

THE DROP-OUT PROBLEM IN HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL  
SPRUCE PINE, NORTH CAROLINA

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Master of Arts

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by  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the serious problems facing the American public high school administrator and teacher is that of holding the high school student in school for the full four-year period of time required for graduation. On the basis of many worthwhile studies, a variety of suggestions and recommendations have been made for the lessening or solution of this problem, but it still continues as one of the sore spots in the American educational system. There is such a degree of diversity among the many public high schools in this country that most studies and recommendations have had only a local effective application. What may be effective corrective measures for one school are not necessarily effective in another school. The problem appears to differ in degree of intensity and cause from area to area and from school to school. There has been much conjecture and some study as to why one school is able to hold a large percentage of its students for the full period of time required for graduation, while a nearby school may be losing large numbers of its students. There seems to be a need for additional research in this area.

In order to understand the full significance of this problem as it affects Harris High School, some of the details

relative to the physical make-up, size, administration, and environmental background of the school must be given.

The school serves the people of a large district, comprising within its limits the three townships of Grassy Creek Number One, Grassy Creek Number Two, and Glenn. This area is located in the southernmost one-third of Mitchell County and contains a population of approximately 7,500 people. Harris High School is the only high school in this district, and it serves the rural population of the area as well as the urban population of the town of Spruce Pine, within whose corporate limits it is located. As a high school separate from the elementary school, it has had an existence of only five years. Prior to 1951, the high school and its sole elementary feeder school, Harris Elementary School, were one, a union school located on the present site of the elementary school. Over a period of thirty-six years, this union school had slowly developed from a small village school, gradually absorbing by a process of consolidation the ten outlying elementary schools on its district periphery. This process of consolidation was certainly not one of a larger school's swallowing up its smaller neighbors, but rather it was done at the insistence of the patrons of the smaller schools, who desired for their children the enlarged educational opportunities thought to be found in the larger school. By 1951, the process of consolidation,

coupled with the natural population increase, had so overcrowded the existing school facilities that a new building became an imperative necessity. Since the condition of congestion extended to the site as well as to the existing buildings, a new site, one and one-half miles distant from the old site, was obtained; and upon this site was erected a new school plant into which the high school portion of the school was moved in January, 1952. The advantages of this separate site, apart and away from the elementary school, are generally felt to have been manifold. The high school had at the beginning of the 1955-56 school term an enrollment of 365 students, taught by a staff of eleven teachers and one principal. While the high school is administratively separate and independent from its elementary feeder school, there are still many areas in which mutual cooperation and helpfulness are necessary. Both schools are served by a common transportation fleet of ten school buses, which transport almost one thousand students to and from the two schools daily. Of the two schools, the high school is greatly overshadowed in size by its elementary feeder school, which during the school term of 1955-56 had a student enrollment of 1,200 students, served by a staff of thirty-seven teachers and a principal. It is generally felt that there is too much disparity between the sizes of the high school and its elementary component, and that too

many of the elementary students drop out of school upon reaching high school.

It is generally thought that the industrial background of Spruce Pine and its environs has had an effect on the drop-out problem in the school. Spruce Pine is commonly referred to as the "Mineral City," and the district in which it is located is known as one of the most "mineralized" districts in the United States. It should be borne in mind, however, that while a great many different minerals are found in the district, few of them are found in more than specimen quantities. Three minerals, feldspar, kaolin, and mica, form the basis for the rather extensive mining and mineral processing industry that has grown up in and around Spruce Pine. With the discovery of the froth-flotation feldspar recovery process that enables the miner and mineral processor to recover feldspar from very low grade ores, this industry has expanded as never before, and large numbers of men are employed both in the mining and processing of feldspar. In recent years the mica industry has had quite a boost from the United States government policy of stockpiling strategic minerals, mica having been classed as such a mineral. Over sixty-five per cent of all the governmental mica purchases are made in the Spruce Pine area. The sheeting and trimming of this mineral as well as its mining have afforded employment to many people, particularly female workers. The

kaolin industry is a stable business that has employed a number of people for many years.

In addition to the mines and the mineral processing plants, the chief sources of employment have been the hosiery mills. At the present there are five hosiery mills in Spruce Pine employing 278 people, a large majority of whom are women.

In many ways the district's industrial complex has affected the drop-out problem in the school. Since the mineral industry so overshadows all other industries, the district very nearly approaches the unenviable position of being an area with a single industry. As a result, there is a lack of economic stability in the area. The mining and mineral processing industries seem especially sensitive to a variety of outside economic and governmental forces. Normally the consumers of sheet mica have as their sources of supply areas outside the United States; India, Bolivia, and Madagascar being the chief suppliers. During times of stress or national emergency, however, when the foreign sources of supply are, or are likely to be, cut off, there is a rejuvenation of the mica industry in the Spruce Pine area. Today there is a "boom" in the industry, as there was during World War I and World War II. Except at times when governmental subsidies are given, or when outside sources of supply are cut off, sheet mica mining and

processing are not very profitable in the area. The situations in regard to feldspar and kaolin are somewhat analogous on a lesser scale. Other areas of the world have extensive deposits of both minerals, and the economic health of the industries is dependent to an extent upon the degree of tariff protection offered by the federal government. During times of stress and depression, which may occur in this area when other areas of the country are relatively unaffected, there is considerable migration from the district to sections of the country where the economic outlook is more favorable. Such migration and such economic stress naturally affect the school. Most of the managerial and engineering skills required for the development and management of the mining and mineral processing plants have not been indigenous to the area, but have been furnished by people possessing these skills coming from other sections of the country. These people ordinarily are college-bred, and have quite naturally insisted that the high school curriculum offered their children be college preparatory. They have also been sticklers for high scholastic standards in the school, and have, in most instances, wielded a degree of influence out of proportion to their number.

For the past sixteen years the investigator, having been intimately connected with the schools of Spruce Pine, has become increasingly aware of the disparity between the

number of students who enter Harris High School in the ninth grade and the number who continue their studies until graduation has been achieved. No systematic investigation or research has ever been undertaken in this particular high school to try to establish the reason for, or the extent of, this problem.

## I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to discover the extent of student drop-outs from each high school grade level of the last nine graduating classes of Harris High School; (2) to show at which grade levels in the four years of high school work, and during which of the past nine years, the problem has been most acute; (3) by means of a teacher, student, and parent questionnaire and interview study of student drop-outs during the current school year of 1955-56, to indicate reasons for the extent of the problem in Harris High School; and (4) to offer suggestions and recommendations for a lessening of the severity of the problem.

Importance of the study. Buttressed by law and public opinion, it is generally understood and conceded that it is the mission or function of the American public high school to offer educational opportunity to all the youth of the land

who are physically and mentally able to attend the school, who are able to meet certain entrance requirements, and who are willing to conform to the regulations and requirements of the school. It is also generally understood and conceded that the educational training offered by the public high school is valuable, and that that portion of the youth who fails to avail itself of this training thereby renders itself a disservice. It might also be said that in the degree that the school fails to enlist or hold its students, that it is to that extent failing in the performance of the duty for which it was established, and that the dropping of large numbers of students from the rolls of the school is indicative that the school is not meeting the educational needs of its patrons.

The person who drops from the high school or who otherwise fails to gain a high school education will have penalized himself in many ways. Because of the pyramidal structure of the American educational system and the fact that most colleges require a high school education as a condition of admission, he will have, in most instances, rendered himself in a position unfit for further formal educational training. His future job opportunity will be limited to the extent that industry requires a high school education of its employees. The cultural and social values of high school attendance, the training in the principles of democratic living,



while difficult to assess, are generally considered to be some of the most important values that result from high school attendance. Naturally the student who drops from the school is denied all the educational opportunities that are thus offered, and not only the drop-out, but society as a whole, suffers as a result.

The public schools of North Carolina are highly dependent for their well being upon the good will and support of the parents and children in the school communities. It is hardly to be expected that the student who drops from school is now, or will be in later years, as friendly in his attitude toward the school as is the student who realizes the value of the instruction that is being offered to the extent that his study is continued until graduation has been achieved. The school that fails to hold large numbers of its students cannot realistically expect to command the maximal public support that is needed to care for the needs of an expanding school system. There are times when the supportive feelings of the citizen are tempered with the realization that support means increased taxation. It should perhaps be borne in mind that people who drop from school are not thereby denied either the privilege of the ballot or the right of the expression of opinion.

The average daily attendance of the schools of North Carolina provides the basis for teacher allotment. For any

current year, this teacher allotment in the high school is based on the average daily student attendance for the previous year. On this basis, four high school teachers are allotted for the first eighty students in attendance the previous year, and one additional teacher for each group of thirty students in excess of the original eighty. It is thus seen that a loss of students means a corresponding loss of teachers at the rate of thirty students for each teacher. Inasmuch as student loss carries a corresponding degree of teacher loss, it is readily seen that a heavy rate of student drop-out from a school not only deprives the drop-outs of further educational opportunity, but will penalize at the same time the students who remain in school, to the extent that the curricular offering is affected by the number of teachers who are working in the school. It is only in schools with large teaching staffs that much in the way of special education can be offered. This method of teacher allotment carries serious implications for the school. The very courses that might hold the prospective student drop-out in school cannot be offered with the limited teaching staff obtained upon the basis of student attendance for the previous year. Almost invariably the student enrollment in a school with a heavy rate of drop-out is very heavy at the beginning of the year, and the teachers struggle along, hoping that when the enrollment survey is made at the end of

the first ten days of the term, relief will be obtained in the form of additional teachers. At the end of the first ten days of each school term, a survey of student enrollment is made to determine whether additional teachers are needed or justified. Oftentimes in such surveys the enrollment almost, but not quite, measures up to the point that will entitle a school to an additional teacher. In such an event, it is easy to see why the school with a long history of student drop-outs would not be granted the additional teacher.

The changing demands of the American labor market are pointed up by a study of Table I.

TABLE I  
CHANGING ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MARKET\*

	Per cent of total labor market in each category	
	1946	1956
Common labor	40	10
Skilled, semi-skilled	35	60
Professional	5	15
Miscellaneous, clerical	20	15

\*Davis M. Nichols, U. S. Employment Service, Spruce Pine, North Carolina, in a personal interview, January, 1956. Permission to quote secured.

Most people will readily admit that modern industry demands more and more in the way of educational preparation of its employees, and that the educational level attained by the father is not sufficient to meet the needs of the son. When it is considered that the only category that is readily open to the non-graduate of the high school is that of common labor, the sorry plight of the student drop-out becomes apparent.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Student drop-out. This term was interpreted as meaning any student who for any reason had severed his connection with the school at any time during the period of high school attendance before having reached the point of graduation. The student who was not promoted was not shown as a drop-out. The student who transferred from the school to some other high school, in the portion of the thesis devoted to the nine year study, however, was shown as a drop-out. A study of the data in this area shows that the transfers were balanced by the new students who were obtained from other high schools.

Curriculum. The word curriculum as used in this study was interpreted to mean the actual course work offered the student rather than to denote, in the broad meaning of

the word, the total of school directed activity.

Feeder school. The term feeder school, as used in this study, was interpreted to mean the elementary school from which the high school drew its students for its beginning high school class. In the case of Harris High School, the one and only feeder school was Harris Elementary School.

Special education. The term special education, as used in this study, was understood to mean an addition to the regular curricular offering of the school, offered for the express purpose of meeting the needs of a special group of students whose needs are not adequately met by the regular curricular offerings. Such courses might, or might not, give credit toward graduation, might be offered to meet the needs of the advanced student who wants special training in some special field of endeavor, or might be offered to meet the needs of the scholastically retarded student who cannot successfully carry the regular high school course work.

Tool subjects. This term was used to denote those school subjects in which a high degree of proficiency is a prerequisite to a successful pursuance of the subjects that follow on a more advanced level in the school. In this study such subjects as reading, writing, spelling, the four fundamental processes in arithmetic, etc., are considered as being

tool subjects. It is obvious that the student who cannot read will be unable to successfully pursue a study of American history, and that the student who has failed to master the four arithmetical processes would be handicapped in the high school mathematics studies.

Grading system. The grading system employed in Harris High School is a letter system as follows: A, equivalent to a numerical grade of 90 to 100; B, equivalent to a numerical grade of 80 to 89; C, equivalent to 70 to 79; D, below 70. The letter grade of D is a failing grade.

