	113	127	98	83	17	6
West	13	11	93	127	161	177	189	152	36	25
Total	39	40	189	242	405	443	476	382	97	99

* M - Mother

* F - Father

TABLE XXXVI

EDUCATION OF PARENTS OF PUPILS WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Education of Parents	Primary		Elementary		Junior High		Senior High		College	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
East	24	14	60	83	145	147	177	155	51	58
North	16	11	27	34	97	88	89	96	8	8
West	10	12	85	71	138	137	122	133	13	15
Total	50	37	172	188	380	372	388	384	72	81

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

The survey of school attendance in the white schools of Mecklenburg County, 1954-1955, disclosed the degree to which the educational facilities of the schools of this administrative unit are being used by the children of school age.

Definite policies and prodedures for approaching the attendance issues have been developed in Mecklenburg County for the purpose of improving the education of the child. Co-operative efforts on the part of school personnel have enlarged the effectiveness of the school attendance service. Specific policies and prodedures have contributed to the organization of the attendance program. The organization for the administration of attendance is centered in the offices of the Superintendent of Mecklenburg County Schools with the work of the visiting teacher. This official's work is guided by the reports and requests from the principals and teachers. The county doctor, county dentist, and county nurses have been available at all times during the year. Files have been maintained for the preservation of attendance data. These files are stored in the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

The status of attendance in the Mecklenburg County Schools indicates that the children of school age have been taking advantage of the educational facilities offered for their use. The enrollment of 14,202 was an all time high. The percentage of attendance was high. The percentage was approximately ninety-five per cent. Absences were slightly more than five per cent. Losses were less than nine per cent of the total enrollment.

Many causes existed which prevented children from attending school. The chief causes were found to be personal illness and work at home. Other causes were trips, visits, and business and medical appointments, not authorized by the schools. Truancy was not an evident cause. It is the opinion of this writer that cases which would normally be classified as truant have been reported as absence due to causes which would receive legal excuse.

The investigation of specific cases of perfect attendance and excessive absence revealed the distribution of major factors which might aid in the derivation of predominant causes or specific difficulties involving non-attendance. The personal data sheets revealed data for possible comparison of factors pertaining to age, grade-placement, scholastic rating, church and club membership, health, economic status of the home, marital status of the parents, and the

education of the parents. These data were presented for the reader to make comparisons and draw possible conclusions.

An analysis of attendance is vital to the evaluation of the school attendance service. The purpose of this study was to compile pertinent data which would enable the local administrative unit to discover the relative importance of factors causing absence from school. This study has not shown conclusive evidence that any specific factors cause absence. The study has been an initial attempt to discover factors which may influence attendance or non-attendance and to discover possible places in which the school attendance service may be improved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Heck, Arch O., Administration of Pupil Personnel. New York: Ginn and Company, 1929. 479 pp.

B. BOOKS: PARTS OF SERIES

Reavis, G. H., "Factors Controlling Attendance in Rural Schools", Contributions to Education, No. 108. New York: Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1920. 69 pp.

C. PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Heck, Arch O., "School Attendance", Review of Educational Research, 3: 186-93, 246-49, 1933; 6: 157-63, 243-44, 1936; 9: 161-68, 227-29, 1939.

Henderson, Louise, "A Study of Absences on Account of Sickness Among High School Girls", School and Society, 36: 797-800, December 17, 1932.

Kirkpatrick, M. E., and Lodge, Townsend, "Some Factors in Truancy", Mental Hygiene, 19: 610-19, October, 1935.

Platt, A. W., "Intrinsic Causes for Public School Absences", School and Society, 57: 307-08, March, 1943.

Punke, Harold H., "Sociological Factors in Absence from School", Journal of Educational Research, 32: 282-90, December, 1938.

D. ENCYCLOPEDIA ARTICLES

Monroe, Paul, editor, "Attendance", A Cyclopedia of Education, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911, I, pp. 284-295.

Monroe, W. S., editor, "School Attendance", Encyclopedia of Educational Research, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941, p. 918.

E. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Long, Robert P., "Causative Factors of Absence in the Newell School", Unpublished Master's thesis, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, 1949.

APPENDIX

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Student's Name and Birthdate _____

School _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____

Average Grade _____ Club Membership _____

Health (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor) _____

No. days absent as of 5/13/55 _____

Parents Names _____ Church Member? _____

Father's Education - Grade completed _____

Mother's Education - Grade completed _____

Broken Home? _____ State Conditions _____

Present Address _____

Father's Occupation _____ Mother's Occupation _____

Is child well adjusted? ____ Or do you consider him a
discipline problem? ____ Has teacher visited home this
year? ____.

Economic status of the home: Ab. Ave. ____ Ave. ____ Below Ave. ____
Low ____.

Remarks: Comment briefly regarding reasons for absences.
Any unusual conditions in home. Any physical
handicaps of child, etc.
