

1960

A Follow Up Study of Dropouts From East Valley High School

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A FOLLOW UP STUDY OF DROPOUTS
FROM EAST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

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

by
Margaret E. Ray
August 1960

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful appreciation is expressed to my husband, Ralph Ray, for his encouragement, help, understanding, and love. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Maurice Pettit for encouraging me to undertake a teacher education program and for his advice and help while serving as chairman of my committee.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

During the twentieth century many changes have affected our American way of life. Evidences of these changes have been seen in the shift from an agricultural to a highly industrialized and from a rural to an urban society. Since World War II atomic science, automation, and the attempts to conquer outer space have further changed American culture. The American position in world affairs has also undergone a radical change. No longer is the American foreign policy one of isolation, but of world leadership. These developments have each in turn affected American culture.

Modern educational systems, the social institutions responsible for the perpetuation of our culture, reflect the great social changes of our times. Social change is invariably accompanied by tensions, anxieties, and conflicts, and these too are reflected in the schools. Individuals also reflect these problems. Students often begin with frequent absences, truancy, or withdrawal. All these changes, however, point to the need for more education, understanding and knowledge to deal with the total complex.

Young people today need at least a high school education. They need trades, skills, craftsmanship, and knowledge. These can best be developed by organized learning.

However, many of our youth are reacting to the new tensions and anxieties by withdrawing from school or by other types of anti-social behavior. Only about sixty-five per cent of the high school age Americans are availing themselves of a basic high school education. These are the voters of tomorrow. Is there any way that some of these young people can be encouraged to continue their education?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to survey former students of East Valley High School (formerly Moxee Consolidated High School) who terminated their education prior to graduation during the school years 1956-1957 to 1959-1960 inclusive in order to determine the reasons for their withdrawal. It is hoped that this information will be used by school personnel to plan a better educational program. If this study should indicate some shortcomings within the school, recommendations for an improved guidance program and/or curriculum changes could prove profitable to the students, the Moxee School District, the community, and society. These purposes concur with those of Johnson, who says that information compiled from any concentrated study of school-leavers should be (2:217):

1. Used to work with certain individuals to have them return to school.
2. Used to counsel and to guide students with the aim of preventing their becoming dropouts.
3. Examined for whatsoever implications there may be which might affect the curriculum of the school.

Importance of the Problem

For many years the high school dropout rate has been a source of concern to educators. Today the full impact of the problem is beginning to disturb all government agencies on the local, state, and national level. Industry and business are more and more frequently demanding a high-school diploma from job applicants.

Almost daily new technical developments are increasing the trend toward more opportunities for the educated and skilled and fewer jobs for the unskilled. Thus the uneducated in today's economy are faced with irregular employment and lower wages. The economic future of our country depends upon each person being able to support himself. Even the armed forces need educated personnel to furnish the specialized and technical skills required for the defense of our country in an atomic and space age.

Dr. Maurice Pettit (17) in a speech made at Walla Walla College in July, 1959, quotes Department of Labor estimates that the year 1965 will see us needing thirty-seven per cent more technical and professional personnel, twenty-two per cent more proprietors and managers, fifteen per cent fewer farmers and farm workers, and four per cent fewer unskilled workers. What does this mean to the individual who has not availed himself of even a basic high school education?

In recognition of the problem faced by the thirty-five per cent (19:1) of the students who enroll in high school and do not graduate, the United States Department of Labor, the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the United States Department of

Defense are promoting a National Stay-in-School Campaign. Appeals to the youth of America to complete their education are appearing in popular publications, and prominent motion picture stars are making similar appeals on nationwide television programs.

Some of the problems created by the large number of high school dropouts are expressed by the Research Division and Department of Classroom Teachers, National Education Association (14:1):

Today's dropout will continue to present a problem long into the future. The full impact may well not be felt until the time when the dropout of today is the citizen of tomorrow. How meaningful a contribution can he be expected to make to the economic, social, and political life of the community, without having had the advantages offered by those understandings which the school proposes to give to all youth? To what extent may he be lacking a conception of the just demands of modern life upon the individual citizen? And ultimately, how reluctant may he be to support, through tax payments, the good system of education which is required by every person in this technological age?

Problems to be Considered

Americans are becoming increasingly aware of the struggle being waged by totalitarian communism to gain world domination. In the past fifteen years we have seen one country after another succumbing to these pressures. If the United States is to remain free, and more than this, to provide assistance and inspiration to weaker countries facing the same problem, she must have an educated citizenry. Why? Franklin Patterson points to five major developments the youth of today will face as citizens of tomorrow:

1. The revolution in science, technology, and production.
2. The explosive increase in mankind's population.
3. The struggle of mankind for political freedom, self-respect, dignity, and acceptance. Tomorrow's adults in the United

States will witness the further rise of the nonwestern world. They will see Africa in turmoil, India in ferment, and South-east Asia struggling for a better life.