### III. PROCEDURES AND SOURCES OF DATA

The data. The data used in this study were obtained from the following sources: (1) a careful review was made of all literature pertinent to this subject written during the past ten years; (2) the high school principal's final report for each of the school terms 1944-45 to 1954-55, inclusive, furnished valuable data relative to drop-outs for a nine year period; (3) the cumulative record for each of the drop-outs in the current year, 1955-56, gave valuable data relative to attendance and scholarship; (4) a teacher questionnaire for each of the drop-outs in the current year, 1955-56, was prepared by each high school teacher having such students in any class; and (5) a personal interview

with the parent of each of the current drop-outs, usually with the drop-out present, was undertaken and carried out during the course of the school year of 1955-56. In addition, interviews were held with a number of students who had dropped out during some of the former years covered by this study.

Procedures used in collecting data. In order to establish the extent of the problem of student drop-outs in Harris High School, a study was made of the principal's final report for each of the school years 1944-45 to 1954-55, inclusive. From each of the reports, two facts were obtained for each of the high school grade levels: the total enrollment for the year, and the total number of drop-outs or losses. When these facts were tabulated in the form of a table, a picture of the drop-out problem for the nine year period was obtained. Tables III, IV, and V, found in Chapter III, show the results of this study and tabulation. The investigator feels that a study of this type possesses certain advantages over a study that merely follows the progress of some single class as it progresses from the beginning of high school to graduation. For one thing, this study extended over a longer period of time and followed not one but nine classes. It also gave a picture of the extent of student drop-outs from all high school classes

during any given year of the past nine. Since the nation had passed through various phases of economic fluctuation and stress, as well as a number of national crises and emergencies during the nine year period, this study afforded in a minor degree a glimpse of the effects of such outside environmental conditions on a high school. Inasmuch as school administrative changes occurred during the nine year period, such a study might be used to point up the effect that different educational philosophies held by different administrators might have on the student drop-out problem. Since this study is not concerned with educational philosophy, however, this phase of the problem was not explored.

The questionnaires filled out by the high school teachers gave insight into the reasons for the current year drop-outs, and to a degree indicated why students dropped out for the whole nine year period. Obviously, it was impossible to make a detailed study of each of the drop-outs for the whole nine year period, hence the rather detailed study of the current year's crop of drop-outs. At the end of each six-weeks period, the high school teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaires for each drop-out they had had in any of their classes for that period. The teachers cooperated most loyally in this work. The questionnaires were collected and the results tabulated at the end of each period. The questionnaire is reproduced



in the appendix, and an analysis of the findings is found in Chapter III.

As soon as the questionnaires were obtained from the teachers and the results tabulated, the cumulative records of the drop-outs were withdrawn from the school files, and a careful study was made of each record. Information dealing with the student's habits of attendance, the marks made in previous years, and certain details of his family and environmental background, was obtained from these records and recorded on the form as reproduced in the appendix.

The study of each drop-out was completed by a personal visit to the home, and a discussion of the problem with the student and his parent. Careful notes were made of these meetings, and immediately afterward a summary of the interview was written. Samples of such interviews are given in Chapter III.

In making a review of the literature that has been written on this subject, four broad purposes were kept in mind: (1) to discover whether or not the person who dropped out of school possessed traits, characteristics, and other discernible differences that would set him apart from the student who continued in school; (2) to locate and point out signs of impending student drop-outs, so that corrective measures might be applied early in the student's school career; (3) to discover the reasons for student drop-out;

and (4) to find as many ways as possible in which a school might increase its student holding power. Chapter II gives a review of the literature and a summary of the findings. Chapter III gives an analysis of the data collected in the study of Harris High School itself. Chapter IV gives a list of suggested ways by which the holding power of the school might be increased.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written in regard to the extent and the gravity of the high school drop-out problem. In reviewing the mass of literature, four broad purposes were kept in mind: (1) to discover if the person who dropped out of school possessed traits, characteristics and other discernible differences that would set him apart from the student who continued in school; (2) to locate and point out signs of impending student drop-outs, so that corrective measures might be applied early in the student's career; (3) to discover the reasons for student drop-outs; and (4) to find as many ways as possible in which the high school might increase its student holding power.

#### I. LITERATURE ON PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND EMOTIONAL QUALITIES OF SCHOOL DROP-OUTS

##### Mental and emotional characteristics of drop-outs.

Brown, in conducting his survey of high school student drop-outs, discovered that there was no significant difference between the intelligence levels of those who dropped from school and those who remained until graduation. He stated that his survey revealed that more than 61 per cent of the students in question had I. Q.'s of more than 100, and that

the intelligence quotient of those who remained in high school was no higher.<sup>1</sup>

Stern brought out even more emphatically the fact that there is little difference between the intelligence level of the general school population and those who become school drop-outs. She said in part:

Are the children who don't get enough out of school to stay there too stupid to learn? Not according to the evidence. The intelligence quotient of one-fifth of the drop-outs indicated college-level ability. And more than two out of five would have had no difficulty with the average high school program. The rest, although below average in intelligence, were still teachable.<sup>2</sup>

Dillion made a very extensive study of the drop-out problem in five different locations in the mid-west. In order to make his study as all-embracing as possible, he selected the small town of Jackson County, Michigan; the industrial centers of Lansing, Michigan; Cincinnati and Cleveland, Ohio; and Indianapolis, Indiana, as centers for his survey. From schools in these places he selected 1,380 cases of students who had dropped from school and made an intensive check of these cases. In his findings he reported that there was no significant deviation between the intelligence levels of the drop-outs and the students

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<sup>1</sup>Howard W. Brown, "Why They Leave School," The Education Digest, 34:40-41, February, 1950.

<sup>2</sup>Edith M. Stern, "Why Teen Agers Quit School," Woman's Home Companion, 76:34-35, October, 1945.

who remained in school. He reported that two out of every five drop-outs had I. Q.'s of ninety-five or above, and of the remaining 60 per cent, only 35 per cent had I. Q.'s of below eighty-five.<sup>3</sup>

Dillion tabulated the results obtained from a poll of teacher opinion regarding the personal characteristics and habits of the 1,100 school drop-outs on whom his study was based. His tabulation is reproduced in Table II.

TABLE II  
JUDGMENT OF TEACHERS ON CHARACTERISTICS OF  
SCHOOL LEAVERS

Characteristic appraised	Teacher	Teacher
	per cent Yes	per cent No
Seemed unhappy or worried	30	70
Easily discouraged	49	51
Lacked initiative	72	28
Lacked self-confidence	56	44
Interested in school	30	70
Caused trouble	24	76
Secretive or seclusive	37	63
Participated in class	50	50
Got along well with teachers and others	70	30
Too aggressive	17	83
Sullen and resentful	20	80
Attendance problem	70	30
Lacked skill in tool subjects	60	40
Immature	30	70
Irresponsible	66	34
Poor study habits	58	42

This tabulation shows that in seven of the sixteen areas

<sup>3</sup>Harrold J. Dillion, Early School Leavers, A Major Educational Problem, Publication No. 401 (New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1949), p. 34.

checked the school drop-out was judged to be deficient by his teachers. Since no comparable check list of the characteristics of the students who remained in school was provided, however, there was no way of knowing whether the areas of deficiency were characteristic of the drop-outs alone. The drop-out, according to Dillion, lacked self-confidence and initiative; he had poor study habits and was irresponsible; he was an attendance problem and lacked skill in the tool subjects; and finally, he had little interest in school subjects. The seven areas of deficiency were all closely related, and the sum of all the items, or any one of the items alone, could have been highly contributory to the student's dropping from school. The nine remaining items on the list, the ones on which the drop-out was given a plus quantity rating, indicated that the drop-out was essentially a pretty good citizen. He was happy and not easily discouraged; he caused no trouble in the school, getting along well with his teachers and his classmates; and he possessed few of the attributes commonly associated with the problem child.<sup>4</sup>

Signs of impending drop-outs. It was generally recognized by the authorities that one of the worst features of the whole drop-out problem was the paucity of warning

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

signals given by the prospective drop-out before he severed his relations with the school. In many instances, without any previous warning, the student merely failed to appear at school one day, and, upon inquiry, the teacher learned that another student had dropped from school. Once such a step had been taken, the teacher usually experienced great difficulty in persuading the drop-out to reconsider his decision and re-enter school. Tonsor, however, stated that in the Grover Cleveland High School in Brooklyn he was able to predict with a high degree of accuracy which of the incoming high school class would be most likely to drop out. He obtained the data for his predictions from the elementary school records of his incoming students. Those students who had experienced a notable drop in achievement, usually beginning in the fourth grade, in such basic subjects as spelling, composition, reading, and arithmetic, were judged to be highly susceptible to drop-out tendencies. A record of increasing absences, a personality deficiency record, frequent transfers from school to school, lack of vocational interest, little participation in extracurricular activities, and lack of family ties were all cited as predisposing tendencies toward dropping from school.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Charles A. Tonsor, "Reducing the Drop of the Crop, Grover Cleveland High School, Brooklyn, New York," Clearing House, 28:365-66, February, 1954.

## II. LITERATURE ON WHY STUDENTS DROP OUT OF SCHOOL

Causes of student drop-outs. Much has been written concerning the economic reasons students have for leaving school. It seems that oftentimes the economic reason was not as much any real financial need that the student had as it was a desire of the student to have spending money in his pocket. Tonsor expressed this viewpoint very well with his statement:

The holding power of a school is to some degree what the teacher makes it, but to a greater degree what the community makes it. If the community is more interested in the immediate financial return from its offspring than in a long-term educational program, the law being what it is, the school cannot keep them on the reservation. . . . In our community we have many for whom the dollar means more than the future. Students quit to go to work although both [italics in original] parents are working. They reason that driving a truck means more rapid advancement and higher pay than many a job requiring much more education. That is often hard to deny.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the writers were by no means in agreement with Tonsor, however, but rather thought that economics played a minor role in influencing students to drop from school. Zimand found that the majority of high school students dropped from school, not from the necessity of helping support themselves or the family, but simply because they wished to quit school.<sup>7</sup> Stern, writing in the same

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>7</sup>Gertrude Folks Zimand, "Don't Let Them Quit School," Parents Magazine, 22:14, August, 1947.



vein, stated: "Only one-fifth of the students who dropped out of school gave money problems as a reason for quitting."<sup>8</sup> Elledge found that "parents of the drop-out were generally in the low income group," and reasoned that "the lure of money" played a part in influencing students to drop from school.<sup>9</sup>

Granting that economic reasons played a part in influencing students to drop from school, most authorities expressed the belief that most drop-outs had far more potent reasons for dropping. One of the most frequently mentioned reasons for dropping was a lack of interest on the part of the drop-out in what the school had to offer. Armstrong, elaborating upon this theme, stated:

We must admit that a great deal of what we have to offer boys and girls has no bearing on what they will be required to do as workers in business and industry. In most of our high schools today only a book education is available. That is not the best method of learning for all pupils, and some find it so unsatisfactory that they stop school. Most of our education theory has to do with learning by doing, but, with a few notable exceptions, most of our learning is acquired from a text-book with the question and answer routine.<sup>10</sup>

On the same subject Jones related that:

One of the crucial problems relating to high school drop-outs continues to be that of developing varied

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<sup>8</sup>Stern, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>9</sup>Charles Cowles Elledge, "Eliminations from the Class of 1950 in the Marion High School" (unpublished Master's thesis, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, 1950), p. 33.

<sup>10</sup>David T. Armstrong, "Pupils' Objections to Schools," The Nations Schools, 35:5, March, 1945.

curricular offerings to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all youth so that the number who complete high school will approach 100 per cent of those who enter. Even though all grant that economic necessity and certain other factors are operative in causing students to leave high school before graduation, we cannot escape the conclusion that the big majority of those who leave school do so because they do not find activities which sufficiently challenge them, because the learning activities are not suited to their abilities, and because life inside the school does not seem as real as it does outside the school.<sup>11</sup>

Holbeck thought that the heart of the trouble lay in the high school curriculum. He deplored the fact that the curriculum of the high school was designed "primarily for college preparation," and expressed the opinion that many more high school students would be held in school if curricular changes were made to meet the interests, needs, and abilities of the students.<sup>12</sup>

Elledge, in common with several others, cited the fact that most drop-outs occurred after the student had reached the age sixteen. He attributed the heavy incidence of drop-outs at this age to the fact that the compulsory attendance law did not compel students to attend beyond their sixteenth birthdays.<sup>13</sup>

Discouragement, springing from one source or another

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<sup>11</sup>Galen Jones, "High School Attendance," School Life, 29:23, October, 1946.

<sup>12</sup>Elmer S. Holbeck, "Some Ways to Prevent Drop-Outs," The Nations Schools, 45:36, May, 1950.

<sup>13</sup>Elledge, op. cit., p. 31.

was listed as a potent factor in causing high school students to drop from school. Sometimes the discouragement stemmed from a feeling of inadequacy on the part of the incoming high school student, a feeling that elementary preparation had been inadequate to a successful carrying on of high school work. Again, especially in the case of the graduate of the rural elementary school who transfers to the urban high school for his high school work, difficulty was experienced by the incoming student in identifying himself with the new student groups that were met and in developing a feeling of "belonging." Taylor expressed this feeling of difficulty and frustration very poignantly in the following:

Alice moved from a county town to a large city. She was ready for tenth grade, but the new school was a strange world to her. The school customs were different; the new girls laughed at things Alice didn't think funny at all; they talked about school activities Alice had never heard of. She might have caught on to these things in time if she had found her class work easier. But unfortunately, Alice's old school had not prepared her for tenth grade in the new one. Subjects like biology and world history were beyond her. She wasn't ignorant--in her old world. She could milk cows and churn butter. She knew bird songs and wild flowers--but none of that helped her read the new textbooks. Rather than go back a grade or two to catch up on her schooling and learn to adjust to her new world, Alice preferred to drop out of school.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Florence Taylor, Why Stay in School? Life Adjustment Booklet (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1948), p. 10.

### III. LITERATURE ON HOW THE SCHOOL MAY INCREASE ITS STUDENT HOLDING POWER

More and more people are deploring the fact that the average high school curricular offering is rather barren, and are attributing to this meagerness of offering much of the school's lack of holding power. The schools have been accused of building up artificial situations within the classrooms that have largely divorced classroom work from real life. Goodman, in expressing this viewpoint, said in part:

The more realistic the situation becomes the more any person will learn. A learning situation divorced from real life and artificially built up to stimulate some imaginary situation which the pupil may or may not encounter in later life can never carry the implications for learning that are needed to really interest the pupil.<sup>15</sup>

Expressing somewhat the same ideas, Potter wrote:

The school cannot live independently of the community, and that school which surrounds itself with a high wall or moat thereby shutting out community contacts cannot expect to hold its students after they have passed the age of compulsory attendance. School experience, to be real, must be life like.<sup>16</sup>

Considerable success has been experienced by many schools in increasing their holding power over the students.

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<sup>15</sup>Samuel M. Goodman, Implications of Armed Services Educational Program (Washington: American Council on Education, 1947), p. 90.

<sup>16</sup>Gladys L. Potter, Exploring Your Community (Washington: The Association of Childhood Education, 1940), p. 28.

In the local high school in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, the student holding power was increased from 71 per cent in 1951 to 93 per cent in 1952 by putting into practice the following changes:

(1) The adoption of a philosophy that the school has the obligation to try to keep every single youth in school through graduation or through age 18; (2) modification of curriculum and grouping of classes in the required courses to fit more closely the needs, abilities, and interests of slow learners; (3) the addition of several elective courses in business education, industrial arts, and home-making of practical value to these potential nongraduates; and (4) increased guidance service.<sup>17</sup>

The idea that the school itself must make some change or adjustment to accommodate the students that it expects to hold was implicit in most of the literature. Cook scored the uncompromising and rigid adherence of high school teachers to a set of scholastic standards for all students regardless of ability when he stated: "The subject with the highest percentage of failure, English, is the one subject required in each semester for all students; and the subject with the second highest rate of failures, industrial arts, is the supposed haven of the boy who has shown little academic ability."<sup>18</sup> His suggestion as to how the school might

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<sup>17</sup>George A. McGee, "We Increased Our Holding Power with Our Secondary School Students," National Education Association Journal, 482:42, November, 1953.

<sup>18</sup>Edward S. Cook, Jr., "How IQ Figures in the School Drop-Out Problem," School Executive, 74:56, September, 1954.

increase its holding power is worthy of note:

First we can employ in high school classes the techniques, now so widely accepted in the elementary school, which encourage us to have in any one class individuals working on many different levels. This will allow all students, regardless of their placement on the intelligence distribution, to engage in activity which holds out not only challenge but also promise of eventual success.<sup>19</sup>

Adherence to too rigid standards was also scored by Ackerland as follows:

The high school must be extremely cautious about the unholy practice of "flunking" students out of school. It must also re-examine its concept of standards as applied to academic achievement. In a sense "flunking" a student is merely "passing the buck" to that student. When students are not in school, certainly the school can do nothing for them; but if they are in school surely something can be accomplished to help them prepare for their roles as adult citizens.<sup>20</sup>

The inclusion of a more varied and extensive student activity program was recommended as one way to hold students in school. Thomas stated that "not one person who dropped before completing the third year had engaged in even one activity, and 89 per cent of those who finished had."<sup>21</sup> He further elaborated:

In every method of comparison or grouping used, activities were found to be the factor most related to whether or not the student finished high school, and by far the

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>20</sup>George C. Ackerland, "A High School Diploma for Whom?" School Executive, 73:44, November, 1953.

<sup>21</sup>Robert Jay Thomas, "An Empirical Study of High School Drop-Outs in Regard to Ten Possibly Related Factors," Journal of Educational Sociology, 28:17, September, 1954.

most striking difference between those who finished and those who dropped out.<sup>22</sup>

There has been some writing as to how financial worries may be relieved for high school students. The seriousness of this problem for the high school student is well expressed by the following:

At today's prices, clothes, carfare, lunch money, fees for laboratory, locker, and gym, books and supplies, and school activities cost a ninth grade student an average of \$80. The cost is about \$140 in the twelfth grade. When boys and girls can't subscribe to the school paper or when they have to "wait until next week" to buy a notebook they need now, they are often more embarrassed than their teachers ever know. It is even more embarrassing when they can't buy a ticket to a school dance, or to the weekly basketball game. Some students have found it easier to quit than to be left out of things because they couldn't afford them.<sup>23</sup>

Elledge expressed the belief that such financial insecurity might be alleviated by the enactment of special school tax laws that would take care of all the school expenses of the students, and by persuading the industrial concerns who hired school drop-outs to refrain from hiring those who were not high school graduates.<sup>24</sup>

Evidence showed that the influence of others was a potent force toward keeping students from dropping out of

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>23</sup>Taylor, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

<sup>24</sup>Elledge, op. cit., p. 34.

school. Patterson, in making a survey of the forces that had influenced two hundred seniors to remain in school until graduation, found that eighty-five had been seriously influenced to stay in school by both parents; thirty-one had been influenced by mothers alone; and only ten admitted that teachers had exerted any influence in keeping them from dropping. It was interesting to note that in this survey the seniors mentioned mothers four times more frequently than fathers as having had an influence in keeping them in school.<sup>25</sup>

In this same survey the two hundred students explained why they had remained in school for the four years required to finish high school. Their reasons for staying are worthy of note:

The reasons 200 seniors of the class of 1953 stayed in Drury High School until graduation were that: they believed a high school education was necessary to get a good job and to get ahead in life; they liked their school friends and associations; they were influenced to stay in school by their parents and relatives, friends, guidance officers, and teachers; they liked and enjoyed school; they were preparing for advanced education; they never thought about dropping out; they wanted to increase their knowledge and learn for its own sake; they preferred school to work; and they felt when they had attended through age sixteen it would be foolish to quit school.<sup>26</sup>

The whole problem of increasing the holding power of the school was summed up in the following seventeen activities

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<sup>25</sup>Walter G. Patterson, "Why Do Young People Stay in High School?" Clearing House, 29:93, October, 1954.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.



suggested by Dillion:

(1) Know the student. (2) Obtain the student's confidence. (3) Provide an educational program wherein the student can experience success. (4) Include home economics as a subject in the curriculum. (5) Give grade repeaters a new teacher and new subjects. (6) Demonstrate relationship between education and life. (7) Extend the social experience of the student. (8) Give the student some personal experiences. (9) Recognize signs of trouble. (10) Provide for the above average student. (11) Establish a good school record system. (12) Make use of school records. (13) Help the student select the right courses. (14) Begin counseling early. (15) Allow time for home visits. (16) Secure parent interest and cooperation. (17) Secure public support.<sup>27</sup>

#### IV. SUMMARY

##### Mental and emotional characteristics of drop-outs.

In summarizing the literature concerning the mental and emotional characteristics of drop-outs, it might be stated that there was no significant difference between those who dropped from school and those who remained for graduation. Even the lowest in intelligence of those who dropped were still considered teachable. Two out of every five drop-outs have I. Q.'s of ninety-five or above, and of the remaining 60 per cent only 35 per cent have I. Q.'s of below eighty-five. The drop-out lacked self-confidence and initiative; he lacked skill in school subjects and was a poor attender; he was happy and not easily discouraged; and he caused no trouble in the school.

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<sup>27</sup>Dillion, op. cit., pp. 83-88.

Signs of impending drop-outs. The prospective drop-out, according to the literature reviewed, can best be located by a study of elementary school records. The student who has experienced a notable drop in achievement early in his school career, making very low marks in such basic subjects as reading, arithmetic, composition, and spelling was judged most likely to drop from the high school.

Causes of student drop-outs. Listed below are some of the causes found most frequently in the literature reviewed as being factors in student drop-outs.

1. Economic reasons played a large part in causing high school students to drop from school.
2. The majority of high school students dropped simply because they wished to quit school.
3. A lack of interest was the greatest factor in influencing students to drop.
4. The high school curriculum was not so designed as to hold the student who was not primarily academically inclined.
5. The high school curriculum was designed primarily for college preparation.
6. The compulsory attendance law was at fault in that it did not compel students to attend school beyond their sixteenth birthdays.

7. Inadequate elementary preparation and adjustment difficulties encountered in transferring from the elementary to the high school caused many drop-outs.

How the school may increase its holding power. Suggestions as to how the school might be able to increase its holding power included the following:

1. When the high school more completely identifies itself with the life of the community in which it is situated, it will have increased its holding power.
2. The school cannot live independently of the community.
3. The adoption of an educational philosophy that encompasses the education for all is necessary to increase the holding power of the school.
4. The techniques employed successfully in handling students on different levels and with different interests in the same class in the elementary school are equally well adapted to high school teaching.
5. Rigid adherence to standards as applied to academic and achievement causes the dropping of many students.
6. Activities were found to be the factor most related to whether or not the student continued in school until graduation.
7. Students who are relieved from feelings of financial insecurity were not so likely to drop from school.

8. The influence of mothers, fathers, relatives, and others was important in holding students in school.
9. Knowing the student, his parents, his environmental background, and letting him know that his teachers were interested in him as a person contributed to a reduction in student drop-outs.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The sources of data used in this study were as follows: (1) the high school principal's final report for each of the school years 1943-44 to 1954-55, inclusive; (2) the cumulative school record for each of the school drop-outs during the current school year of 1955-56; (3) a questionnaire completed by the high school teacher for each drop-out she had in any class during the current 1955-56 school term; and (4) a personal interview with each of the 1955-56 drop-outs, usually with the parent present and participating.

#### I. DROP-OUT RECORD FOR HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL FOR PAST NINE YEARS

Data relative to the number of drop-outs from each of the grade levels of Harris High School for the past nine years were obtained from the Harris High School principal's final report, beginning with the final report of the school year 1943-44, and ending with the report of the school year 1954-55. A compilation and tabulation of these data are found in Table III, pages 40-41.

Three items--total enrollment for term, enrollment last day of term, and total number of drop-outs--were obtained from these reports for each grade for each of the

nine years. In addition to showing the number of drop-outs from its beginning in high school to graduation for each of the last nine graduating classes, the table provided source materials for Table IV, page 43, which is a tabulation of the yearly number of drop-outs from each grade for each of the past nine years; for Table V, page 47, which shows the percentage of each class dropping for each of the past nine years; and for Table VI, page 50, which shows in order of severity the extent of the drop-out problem from year to year.