4. The survival of healthy individualism.
5. The struggle for peace in an age of nuclear power (16:99-101).

In order to face these problems, Patterson continues;

1. We need to help tomorrow's adults to learn the best knowledge and wisdom of man's experience with freedom.
2. We need to provide them with tools for making democratic citizenship work. They need knowledge about our nation, our government, and the changing world. They need to know how to search for truth, how to think things through, how to discuss and decide, how to follow through as citizens.
3. We need to help them develop traits of character and behavior typical of people who are self-reliant and yet socially responsible (16:102).

How can these goals be met with any degree of success with over one-third of our population failing to avail themselves of the education and training offered in the modern high school?

Another aspect of the problem being given much publicity at the present time is juvenile delinquency. How is this related to a study of high school dropouts? Moore (13:51) reports that "approximately 61 per cent of the delinquents between the ages of eight and seventeen years are out of school." In another study, Brownell (4:52) says that delinquency is related to public schools in three ways: Schools may produce delinquency. Schools may help prevent delinquency. Schools may help deal with delinquents through curriculum and program activities.

Nationally, the largest number of high school dropouts occurs between the ninth and eleventh grades, or at the time the student is no longer bound by compulsory attendance laws. What factors or combination

of factors lead a student to leave school before graduation? What can be done to increase the school's holding power? Can the potential dropout be identified early enough and helped to solve enough of his problems so that he will remain in school? These questions cannot be answered satisfactorily enough to completely eliminate high school dropouts. However, since the ultimate goal of the schools in a democratic society is to approach as nearly as possible the ideal of serving all of the children of all of the people, an attempt will be made to present the best answers available at this time.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the term "dropout" will be applied to the student who has entered high school in the ninth grade but has withdrawn from school before graduation. The terms "withdrawals," "withdrawees," and "withdrawers" have been used by various authors to designate those students who failed to graduate.

A "comprehensive" high school, as defined by Conant (5:7) is one which "is expected to provide for all the youth living in a town, city, or district."

"Retardation," in this study will be used to denote the retaining of a student in an elementary grade for a second year, causing him then to be older than other pupils in his class.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

American Philosophy of Education Changes

The early history of the secondary schools in America states that their purpose was almost exclusively the preparation of students for college. This meant that the high school population was a fairly homogeneous group of students, for the most part from upper class families. It also meant that the curriculum was narrow and rigid. Guerin (10:4-5) reports from a Harvard University study that in 1870 there were eighty thousand high school students in America and that seventy-five per cent of these students attended college after graduation. The same study reports that by 1940, while the population of the United States had tripled, the enrollments in the secondary schools of the nation had multiplied ninety times. In contrast to the population growth the percentage of students entering college had reversed. At this time seventy-five per cent of the high school graduates looked forward to work, not college.

These facts have had or should have had a tremendous effect on the secondary school systems in this country. The pamphlet "Contemporary Challenge to American Education" sums the situation as follows:

The American attempt to provide universal twelve year education is without parallel in history. The educational system of most nations have usually been two-fold in character, with secondary schools for the bright, who are to become an elite, and the other schools for the masses.

Just as the purposes of the American schools are unprecedented, so are its achievements. To it the American people owe the unity

which has enabled them to master a continent and to forge from immigrant diversity a single person. It has helped to prevent the formation of rigid class barriers. It has fostered diversification of talent, the ingenuity, and productivity which has brought this society to the highest level of economic prosperity ever known. On it are based many of the great American scientific and technological advances. And, perhaps most important of all, the spiritual stamina and fervor for freedom which have preserved individual liberty and guarded equality of opportunity through war and hardship have been derived from American education (15:6-7).

In an attempt to adapt to the more democratic philosophy, many statements of the goals of education have been proposed, tested, and then accepted or rejected. The "Ten Imperative Needs of Youth" reflect this democratic philosophy and have been widely accepted as an ideal toward which American secondary schools should strive (9:110-111):

1. All youth need to develop saleable skills and those understandings and attitudes which make the worker an intelligent and productive participant in economic life.
2. All youth need to develop and maintain good health, and physical fitness and mental health.
3. All youth need to understand the rights and duties of the citizens of the democratic society and be diligent and competent in the performance of their obligations as members of the community and citizens of the state and nations and peoples of the world.
4. All youth need to understand the significance of the family for the individual and society and the conditions conducive to successful family life.
5. All youth need to know how to purchase and use goods and services intelligently, understanding both the values received by the consumer and the economic consequences of their acts.
6. All youth need to understand the method of science, the influence of science on human life and the main scientific facts concerning the nature of the world and of men.
7. All youth need opportunities to develop their capacities to appreciate beauty in literature, art, music, and nature.

8. All youth need to be able to use their leisure time well and budget it wisely, balancing activities that yield satisfaction to the individual with those that are socially useful.
9. All youth need to develop respect for other persons, to grow in their insight into ethical values and principles, and to be able to live co-operatively with others and to grow in the moral and spiritual values of life.
10. All youth need to grow in their ability to express their thoughts clearly and to read and listen with understanding.