Some explanation should be made at this point as to how the drop-out data were obtained. There is a column on the principal's final report for the year in which all losses from each grade are recorded. The numbers recorded in this column include students who have transferred to other schools as well as those who are bona fide drop-outs. No effort was made in this study to separate or distinguish between the numbers who transferred to other schools and the numbers who were actual drop-outs. Rather, the totals of the "losses" column were considered as being drop-outs. The investigator, from his long experience with Harris High School, has noted that the number of students who leave this school to transfer to other schools is just about balanced by the number who transfer from other schools to Harris High School. In view of the foregoing, the transfer

factor is believed to have had a negligible effect on the final facts as revealed in this study.

In further explanation of Table III, pages 40-41, it will be noted that in order to give a true picture of the drop-out problem for each of the last nine graduating classes, beginning with the one graduating during the school year of 1946-47, and ending with the one graduating during the school year of 1954-55, it was necessary to collect drop-out data for the school year of 1943-44 and each succeeding year thereafter through the school year of 1954-55. This resulted in twelve sets of data for the ninth grade, eleven for the tenth, ten for the eleventh, and only nine for the twelfth grade, which made it possible to follow the continuous progress of only nine high school classes from the ninth grade through to the twelfth grade and graduation. The horizontal bars on the table were placed there to set off the years that were common to all four years of high school. A consideration of the items between the bars permitted the investigator to get a picture of the drop-out problem during any given year as it affected not just one class or grade level, but the whole of the high school for that particular year.

The data in regard to the yearly number of drop-outs from all four grade levels of the high school are presented in Table IV, page 43. In 1946-47, from a total

TABLE III

EXTENT OF STUDENT DROP-OUTS FROM NINE CONSECUTIVE CLASSES IN HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL, ENTRY DATES IN NINTH GRADE: SCHOOL YEARS OF 1943-44 TO 1954-55, INCLUSIVE: GRADUATION DATES FROM HIGH SCHOOL: SCHOOL YEARS OF 1946-47 TO 1954-55, INCLUSIVE

NINTH GRADE				TENTH GRADE			
School Term	Total enrollment for term	Enrollment last day of term	Total number drop-outs for term	School Term	Total enrollment for term	Enrollment last day of term	Total number drop-outs for term
1943-44	82	63	19	1944-45	56	47	9
1944-45	63	53	10	1945-46	55	49	6
1945-46	84	69	15	1946-47	70	58	12
1946-47	73	59	14	1947-48	58	50	8
1947-48	95	64	31	1948-49	65	53	12
1948-49	73	60	13	1949-50	58	51	7
1949-50	94	84	10	1950-51	82	73	9
1950-51	92	80	12	1951-52	72	66	6
1951-52	78	69	9	1952-53	68	52	16
1952-53	108	91	17	1953-54	85	68	17
1953-54	113	100	13	1954-55	113	99	14
1954-55	118	98	20				
Totals 1946-55	844	705	139		671	570	101
Totals for nine year period 1943-52	842	692	150		669	567	102



TABLE III (continued)

ELEVENTH GRADE				TWELFTH GRADE			
School Term	Total enrollment for term	Enrollment last day of term	Total number drop-outs for term	School Term	Total enrollment for term	Enrollment last day of term	Total number drop-outs for term
1945-46	53	46	7	1946-47	56	45	11
1946-47	38	34	4	1947-48	37	31	6
1947-48	68	50	18	1948-49	44	39	5
1948-49	45	41	4	1949-50	38	33	5
1949-50	51	47	4	1950-51	40	38	2
1950-51	50	46	4	1951-52	43	42	1
1951-52	71	67	4	1952-53	66	65	1
1952-53	65	58	7	1953-54	56	52	4
1953-54	55	45	10	1954-55	46	46	0
1954-55	69	63	6				
Totals 1946-55	512	451	61		426	391	35
Totals for nine year period 1943-52	565	497	68				

enrollment of 237 students, 17 per cent of the year's enrollment, or forty-one students, dropped out. These were distributed among the four high school grades as follows: from the ninth grade, fourteen dropped; from the tenth, twelve dropped; from the eleventh grade, four dropped; and from the twelfth grade, eleven dropped. A study of the table reveals that for the other years listed the results were as follows: in 1947-48, from a total high school enrollment of 258, a total of 63 students or 24 per cent dropped; in 1948-49, thirty-four students, or 15 per cent of the entire student body dropped; in 1949-50, twenty-six students, or 11 per cent of the entire student body dropped; in 1950-51 twenty-seven students, or 10 per cent of the entire student body dropped; in 1951-52, the lowest drop-out rate for the entire period was experienced--twenty students, or 8 per cent of the student body dropped; in 1952-53, a sharp rise was noted when forty-one students, or 14 per cent of the student body dropped; in 1953-54, the per cent of drop-outs remained constant with forty-four students or 14 per cent dropping; in 1954-55, a slight decrease was noted when forty students, or 12 per cent, dropped. A study of the year by year rate of student drop-outs reveals that beginning with the year 1947-48, when the highest rate of student drop-out was noted, 24 per cent, there was a tendency toward a reduction of the rate of drop-outs down through and including the year of

TABLE IV

NINE YEAR SURVEY OF STUDENT DROP-OUTS FROM HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL; PERIOD OF TIME COVERED: SCHOOL YEARS OF 1946-47 TO 1954-55, INCLUSIVE

SCHOOL YEAR	NINTH GRADE		TENTH GRADE		ELEVENTH GRADE		TWELFTH GRADE		TOTAL ENROLLMENT FOR YEAR	TOTAL DROPS OUTS FOR YEAR	PER CENT ENROLLMENT DROPPED
	Total enrollment	Total drop-outs	Total enrollment	Total drop-outs	Total enrollment	Total drop-outs	Total enrollment	Total drop-outs			
1946-47	73	14	70	12	38	4	56	11	237	41	17
1947-48	95	31	58	8	68	18	37	6	258	63	24
1948-49	73	13	65	12	45	4	44	5	227	34	15
1949-50	94	10	58	7	51	4	38	5	241	26	11
1950-51	92	12	82	9	50	4	40	2	264	27	10
1951-52	78	9	72	6	71	4	43	1	264	20	8
1952-53	108	17	68	16	65	7	66	1	307	41	14
1953-54	113	13	85	17	55	10	56	4	309	44	14
1954-55	118	20	113	14	69	6	46	0	346	40	12
Totals for nine year period	844	139	671	101	512	61	426	35	2453	336	14*

\*Average yearly per cent of drop-outs.

1951-52 when only 8 per cent of the student body dropped. In the year 1952-53, there was a sharp rise in the rate to 14 per cent which continued at the same rate through 1953-54, and then dropped off slightly to 12 per cent for 1954-55.

A comparison of the yearly rate of drop-out with the average for the nine year period, 14 per cent, showed that during five of the years under study the rate was less than the average for the whole period: 1949-50, 11 per cent; 1950-51, 10 per cent; 1951-52, 8 per cent; and 1954-55, 12 per cent. During three of the years the average rate was exceeded: 1946-47, 17 per cent; 1947-48, 24 per cent; and 1948-49, 15 per cent. Inasmuch as the only years when the average for the whole period was exceeded were at the beginning of the period under study, it might be said that the data revealed a slight tendency toward a reduction of the rate of drop-outs from the beginning to the end of the period.

A comparison of the rate of drop-outs from Harris High School with the rate for the high schools of the state of North Carolina as a whole was interesting. State-wide statistics were available for only six of the nine years under study.

The comparison is as follows:

Year	<u>Yearly per cent of drop-out</u>	
	Harris High School	North Carolina High Schools
1946-47	17	9.9
1947-48	24	9.7
1948-49	15	8.3
1949-50	11	8.3
1950-51	10	10.1
1951-52	8	8.9

In order to obtain a complete picture of the drop-out problem as it affected each of the nine graduating classes under study from the time each class entered high school until graduation, relevant data were selected from Table III and arranged as shown in Table V, page 47. This table shows that the first class under study entered the high school in the ninth grade in the 1943-44 school term with an enrollment of eighty-two members. During the four years spent in high school, thirty-seven members dropped from the class, leaving an enrollment of forty-five students who graduated at the close of the 1946-47 school term. The class suffered a loss of 45 per cent of its original enrollment during its passage through the high school. Each of the eight succeeding classes were treated in the same way with results as follows: the class beginning with the school term of 1944-45 and graduating in 1947-48 lost 51 per cent

of its original enrollment; the class beginning in 1945-46 and graduating in 1948-49 lost 54 per cent of its enrollment; the class beginning in 1946-47 and graduating in 1949-50 lost 55 per cent of its original enrollment; the class beginning in 1947-48 and graduating in 1950-51 lost 60 per cent of its original enrollment; the class beginning in 1948-49 and graduating in 1951-52 lost 42 per cent of its original enrollment; the class beginning in 1949-50 and graduating in 1952-53 lost 31 per cent of its original enrollment; the class beginning in 1950-51 and graduating in 1953-54 lost 43 per cent of its original enrollment; and the class beginning in 1951-52 and graduating in 1954-55 lost 41 per cent of its original enrollment. These facts were significant for two reasons: first, the attrition of the graduating classes steadily increased from the 45 per cent recorded for the 1946-47 graduating class to the abnormally high figure of 60 per cent recorded for the graduating class of 1950-51; and second, a tendency toward a falling off of drop-outs was noted, beginning with the graduating class of 1951-52, and, somewhat erratically, fluctuating to the figure of 41 per cent recorded for the graduating class of 1954-55. It might be said that Harris High School reached the nadir of educational opportunity offered its students with the graduating class of 1950-51, and that from that date some improvement has been discernible.

TABLE V

PER CENT OF EACH OF THE LAST NINE CONSECUTIVE NINTH GRADE CLASSES OF HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL THAT DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL BEFORE SPENDING THE FOUR YEARS NECESSARY FOR GRADUATION; ALL PER CENTS COMPUTED TO NEAREST WHOLE PER CENT

Ninth grade class beginning with term of	Total enrollment of beginning class	Number dropping grades 9-12, inclusive	Number remaining four years in high school	School term of graduation	Per cent of ninth grade enrollment dropped
1943-44	82	37	45	1946-47	45
1944-45	63	32	31	1947-48	51
1945-46	84	45	39	1948-49	54
1946-47	73	40	33	1949-50	55
1947-48	95	57	38	1950-51	60
1948-49	73	31	42	1951-52	42
1949-50	94	29	65	1952-53	31
1950-51	92	40	52	1953-54	43
1951-52	78	32	46	1954-55	41
Totals for nine year period	734	343	391		47*

\* Average yearly rate of drop-out for nine year period.

The investigator does not venture to advance reasons as to why the per cent of drop-outs steadily increased with each of the graduating classes from 1946-47 to 1950-51. Two facts, however, whose significance he is not able to evaluate, will be mentioned. In 1947-48, a new principal, with an educational philosophy somewhat different from that of his predecessor came to the school and served for the next four years, leaving at the end of the 1950-51 term. The years 1943 to 1951, the period of time during which the drop-outs were accumulated that were expressed in the totals for the graduating classes of 1946-47 to 1950-51, were fateful years for the whole nation. It was during this period of time that the supreme war effort was made that resulted in our victory in World War II; it was during this period of time that the disorganization followed that is always attendant upon the ends of wars; and it was during this period of time that the fresh war broke out in Korea. It was not the purpose of this study to attempt to gauge the possible effects that these outside forces might have had upon the drop-out problem of Harris High School.

Table VI, page 50, is an arrangement in descending order of the per cent of drop-out from each of the high school grades for each year of the nine year period. This table afforded a year to year comparison of the rate of drop-out for each grade, and permitted an observation as to whether



there was a sequential, year to year, improvement in the rate of drop-out in any grade. No such sequential rate of improvement was noted for either the ninth, tenth, or eleventh grades. With one exception, however, the rate of drop-out from the twelfth grade showed a steady year to year decrease from the high point of 20 per cent experienced in the school year of 1946-47 to the zero per cent experienced in the school year of 1954-55. The exception to this steadily declining rate occurred during the school year of 1953-54, when the rate of drop-out exceeded that of the three previous years.

It was of interest to note which of the yearly rates of drop-out exceeded the nine year average rate for each grade. The nine year average rate of 15 per cent for the ninth grade was exceeded in the following instances: 1947-48, 32 per cent; 1946-47, 19 per cent; 1948-49, 18 per cent; 1954-55, 17 per cent; and 1952-53, 16 per cent. In the tenth grade the yearly average rate of drop-out, 14 per cent, was exceeded in four instances: 1952-53, 24 per cent; 1953-54, 20 per cent; 1948-49, 18 per cent; and in 1946-47, 17 per cent. In the eleventh grade, the average yearly rate of 11 per cent was exceeded in only two instances: 1947-48, 26 per cent; and in 1953-54, 18 per cent. In four instances the average yearly rate of drop-out of 8 per cent for the twelfth grade was exceeded: 1946-47, 20 per cent; 1947-48, 16 per cent;

TABLE VI

PER CENT OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT DROPPING FROM EACH CLASS OF HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL FOR A NINE YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING WITH SCHOOL TERM OF 1946-47 AND ENDING WITH TERM OF 1954-55; PER CENTS ARE COMPUTED TO NEAREST WHOLE PER CENT, AND ARRANGED FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST

NINTH GRADE		TENTH GRADE		ELEVENTH GRADE		TWELFTH GRADE	
School Year	Per cent total enrollment dropped	School Year	Per cent total enrollment dropped	School Year	Per cent total enrollment dropped	School Year	Per cent total enrollment dropped
1947-48	32	1952-53	24	1947-48	26	1946-47	20
1946-47	19	1953-54	20	1953-54	18	1947-48	16
1948-49	18	1948-49	18	1946-47	11	1949-50	13
1954-55	17	1946-47	17	1952-53	11	1948-49	11
1952-53	16	1947-48	14	1948-49	9	1953-54	7
1950-51	13	1949-50	12	1954-55	9	1950-51	5
1951-52	12	1954-55	12	1949-50	8	1951-52	2
1949-50	11	1950-51	11	1950-51	8	1952-53	2
1953-54	11	1951-52	8	1951-52	6	1954-55	0
Average yearly per cent lost by Grade		15		14		11	
						8	

1949-50, 13 per cent; and 1948-49, 11 per cent. The feeling that there had been a gradual lessening of the drop-out problem in Harris High School over a period of the last few years lost much of its validity when it was noted that in the ninth grade the rate of drop-out during both of the comparatively recent school terms, 1952-53 and 1954-55, exceeded the nine year average rate for that grade; that in the tenth grade, the school terms 1952-53 and 1953-54 were worse for drop-outs than any of the other years considered in the whole nine year period; and that in the eleventh grade, the rate of drop-out during the school term 1953-54 was second highest. As was noted earlier, it was only in the twelfth grade that the rate of drop-out seemed to decrease from year to year.

An effort was made to discover if a heavy rate of drop-out in any high school grade during any given year was common to the other three grades during the same year. This study revealed that it was only during two school terms of the nine, the terms of 1946-47 and 1947-48, that the rate of drop-out for all four high school grades exceeded, or was equal to, the average rate for each grade. In the ninth, tenth, and twelfth grades, the rate of drop-out during the school term of 1952-53 exceeded, or was equal to, the average rate in each grade. In the tenth and eleventh grades, the rate of drop-out exceeded the average rate for each of these grades. A consideration of the foregoing revealed that

with the exception of the instances cited, there was little pattern or continuity between the rate of drop-out in one grade during any given year and the rate in the other three grades during the same year.

The average yearly loss of students from each grade showed a decreasing quantity with each advancing grade: 15 per cent from the ninth grade; 14 per cent from the tenth grade; 11 per cent from the eleventh grade; and 8 per cent from the twelfth grade. Expressed in quantitative terms, and ignoring or rounding off fractional parts, this means that of each one hundred students who entered Harris High School during the past nine years, on the average, fifteen dropped out while in the ninth grade; of the eighty-five remaining students, twelve dropped out while in the tenth grade; of the seventy-three who remained to enter the eleventh grade, eight dropped out while in that grade; and of the sixty-five who were left to enter the twelfth grade, five dropped out before graduation was achieved.

## II. THE CURRENT DROP-OUT PROBLEM IN HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL

During the course of the school term of 1955-56, a total of eighteen students dropped from Harris High School, distributed by sex and grade as follows: from the ninth grade two boys and five girls; from the tenth grade six boys

boys and no girls; and from the eleventh grade three boys and two girls. No drop-outs occurred from the twelfth grade. As was mentioned earlier, a detailed study was made of this current crop of drop-outs. This study was in three parts: (1) a careful study was made of each dropping student's cumulative school record; (2) each high school teacher who had a student dropping from any class filled out a questionnaire as to certain aspects of that student's school life as it had been observed by the teacher; and (3) the investigator held a personal interview with each drop-out, usually in the presence and with the active participation of at least one of the parents.

#### Data from School Records

The school record of each drop-out from the time he entered school in the first grade until the date he dropped from school was carefully studied to see if it would yield significant clues as to the cause of the drop-out.

Elementary school grades of drop-outs. The grades earned by each of the drop-outs were averaged by subject for the whole eight year period of elementary school attendance and arranged as shown in Table VII, page 55. A study of the table revealed that in only two areas of endeavor, those of conduct and physical education, were the students up to a low B average, neither of these being in the true sense of the word academic subjects. The average grade of the group in

such tool subjects as reading, writing, spelling, language, and arithmetic was so low, the high seventies and the low eighties, that the conclusion that a lack of skill in these vital areas predisposed the student toward dropping from the high school became inescapable, especially when the natural lenient tendency of the teacher toward the retarded as regards markings and grades was taken into account. The very little variations in the markings from grade to grade and subject to subject was further evidence that the markings might have been more in the nature of awards than earned quantities. An interesting corollary in this connection was the fact that nearly 50 per cent of these children had had a retention record in the elementary school, grade three having been failed most frequently. It appeared from the study of this table that the student who entered high school with low average elementary grades in such tool subjects as reading, writing, spelling, language, and arithmetic did so under a distinct disadvantage and was predisposed toward dropping from school.

In order to obtain a basis of comparing the elementary school grades earned by the high school drop-out with those earned by the student who remained in school, data on elementary school grades earned by the members of the currently graduating class were obtained from the cumulative records of these students and arranged as shown in Table VIII, page 56.

TABLE VII

AVERAGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GRADES EARNED BY  
CURRENT DROP-OUTS FROM HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL

Subject	Students with D average	Students with C average	Students with B average	Students with A average	Arithmetical average for subject*
Reading		9	7	2	81
Language	1	10	6	1	79
Spelling	1	7	8	2	81
Writing	1	7	9	1	81
Geography	1	11	5	1	78
History	1	13	4		78
Conduct		1	13	4	87
Health		6	11	1	82
Physical Education		2	12	4	86
Science		5	13		82
Arithmetic	1	9	7	1	79
Average elementary school grade, all subjects					81

\*Arithmetic averages were obtained by assigning numerical values as follows: D, 65; C, 75; B, 85; and A, 95.

TABLE VIII

AVERAGE ELEMENTARY GRADES EARNED BY FIFTY-TWO MEMBERS OF  
1956 GRADUATING CLASS OF HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL

Subject	Students with D average	Students with C average	Students with B average	Students with A average	Arithmetical average for subject*
Reading	10	24	18	86	86
Language	7	28	17	87	87
Spelling	10	15	27	88	88
Writing	10	29	13	85	85
Geography	12	27	13	85	85
History	8	26	18	87	87
Conduct	1	24	27	90	90
Health	5	31	16	87	87
Physical Education	2	30	20	88	88
Science	4	31	17	87	87
Arithmetic	13	21	18	86	86
Average elementary school grade, all subjects					87

\*Arithmetic averages were obtained by assigning numerical values as follows: D, 65; C, 75; B, 85; and A, 95.



A comparison of this table with Table VII, page 55, shows that in all subject matter areas the students who remained in school had earned higher grades when in the elementary school than had those who dropped out. In only one area, that of conduct, was the average grade of the drop-out an approximate equal to that of the student who remained in school, an average of eighty-seven for the drop-out as compared with an average of ninety for the student who remained in school. In all other areas the average difference was from four to nine points, an over-all average grade of eighty-one in all subject areas for the drop-out as compared with an over-all average of eighty-seven for the student who remained in school. This elementary grade differential between the drop-out and the student who remained in school would seem to indicate that the drop-out, in Harris High School at least, was less adequately prepared for carrying on high school work than was his colleague who remained in school. This finding runs somewhat counter to findings made in other schools. The investigator has no way of ascertaining what effect, if any, this lack of preparation had on causing students to drop from school.

A comparison of Table IX, page 59, with Table X, page 60, will show that there was a wider divergence between the grades earned in the high school by the drop-out as compared with the grades earned by the student who remained in school

than in the elementary school. The average high school grade earned by the drop-out was seventy-one, as compared with an average of eighty-four for the student who remained in school. This divergence would seem to indicate that the student who enters high school inadequately prepared by the elementary school will find himself sliding farther and farther behind his more fortunate classmates as he attempts to do the work of the high school.

High school grades earned by drop-outs. Average high school grades were compiled by subjects and arranged as shown in Table IX, page 59, for those students who dropped during the 1955-56 school term. In order to obtain a basis of comparison, the high school grades earned by the fifty-two members of the 1956 graduating class of Harris High School were also compiled. This information is found in Table X, page 60.

The group of dropping students had enrolled in a total of eighty-three high school courses during their stay in the high school and had successfully completed seventy-one of them, an average of approximately four units of credit per pupil. As was mentioned above, the average high school grade earned by the drop-out was seventy-one, as compared with an average of eighty-four for the student who remained in school.

A comparison of the average elementary grade, 81, with

TABLE IX

AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GRADES EARNED BY CURRENT  
DROPOUTS FROM HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL

Subject	Students with D average	Students with C average	Students with B average	Students with A average	Arithmetical average for subject*
English I		9	2		77
English II	5	3		1	69
Civics	1	4	4		78
Algebra I				1	95
Math I	4	7			71
World History	2	4	1		74
Bookkeeping				1	95
Home Economics		3			75
Agriculture		3	4		80
Geography	1	1			70
Health	1	7	1		75
Biology	3	2	1	1	75
General Science	1	4	1		75
Average high school grade, all subjects					71

\*Arithmetical averages were obtained by assigning numerical values to letter markings as follows: D, 65; C, 75; B, 85; A, 95.

TABLE X

AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GRADES EARNED BY FIFTY-TWO MEMBERS OF  
1956 GRADUATING CLASS OF HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL

Subject	Students with D average	Students with C average	Students with B average	Students with A average	Arithmetical average for subject*
English I	1	15	21	15	85
English II	9	19	17	7	81
Civics		5	16	18	88
Algebra I	1	24	14	3	79
Math I	1	27	12	15	83
World History	2	7	9	12	85
Bookkeeping		12	14	17	86
Home Economics			15	37	92
Agriculture	1	24	14	3	79
Geography		2	4	3	86
Health		10	23	18	86
Biology	6	22	20	10	81
General Science		6	7	4	83
Average high school grade, all subjects					84

\*Arithmetical averages were obtained by assigning numerical values to letter markings as follows: D, 65; C, 75; B, 85; A, 95.

that of the high school, 71, showed that high school work was: (1) more difficult for the average student, or (2) high school teachers were more exact and demanding in their grading systems. The fact that only three girls, from a possible seven, and seven boys, from a possible eleven, enrolled in either home economics or agriculture, supposed to be havens for those students who are low scholastically and who in the normal course of events are expected to extend their education no farther than the high school, indicated a need for more guidance service. The high school subject most frequently failed was English II, failed by five students; closely following were Math I and biology, failed by four and three students respectively. The very low marks made by the group of drop-outs in the high school and the attendant discouragement that naturally follows raised the question as to the possible effect that grades and markings might have on causing students to drop from school.

Attendance records of drop-outs. Since in only a few instances had high school attendance data been recorded on the student's school record, the gathering of such data other than for elementary school attendance was not possible. Elementary school attendance data showed, contrary to popular belief, that the prospective high school drop-out was not an attendance problem in the elementary school. In this area

the average attendance of each individual in the whole group ranged from 80 to 98 per cent, with the average for the whole group being 94 per cent. It was not possible to gauge the effect the state compulsory school law might have had on this attendance figure, but it should be noted that in only three of the past ten years has Mitchell County had an attendance officer.

Socio-economic level of the drop-out. Nine of the eighteen drop-outs had fathers who were regularly employed at the prevailing wage scales. Fourteen of the parents owned their own homes, and twelve possessed automobiles. Only three of the families of pupils were drawing welfare payments, a percentage not out of line with that of the general population in Mitchell County. Most of the more common modes of making a living had representatives from the parents of the group of drop-outs: four of the fathers were miners; two were civil servants; two were deceased; four were disabled and unemployed; two were textile employees; two were truck drivers; one was a railway engineer; and one was a farmer. There were no divorces between fathers and mothers in any of the families. All but one of the families were well established and had maintained their homes in the same place for many years. All families were indigenous to Mitchell County. There appeared to be little

difference between the economic levels of the families of those who dropped from school and those who remained in school. In studying the families of the drop-outs, one rather significant fact came to light. There was not a single "only child" in the entire group; the average family consisted of the father and mother with six children, the drop-out usually having been the third or fourth child to be born into the family.

Educational attainments of members of drop-out's family. Of the parents, only one, a father, had finished high school. The other fathers had stopped school all the way from grade three to grade nine, the average father having stopped in grade five. The educational attainments of the mothers appeared to be slightly higher, ranging from grade three to grade eight, with the average mother having stopped in grade six. Of the eighty-eight brothers and sisters of the drop-outs, only seven had finished high school, and of this number none, except two who were in nurse's training, had taken any further formal schooling. There was no illiteracy in any of the families.

#### Teacher Evaluation of Current Drop-Outs

Each high school teacher who had in any one of her classes a student who dropped from school during the current 1955-56 school term answered a questionnaire on certain

qualifications and characteristics of that student. The questionnaire, consisting of nineteen multiple-choice statements, covered such aspects of the student's school life as his personal relationships with his fellow students and his teachers, the degree of his readiness for the high school classes in which he was enrolled at the time he dropped from school, and the extent to which he was able to identify himself with the school and its program of studies. In addition, from several of the items a sampling of teacher opinion as to the best method for handling the student who was disgruntled with the school's program, making failing grades, and showing other signs of an impending break with the school, was obtained. The answers to a few of the questions provided a good index to one phase of the educational philosophy of this particular group of teachers: the attitude of the teacher toward the student who is failing or making low marks and the extent of effort or lack of effort expended toward keeping that student in school for a longer period of time. The questionnaire, with the total teacher response to each question, is reproduced on pages 101-103 in the appendix.

It should be noted at this point that not all the high school teachers took part in answering this questionnaire; only those who had students dropping from classes answered the questions, and, as a consequence, it was not



presumed that the questionnaire reflected the total opinion of the high school faculty. It should also be noted that each teacher filled out only one questionnaire for any single drop-out, even though she might have been teaching that student in multiple classes.

Age of drop-out. There was a total of fifty responses to this question. Four per cent of the responses indicated that the teachers thought the drop-outs were too young for their grades; 64 per cent thought they were of the correct age; and 32 per cent thought they were too old for their grades. The teachers' responses to this question indicated that, in their judgment, age played no vital part in the drop-out problem.

Extent of scholastic preparation of drop-out. Six of the items in the questionnaire were included in an effort to discover whether or not the student dropped from school because he realized that he was doing no good in his studies and that if he continued in school he would do so with little expectation of being promoted. Teacher responses to these six questions are tabulated in Table XI, page 67. In the first item in the table the teachers were asked to rate the degree of benefit the drop-out had seemed to get from his class attendance while in school. Sixty per cent of the responses indicated that the drop-out had received no benefit

from his class attendance, and 6 per cent indicated that he had benefited much. In view of the rather negative attitude, it seemed that the teachers were more or less in agreement with the student that he should drop from school.

The next item dealt with the degree of qualification that the drop-out had for the class work that he was attempting to carry. Thirteen per cent of the responses indicated that the drop-out was well prepared for his class work; 58 per cent that he was poorly prepared; and 29 per cent that he was hopelessly unprepared. In the third item the teachers were asked to rate the drop-outs as to the school marks that they were being given. The response to this item indicated that 5 per cent of the drop-outs were receiving good marks; 2 per cent, average; 45 per cent, low; and 48 per cent, failing. In an effort to discover what would have happened to the drop-out in a scholastic way had he continued in school, the teachers were asked to indicate whether or not they thought he would have passed their courses had he continued. Only 42 per cent of the responses indicated that the drop-out would have successfully passed his course; 58 per cent predicted that he would have failed.

One of the essential qualifications for successful school work is a willing acceptance of personal responsibility on the part of the pupil. In an effort to discover whether or not the drop-out possessed this essential qualification,

TABLE XI  
TEACHER JUDGMENT OF SCHOLASTIC QUALIFICATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUTS

Item Appraised	Judgment		
	Yes	No	
1. To what extent did drop-out appear to benefit from his class attendance?	Little	60	40
	Much	6	94
	No benefit	34	66
2. Degree of scholastic qualification of drop-out for the courses being taken:	Well prepared	13	87
	Poorly prepared	58	42
	Hopelessly unprepared	29	71
3. Marks being made by the drop-out:	Low	45	55
	Average	2	98
	Good	5	95
	Failing	48	52
4. Chances drop-out would have been promoted:	Would have passed	42	58
	Would have failed	58	42
5. Extent of student effort:	Little ambition	55	45
	Marked ambition	2	98
	No ambition	43	57
6. Scholastic difficulties stemmed from:	Lack of knowledge of how to study	12	88
	Lack of interest in subject	55	45
	Inability to comprehend subject material	16	84
	Deficient background	17	83

teachers were asked to rate the degree of ambition that the drop-out seemed to possess. In this respect the drop-outs were rated as follows: little ambition, 55 per cent; marked ambition, 2 per cent; and no ambition, 43 per cent.

In an effort to discover the reason the drop-out was failing or barely passing his classwork, teachers were asked to check one of four possible reasons. Fifty-five per cent of the responses cited a lack of interest in the subject matter as being the paramount reason for the scholastic difficulties of the drop-out; 17 per cent indicated that the difficulty stemmed from a deficient background; 16 per cent attributed the difficulty to an inability to comprehend the subject matter; and 12 per cent indicated a teacher opinion that a lack of knowledge of how to study was the cause of the difficulty.

Are drop-outs usually discipline problems? Two of the items in the questionnaire dealt with the disciplinary aspect of the drop-out problem. Seventy-one per cent of the responses indicated that the teachers did not think of the drop-outs as being discipline problems, while only 29 per cent indicated the converse. As to referring any one of the drop-outs to the principal for correction, 53 per cent of the responses showed that this had never been done; 30 per cent, that the drop-out had seldom been referred to the

principal for correction; and 17 per cent, that such action was a frequent occurrence.

Teacher effort to hold drop-outs in school. In an attempt to discover whether any effort on the part of the teacher was made to hold the drop-outs in school, teachers were asked: (1) whether such an effort had been made; and (2) what steps were taken, or in what directions such an effort had gone. Sixty-four per cent of the responses indicated that no effort at all was made by the teacher to hold the drop-out in school for a further length of time; of the 34 per cent who did indicate some effort, 7 per cent of the effort had been expended in an interview with the parent of the drop-out, 43 per cent in talks with the drop-out himself, 26 per cent in reports to the principal's office, 24 per cent in activities described as "no formal or special action." In this connection 79 per cent of the responses indicated that the teacher was not acquainted with parents of the child who was dropping from school.

Opinion of teachers in relation to certain selected teaching devices. Five questions were included in the questionnaire in an effort to gauge teacher opinion as to the efficacy of some of the newer teaching methods and devices employed for holding students in the school. The questions and per cent of affirmative and negative response to each

follow:

Do you believe that the school as presently set up can make a significant contribution to the further educational growth of the drop-out? Yes: 45 per cent  
No: 55 per cent

Do you feel that if the drop-out had been given more individual and personal attention by the teacher he would have remained in school? Yes: 32 per cent  
No: 68 per cent

Do you feel that the high school teacher could take better care of the individual differences in her own room by organizing each class into groups and presenting the work on two or more teaching levels? Yes: 80 per cent  
No: 20 per cent

Do you believe that the inclusion of the Core Curriculum, fused classes, or some other similar curricular device would have had an effect on preventing students from dropping from school? Yes: 50 per cent  
No: 50 per cent

Would you recommend that students be assigned classes on an ability grouping basis? Yes: 87 per cent  
No: 13 per cent

#### Personal Interviews with Current Drop-Outs

The investigator was not able to have a personal interview with each of the drop-outs, but he did have such an interview with a majority of them, either with the drop-out himself or with some member of the family who was acquainted with the details of his break with the school. No set or previously prepared list of questions was asked; rather an effort was made to keep the interview on as informal a basis as possible, the drop-out being encouraged to talk and to express his reasons for stopping school freely.

If the drop-out had grievances against the school or any teacher, he was encouraged to express them. Because of the nature of the interview and the type of material gathered, the results were written in narrative form immediately after the interview was concluded. Eight such narratives, representative of the entire group, are reproduced below:

Case I. James attended school for three months in the tenth grade during the 1955-56 term and then dropped. He stated that he dropped school simply because he was not interested in the subject matter offered, that he failed to see how any of the subjects that he was studying could help him in any way, and that he certainly could not see any relationship between the study of English II, which he had failed the previous year and was then repeating, and the operation of a filling station. He particularly disliked the study of English and biology, and, even more particularly, the study of the Shakespearean plays and formal grammar in his English course and the memorization of scientific terms in his biology course.

James had no particular feeling of rancor toward the school or teachers, but he did mention the fact that he was dissatisfied with the lack of opportunity that the average high school student had for using the gymnasium. It seemed that the use of the gymnasium was limited to the varsity

basketball teams and the members of the ninth grade health and physical education classes. He also bemoaned the fact that there was too little free time during the day; other than two ten-minute breaks, there were no interruptions at all during the day to school work, the lunch period being considered a regular part of the class work, with only sufficient time given to go to the cafeteria, eat lunch, and then return to the class scheduled for that period. James displayed mild antagonism toward some of his teachers, particularly the one who had jokingly remarked that his set of whiskers was heavy enough for a grown man and that he needed to shave more often.

James's plans for the future seemed to be rather well formed. At that time he was earning thirty dollars per week working in his father's filling station; and he stated that if all went well his father had agreed to sell him an interest in the station just as soon as he showed that he had learned enough to operate it successfully. He was saving a large part of his wages, and he had recently invested part of his savings in some bedroom furniture.

The interview took place at the filling station, and James was observed in his dealings with his customers. He was pleasant and kind, and seemed to make an especial effort to be courteous and agreeable to everyone. He displayed considerable knowledge of the workings of an automobile.



To one customer he remarked that "it always paid off to use the same brand of oil in a car that had been used when the car was new; otherwise some of the newer oils especially designed for high compression motors were likely to clog up the oil circulatory system."

As a parting remark James commented: "I think I'll learn more at this filling station than I could at school, and it will be something that I want to learn instead of something some teacher tells me I have to learn."

Case II. Sam stated that he quit school because he saw that he was not going to pass his class work, and that anyway, he was not interested in the class work. Last year he had failed two tenth grade subjects, one of which he was trying to repeat this year in addition to carrying the regular load of the eleventh grade student. He felt that he was going to fail all five subjects. He readily admitted that his study habits were very poor, and that only occasionally did he carry a book home for study at night; usually he was able to make all needed preparation for his class recitation during a part of the regular classroom period. Generally Sam liked his subjects, a notable exception being English II, which he had failed the previous year and was at that time repeating. When pressed for details as to why he disliked English II, he said that he had been disgusted with his study

of the Shakespearean drama Julius Caesar. Study on this one play had lasted a month this year, and last year he had spent the same amount of time on the play with identical feelings. He also resented the emphasis on formal grammar that he found in his second year English work. He stated that on his admission to the high school, he had not known the parts of speech, and despite having gone over them three times, he still did not know them.

When asked what part, if any, of his school work he had liked, he remarked that the most enjoyable period that he had ever had in the high school had been the gym period, but that this year, owing to a schedule reorganization, only the varisty teams had the privilege of using the gymnasium.

The economic status of this family was rather low; the father, employed at a local mineral processing plant, earned forty dollars per week, while the mother, also employed, earned twenty dollars per week as an employee in a local cafeteria. There were eight members of the family, two in the army, one married sister, and the remainder living in the home. Sam pointed up the economic difficulties being faced when he remarked that he hated to ask Dad for a dollar nearly every day, and that a student's needs for money in the high school were just about a dollar per day.

Two incidents had occurred in Sam's school career that stood out like sore thumbs in his memory. When he was

in the fifth grade his teacher had suggested in a note to his mother that since Sam looked undernourished, she would recommend that certain special foods be purchased and fed to the boy. At that particular time the members of the family were in difficult financial straits, so much so that Sam was having to walk home for his lunch, a distance of one mile. Rather than being able to buy special foods, great difficulties were being experienced in getting the bare necessities. For six years the memory of this note has rankled in Sam's mind. The other incident occurred during the current year. Because of failure of two tenth grade subjects, Sam was not sure of his class status, whether he was a sophomore or a junior. At the sophomore class meeting, over his protest, he was unanimously chosen as class president. Because of the vagueness of his class position, the class sponsor refused to accept him as president and demanded, successfully so, that another person be chosen in his stead.

Sam was not at present employed. His mother said that he stayed at home and did the laundrying and cooking so that she could work and help support the family. One the day of the interview Sam was doing the week's ironing. Later he planned to join the army.

Case III. Frank said that he first began to lose interest in school when he was in the seventh grade. He stated

that his teacher in this grade was hard on him, did not understand him, and made every possible effort to make life unpleasant for him.

On entering the high school he had gotten along rather well for the first two years, but just at the beginning of his third year he had begun to lose interest and upon occasion to play truant. On one occasion the father had brought Frank back to the school after a period of truancy and had vouched for his future good conduct. Despite his father's interest, Frank continued to cut classes and finally just dropped out entirely.

Frank stated that he could not see how any of the courses that he was carrying could ever be of any practical benefit to him, and that with the exception of mathematics he had no interest in any of them. He particularly detested English II, having failed this course, the only one that he had ever failed.

The educational level of Frank's family was higher than that commonly found in his community. His father was a high school graduate, two sisters were registered nurses, another was enrolled in nursing school, and two other members of the family were in high school. The father had a railway job that required considerable technical knowledge.

The family appeared to be in good economic condition. The father's earnings averaged about one hundred dollars per

week, and he owned a farm and a small commercial orchard.

Frank had been out of school for a period of fourteen weeks when interviewed. During this period he had been employed for only six weeks, and according to his father's statement, his earnings during this six-week period of employment had been "practically nothing."

The father was very much disappointed that Frank was stopping school and stated that he had used every means at his command to keep him in school. In the course of the interview, father and son heatedly discussed the issue of the drop from school. The father maintained that at the present time an education was a necessity; the son stubbornly insisted that what he had been taking in the high school was worthless information.

There was a feeling on the part of the investigator that Frank had reasons sufficient to himself for stopping school which he refused to express either to his father or to the investigator.

Case IV. On the occasion of this visit, Dean, the ninth grade drop-out, his father, mother, and sister were sitting around the living room fire sorting and bundling galax plants for sale on the shrubbery market. The father was a victim of silicosis and was unable to do any work other than the very lightest of tasks. The mother, the

bread winner of the family, was employed at a local mica processing plant at an average weekly earning of thirty-five dollars per week.

All indications pointed to a struggle for a livelihood in that family. The gathering and sale of galax plants is usually associated with subsistence employment.

Since stopping school Dean had worked at a variety of short odd jobs, none of which had paid him a decent wage. Clearly this boy had stopped school because of financial difficulties. In the elementary school he had always been given free lunches or had earned them by working in the lunchroom.

Dean said that of all his school subjects he had liked general science best. He had least liked mathematics, with English a close second. He had never been a discipline problem in the school.

His plans for the future showed some evidence of thought. Upon reaching the age of eighteen he planned to join the army, where, he had heard, a boy could learn a trade. He wanted to learn to be a diesel motor mechanic.

Case V. Ray, age thirty-one, stopped school in 1942 when he was in the ninth grade. He stated that he did not remember just why he had stopped other than he had never cared much for school work, and that at the time he did stop

his mother was having a rather difficult time financially, and that he started work immediately. When he became eighteen, he joined the army and served continuously for eight years and three months. During this period of army service he fought in World War II in Europe as well as in the Korean War. The highest military rank that he was able to reach was master sergeant, because, as he expressed it, "The fellow who doesn't have at least a high school education doesn't have a dog's chance to make a rating in the army."

At the present time he is married, owns a home, and makes a livelihood by driving a truck for a local electrical company. He stated that even here in his civilian occupation he felt that he was handicapped by not having completed high school, that on leaving the service this lack of education had kept him from getting a number of jobs that he felt that he was qualified to do, and that in his present position his chances of advancement were very much limited. He is now augmenting his earnings by attending veterans' high school night classes. In this way he earns an additional \$105 per month. When asked if he was learning very much by his night school attendance, he merely smiled. One got the impression that the \$105 per month was the decisive factor in his night school attendance.

His plans for the future were somewhat nebulous. He plans to continue his work with the local power company, and

he hopes that his chances of advancement will be enhanced if he can manage to get his high school diploma by his night school attendance.

Case VI. Johnny, age twenty-two, stopped school in 1950 in the tenth grade. He said that his primary reason for stopping was that he just did not like the high school work; that he either had to do the work whether he liked it or not or face a barrage of criticism from his teachers; and that he had to keep the road hot to the principal's office because he was not able to prepare all of his home work assignments. He mentioned particularly his dislike for his English work, stating that he did not then see the necessity for a lot of the "stuff" he had to study in the course, and that he still does not see how it might have been of any assistance to him. The impression was gained that Johnny felt bitter toward the school, and that in some ill-defined way he thought he had not gotten a fair deal when he was in school. He readily admitted that his work had been rather poor while he attended high school, that he had not worked nearly as much as he should have, and that he seldom had done any work outside the school room. Apparently he never carried any books home with him at night. Johnny made a rather surprising admission when he stated that his girl friend was partly responsible for his having dropped from school. His girl friend, as he put it, "was somewhat demanding and took



up just about all my time. I had got along mighty well in \_\_\_\_\_ School, but she wanted me to move over here and go to her school so that I'd be in the same school with her. I just never could get used to this school, and to top it all off, she just up and quit me, even though we were engaged to be married." All this at age sixteen!

In the six years since Johnny dropped from school he has spent three years in the army in Korean service, worked part time in his father's hardware store, and apparently spent the rest of the time at loose ends just loafing about. He does not seem to have any well defined plans for the future at the present time.

It seems that Johnny is quite a disappointment to his family, all the members of which are at least high school graduates. His older brother is in college taking an engineering course; his mother and father are both high school graduates, and they own and operate a very flourishing hardware business.

Case VII. Wanda, age nineteen, stopped school in the eleventh grade in 1954. At the present time she is employed in the local dime store at a salary rating of \$20 per week. When interviewed Wanda stated that her chief reason for stopping school was that she just did not have the money to afford to dress as nicely as the other girls dressed, and

that she felt so bad when she compared her clothes with the clothes worn by the other girls. Wanda's mother died when Wanda was quite small, and she has attempted to keep house for her father and several brothers and sisters. The father owns his home and is employed as a laborer on the public highways.

According to her teachers Wanda was an exceptional student and had great possibilities. They stated that it was true that her family was destitute, and that as a result Wanda had a feeling of inferiority. She had earned her own and her sisters' lunches by working in the serving line in the school lunchroom. When she bought clothing, she was compelled to think of the serviceability rather than the attractiveness of the garments, and as a result she was rather shabbily dressed. Permanents, hair sets of all kinds, appeared to be out of the question for Wanda. Many times teachers and other interested patrons had offered to assist Wanda in securing clothing, but all such offers of help had been repulsed. Wanda had an intense pride and refused to accept charity in any form.

Wanda was very attractively dressed when interviewed. She had apparently been using her earnings to replenish her own and her sisters' wardrobes. She is making a success of her work in the store and is well liked and respected by the employer. The investigator gained the impression, however,

that she is dissatisfied with her present status, and that she recognizes that her present job will never be anything more than subsistence employment. In contrast to the others who had been interviewed, she looked back on her classroom experiences with pleasure and told how she had enjoyed some of her classroom experiences.

Case VIII. John's case, as pieced out by the investigator, was a case of unremitting toil, thwarted ambitions, and unsurmountable challenge. He was the fourth son of a large family. Because of destitution in the family, John had been compelled to stop school at the age of fourteen, while still in the elementary school, and to go to work to help support the family. During this early period he had worked at a wide variety of jobs: sawmilling, cutting of pulpwood, gathering roots and herbs, farming, etc. Sometimes he was able to secure employment on public jobs for short intervals.

During all these years he was never satisfied, always wanting to go back to school. Finally at the age of nineteen he quit his job and re-entered school. Because of an avid interest and a quick mind, he quickly mastered the essentials that he had missed in grammar school and was soon well launched in his high school work. By working evenings and Saturdays he was able to help meet the financial

obligations of the family until the middle of his sophomore year. At this time the illness of a member of the family caused an unusual financial drain, and once again he was compelled to stop school and take a job. This time he worked six months, got the family out of debt, and then re-entered school. By hard work he made up the part credits he had missed and continued in school with his original class. This time he was able to continue without interruption until he had reached his senior year, when once again financial difficulties compelled his dropping from school, this time a permanent break. By his stopping and getting a job he made it possible for two younger brothers and a sister to continue in school without interruption.

John's case is clearly a case of financial hardship compelling a break with the school. Since he dropped from school, he has continued his interest in educational matters, has read widely on a great variety of subjects, and despite his lack of formal education, shows evidence of being better informed on a wide range of subject matter than many college graduates. He is a skilled artisan, makes and keeps repaired many of the implements that he uses on the large farm that he owns and operates. He has developed several new strains of field seeds, has done experimental work in orcharding and in forestry, and has an avid interest in plant chemistry.

### III. SUMMARY

In all the years but one for which comparative figures were available, the rate of drop-out from Harris High School exceeded the rate of the state as a whole; in three of the years the rate was approximately that for the state as a whole.

Except in the twelfth grade, school term of 1955-56 excepted, there has been no lessening of the drop-out problem during recent years.

A comparison of elementary and high school marks showed that, on the average, marks earned in the high school were ten points lower than those earned in the elementary school. The high school subject failed most frequently by the drop-out was English II.

There was but little difference between the economic level of the drop-out and the level of the student who remained in school. The drop-out was most likely to come from a large family, however, and was usually spaced as the third or fourth child in the family.

Drop-outs had not been elementary school attendance problems. As a group, drop-outs were neither too old nor too young for their grades.

According to high school teacher opinion, drop-outs were inadequately prepared for high school studies. Most

drop-outs were receiving failing marks when the break occurred.

As a group, drop-outs were not considered by their teachers as serious school discipline problems.

Of the eleven boys who had dropped from Harris High School during the school year of 1955-56, by the end of the school term only two had found any regular employment, one was in the army, and eight were at the home doing odd tasks or just loafing about. Of the seven girls who had dropped during the same period, two were married and five were at the home. None had secured any employment.

Every child who had stopped school had done so against the advice and wishes of his parents.

The most frequent student-given reason for dropping from school was a lack of interest in the subject matter that was being offered in the school. Not a single student stated that the subject matter was too difficult.

No student stated that he thought that he had made the wrong decision and that later he planned to return and finish high school.

## CHAPTER IV

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

It has been proven over and over by actual experience that the rate of drop-out from the public high schools could be lessened. Sometimes all that is needed to accomplish this reduction is an awareness on the part of the teacher and administrator of the extent of the problem. The suggestions and recommendations which follow were sharply indicated by the study which has just been completed as imperative needs.

A continuation of skill subjects in the high school. There has always been quite a break between the elementary and high schools. In the elementary school the chief point of emphasis has been the development of skills on the part of the student within the tool subject areas, whereas in the high school the point of emphasis seems to shift somewhat to the acquisition of the content of the subject matter offered rather than to a continuation of a further development of the skill subject areas. For many students who are entering the high schools, a further refinement in the use of tool subjects is indicated as a great need. This is especially true in the area of reading. In recent years much work has been done in this area by some of the leading public high schools. English teachers appear to have taken

the lead in this pioneer work. The investigator feels that such a course taught on two or more levels in the ninth grade of Harris High School would have a salutary effect in further preparing the students for the prescribed high school courses and for holding them in school.

A student understanding of the value of high school work. The inability of the drop-out to see how his high school work could ever be of any practical benefit to him indicated that there was a need on the part of the high school teacher to do a better job in selling his product: namely, his subject specialty. It seems that painstaking care should be exercised by the teacher in being sure that the student will understand just what values he may expect to derive from any subject that he is taking. Great time and effort should be expended in seeing that this undertaking is achieved. It is doubtful in the mind of the investigator whether any subject can be justified for a student unless that student can see the value of what he is studying.

A point of view. The answers to the teacher questionnaire revealed a basic line of cleavage in teacher opinion as to the purpose and function of the public high school. One group of teachers indicated by their responses that they believed that the student who was not academically



prepared for the pursuance of high school work (subject matter) was a misfit in the high school and could be dropped and forgotten with impunity. This is the old basic line of reasoning that the chief function of the high school is preparation for college, and that any student who fails to possess the necessary faculties for successfully carrying the prescribed college preparatory courses is a hindrance to the progress of the school. Another group of teachers indicated by their responses that they thought the high school had functions other than the college preparatory ones, and that its existence could be justified as an independent institution. If the high school is to maintain its student body, it would seem that the teacher will be compelled to face squarely the issue as to the true function of the high school. If there is to be a value or a place for the slow, the backward, or the poorly prepared student in the public high school, the student must be made aware of that place and of the value that he may expect to receive for his attendance. When he wavers or shows a disposition to quit school, efforts will have to be made to persuade him to continue.

Meeting the parents. Few of the teachers had ever met or knew the parents of the drop-outs. Admittedly it is difficult to meet the parents of 150 students, the

average high school teacher pupil load, particularly when those parents live over a wide area such as is the case in the Harris High School district. The gain or return is so great, however, that considerable effort should be expended in attaining this end. In the past, the Mitchell County Board of Education has granted three half-day school days so that afternoons might be used in visiting parents on school time. Full utilization should be made of this opportunity to meet the parents of the students. When it is remembered that research has shown that the mother wields the most potent influence in keeping the child in school, the full value of meeting this member of the family and making her acquaintance becomes apparent. Every opportunity should be taken to bring the parents to the school. Programs of all sorts, visitation days, etc., should be utilized to the fullest extent.

Expansion of the activity program. A commonly voiced complaint of the drop-out was that "only the members of the varsity teams and the ninth grade physical education classes get to use the gymnasium." This complaint was made so often that a need for an expansion of the high school activity program is indicated. As pointed out earlier, most of the drop-outs have never had an opportunity to play or engage in any activity other than the regular academic work. Some break

during which every student might follow a personal interest or a hobby would make a welcome interruption to regular class work.

Abandonment of strict departmentalization in the ninth grade. Frequent and abrupt changes of classes and teachers are bewildering to ninth grade students. In view of the fact that most drop-outs occur in the ninth grade and that such students seem to appear to have difficulty in becoming adjusted to high school, it seems that if ninth grade students could be assigned to the same teacher for periods of time longer than a single period this adjustment might be achieved less abruptly and painfully. The core curriculum or some adaptation thereof would tend to solve this problem.

High school teacher apprenticeship. Teaching on different levels within the same class room a group of students with wide ability ranges is an accepted and essential practice in the elementary school. It is the belief of the investigator that this practice could be successfully extended to the high school, and that by an application of this practice high school teachers might more successfully meet the wide ability range that is experienced there. The best place to learn this practice is to teach where it is done, namely, in the elementary school. If the high school teacher could begin her teaching career in the elementary

school, it is the belief of the investigator that she would gain an insight into the program of the school as a whole and that there would be less tendency toward specialization in the high school. This apprenticeship training might be acquired in the elementary school itself or in the training school of the teacher colleges.

Adaptations of subject matter. The State Department of Education makes mandatory the offering of certain required subjects in the high school: namely, four years of English, two years of science, two years of social studies, one year of mathematics, and one year of health and physical education. While the offering of certain subjects is prescribed, the content of the required subject matter is not a prescribed quantity. There is nothing within state department regulations that will hamper or prohibit a teacher from offering the subject matter of her course on a level or levels that will most nearly meet the needs and interests of her class. There are grave doubts in the mind of the investigator as to whether a student should be required to repeat courses which he has failed, particularly courses in Shakespearean drama, and more especially as to whether he should be required to repeat the courses in the same manner and with the same content that he had them originally.

Curricular revisions. A complaint frequently voiced

by the drop-out was that the subject matter offered in the school was not interesting and that it appeared to be of no practical value. The fact that approximately one-half of the students drop out before finishing high school indicates that curricular revision should be made so that this group of people might be offered some subject matter that would conform in some degree to their life needs. At the present time, there are three areas in the high school curriculum that cater to this group: namely, the business education, the home economics, and the agriculture departments. Of the students who dropped out during the current 1955-56 term, however, only two had been enrolled in home economics, five in agriculture, and one in business education. The investigator would recommend that a great deal of care be exercised in getting students enrolled in agriculture and home economics classes. In addition, it appears that the curricular offering of the school should be influenced to some degree by the economics of the community. An elementary course in geology, the mining, processing, and marketing of minerals should be included as an elective course or else incorporated in the framework of the general science course. Somewhere in the curriculum, either as an elective or as a part of an existing course, a course should be offered in forestry, the culture of nursery stock, and related subjects.

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APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

## PERTINENT FACTS CONCERNING SCHOOL DROP-OUTS

## HARRIS ELEMENTARY AND HARRIS HIGH SCHOOLS

SCHOOL YEAR 1955-56

## I. PERSONAL DATA CONCERNING DROP-OUT

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ IQ, if available \_\_\_\_\_ Condition of  
health \_\_\_\_\_ Delinquency record \_\_\_\_\_Juvenile court record \_\_\_\_\_ Previous school  
attendance record: Days attended by years:

First grade \_\_\_\_\_ Second grade \_\_\_\_\_ Third grade \_\_\_\_\_

Fourth grade \_\_\_\_\_ Fifth grade \_\_\_\_\_ Sixth grade \_\_\_\_\_

Seventh grade \_\_\_\_\_ Eighth grade \_\_\_\_\_ Ninth grade \_\_\_\_\_

Tenth grade \_\_\_\_\_ Eleventh grade \_\_\_\_\_ Twelfth grade \_\_\_\_\_

Scholastic Record: Average grade in each subject as listed  
for all previous years of school attendance:

## Elementary Subjects

Reading \_\_\_\_\_ Health \_\_\_\_\_ Ele. Science \_\_\_\_\_

Language \_\_\_\_\_ Geography \_\_\_\_\_ Arithmetic \_\_\_\_\_

Spelling \_\_\_\_\_ History \_\_\_\_\_ Music \_\_\_\_\_

Writing \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_ Art \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Education \_\_\_\_\_

## High School Subjects

English\_\_\_\_\_ Geometry\_\_\_\_\_ Bookkeeping\_\_\_\_\_

Civics\_\_\_\_\_ Typing\_\_\_\_\_ French\_\_\_\_\_

Algebra\_\_\_\_\_ Shop\_\_\_\_\_ Home Economics\_\_\_\_\_

Business Arith.\_\_\_\_\_ Agriculture\_\_\_\_\_ Geography\_\_\_\_\_

World History\_\_\_\_\_ Chemistry\_\_\_\_\_ Biology\_\_\_\_\_

American Hist.\_\_\_\_\_ Physics\_\_\_\_\_ General Science\_\_\_\_\_

Per cent of total school days available that drop-out has  
attended\_\_\_\_\_

School Retention Record: Encircle each grade that has been  
repeated. If grade is repeated more than once, encircle  
with more than one circle:

Grade: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

List of high school subjects repeated: \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

Pertinent facts concerning drop-out's family:

Lives with: Mother and Father\_\_\_\_\_ Mother\_\_\_\_\_ Father\_\_\_\_\_

Mother and Step-Father\_\_\_\_\_ Father and Step-Mother\_\_\_\_\_

Grandparent\_\_\_\_\_ Parents Divorced\_\_\_\_\_ Illegitimate\_\_\_\_\_

No established home\_\_\_\_\_

Number of other children in family: Older\_\_\_\_\_ Younger\_\_\_\_\_

Economic status of family: Own home\_\_\_\_\_ Own auto\_\_\_\_\_

Own other properties\_\_\_\_\_ Own business\_\_\_\_\_

Father has a job \_\_\_\_\_ Weekly earnings \_\_\_\_\_

Mother has a job \_\_\_\_\_ Weekly earnings \_\_\_\_\_

Other members of family have jobs \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly earnings \_\_\_\_\_ Drop-Out working \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly earnings \_\_\_\_\_ Family drawing welfare  
payment \_\_\_\_\_

Last school grade attended by father \_\_\_\_\_ mother \_\_\_\_\_

Educational achievements of brothers or sisters \_\_\_\_\_

Degree of illiteracy in the home \_\_\_\_\_

Family indigenous to the area \_\_\_\_\_

Transient workers \_\_\_\_\_ Farm family \_\_\_\_\_

Miners \_\_\_\_\_ Sharecroppers \_\_\_\_\_

Renters \_\_\_\_\_

Present activity of school drop-out \_\_\_\_\_

## II. TEACHER EVALUATION OF DROP-OUT

Name of drop-out \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade or  
subject \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark what, in your opinion, is the correct response to each question or statement.\*

1. For his grade group drop-out appeared to be:  
Too young, 2; of correct age, 32; too old, 16.
2. Drop-out appeared to benefit from his class attendance  
in my room:  
Greatly, 3; little, 31; not at all, 34.

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\*The number following each item is the total of teacher responses to that item.

3. For the subject matter that was being attempted, drop-out appeared to be:  
Well-prepared, 7; poorly prepared, 30; hopelessly unprepared, 15.
4. Drop-out's chief difficulty with this grade or subject seemed to be:  
No knowledge of how to study, 7; no interest in subject, 32; inability to comprehend subject matter, 9; deficient background, 10.
5. Drop-out's social relationship with the majority of his classmates was:  
Acceptable, 39; unacceptable, 14.
6. Drop-out's marks when he dropped from school were:  
Failing, 27; low, 25; average, 1; good, 3.
7. Had drop-out continued in school, I feel that his chances for passing my class would have been:  
He would have passed, 22; He would not have passed, 31.
8. Drop-out's economic status as compared to that of his classmates seemed:  
On a par, 27; lower, 25; higher, 2.
9. Drop-out showed evidence of:  
Marked ambition, 1; little ambition, 29; no ambition, 23.
10. From the standpoint of school discipline, drop-out:  
Was serious problem, 15; was no more of a problem than average student, 37.
11. Drop-out was sent to principal's office for disciplinary action:  
Frequently, 9; seldom, 15; never, 27.
12. Efforts to persuade drop-out to continue in school:  
Were made, 19; were not made, 34.
13. My efforts to persuade drop-out to continue in school consisted of:  
An interview with his parents, 3; a talk with drop-out, 18; a report to the principal's office, 11; a report to attendance officer, 1; no formal or special action, 9.

14. The parents of the drop-out are:  
Unknown to me, 42; acquaintances of mine, 11.
15. I feel that a significant contribution to the further educational growth of the drop-out:  
Could have been made by the school, 25; could not have been made by the school, 31.
16. I feel that if drop-out could have been given a more personal attention by his teacher:  
He would have continued in school, 16; he would not have continued in school, 35.
17. I feel, 37; I do not feel, 10; that the high school teacher should teach each class on two or more levels in order to care for the individual differences of her students.
18. I believe, 23; I do not believe, 22; that the inclusion of the core curriculum, fused classes, or other similar curricular devices would have enabled me to have given drop-out a more personalized attention with the result that he would have been kept in school.
19. I would recommend, 45; I would not recommend, 7; that students be assigned classes on an ability grouping basis.
20. I feel that the following checked personal characteristics of the drop-out played a significant part in his dropping from school:
- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. resentful, 17             | g. boisterous, 3           |
| b. moody, 18                 | h. troublesome, 8          |
| c. unpredictable, 25         | i. industrious, 4          |
| d. lazy, 38                  | j. quarrelsome, 3          |
| e. careless and slovenly, 26 | k. sexually promiscuous, 4 |
| f. dishonest, 9              | l. other, 2                |
21. Drop-out's most highly developed interests that I could discover seemed to be:
- boy-girl relationships, 15
  - athletics and physical education, 4
  - reading, 1
  - getting a job and making money, 22
  - having a good time, 23
  - manual tasks, 7
  - tinkering with automobiles, 6
  - music, 1