The enormity of the problems facing American educators in providing for these needs of all youth becomes more apparent when it is realized that this means students of "every conceivable shade of intelligence, background, means, interest, and expectation" (10:5). The secondary school must find a place for every kind of student, whatever his hopes or abilities. It must provide for the heterogeneous mass and still "foster that fellow-feeling between human beings and human being which is the deepest root of democracy" (10:6). This then is the task of the comprehensive high school. Conant, in his recent report, The American High School Today, included "A Check List to Assist in Evaluating a Comprehensive High School," which emphasizes the scope of the problem facing the schools (5:19-20):

- A. Adequacy of general education for all as judged by:
 1. Offerings in English and American literature and composition
 2. Social studies, including American history
 3. Ability grouping in required courses
- B. Adequacy of nonacademic elective program as judged by:
 4. The vocational programs for boys and commercial programs for girls.

5. Opportunities for supervised work experience
6. Special provisions for very slow readers
- C. Special arrangements for the academically talented students:
 7. Special provisions for challenging the highly gifted
 8. Special instruction in developing reading skills
 9. Summer sessions from which able students may profit
 10. Individualized programs (absence of tracks or rigid programs)
 11. School day organized into seven or more instructional periods
- D. Other features:
 12. Adequacy of the guidance service
 13. Student morale
 14. Well-organized homerooms
 15. The success of the school in promoting an understanding between students with widely different academic abilities and vocational goals (effective social interaction among students).

American public schools have been slow to adjust to this change of philosophy, and since the standards of our educational systems are strongly middle-class oriented, many students are presented with too many discouraging obstacles. To them the best apparent solution is to remove themselves from school.

Previous Studies

As early as 1911 some educators, realizing that the American ideal of education for all was falling short of the goal, started research to attempt to identify the characteristics of the dropouts.

Not until 1942 did reports of studies begin to appear in which an effort had been made to establish criteria for the early identification of potential dropouts. An effort will be made here to report a few of the significant studies and their findings.

Feeling a need for evaluating their secondary school program, New York State undertook a comprehensive survey of students who left school during the academic year 1936-37. This study, reported by Eckert and Marshall, was predicated upon the assumptions that "the character of the students who leave secondary schools constitutes a valid measure of the quality of the school's contribution to effective living and that this test should rightfully be applied to each leaving pupil and not simply to the minority who receive diplomas" (7:8).

However, some of the findings are significant to the study of dropouts:

1. The former pupils, especially those in the larger communities had few contacts with adults.
2. The young people just out of school had little home life.
3. Lines of educational and recreational activity started in the school were usually discontinued immediately after the pupils left school.
 - a. Schools seldom made any provision for contact between in-school and out-of-school groups.
 - b. Reading activities of former pupils were meager and usually confined to inferior fiction.
 - c. Little attempt was made by former pupils to find out about or understand current events.
4. After the pupils left school they had very little contact with it.

- a. Teachers and school officers generally knew almost nothing about homes, or about the parents, or about the out-of-school activities of former pupils.
 - b. Former pupils did not consider the school an agency for advice, and seldom returned to school to seek it.
 - c. Many pupils questioned the ability of the school officers to give dependable advice on nonscholastic problems.
 - d. The exception to these generalizations is to be found in the responses of the boys who had graduated from the specialized vocational schools.
5. Although graduates seem to be better adjusted than the withdrawals, they also needed help after leaving school.
6. The guidance program for pupils in the schools was decidedly inadequate.
- a. Most former pupils stated that they had no advice about curriculum at the time they made a curriculum choice.
 - b. The school had little direct influence on the vocational choice of the pupils. Pupils had little information about various occupations, the required aptitudes, necessary training, the possibilities for advancement, the salary scales, or the opportunities for employment, on which to base their choices.
 - c. In many communities, the relationship between the school and industry was not cooperative. It was not unusual for school people to know very little about their local industries.
 - d. In general there had been consistent selection in the kind of pupils enrolled in the various curricula. The brightest pupils generally found themselves in the college-preparatory group, less intelligent pupils in the commercial group, and the least intelligent in the industrial group. Various selective factors, all related, may have caused this classification. Home background, occupation of parent, wealth, interests, and other factors may have been influential, but it seemed from the interviews that in general only one factor, intelligence, had received specific attention by the schools. Industrial courses were given to pupils who were not able to pass any other courses, regardless of their aptitude for industrial work.

7. Pupils left school with certain attitudes which made it difficult for them to adjust themselves to the out-of-school situation.
 - a. Regardless of the community they lived in, or the occupation of their parents, former pupils wanted white-collar jobs and were dissatisfied with anything less.
 - b. Pupils left school under the impression that it was wrong and weak to seek advice.
 - c. Pupils were not at all realistic about their plans for the future. Many looked forward to entrance into the professions even though there was little chance that these hopes might be realized (7:311-315).

It is not difficult to recognize the fact that at the time of this study New York, one of our most progressive states, was falling far short of meeting the needs of its youth. If it was inadequate even for those who had graduated, it is alarming to think how much less prepared the dropouts were to assume their places in a democratic society and rapidly changing world of work.

A later but less comprehensive study was conducted by Cook (6:191-96). His conclusions were reached after comparing ninety-five withdrawers with two hundred non-withdrawers, selected at random but with identical per cent of grade and sex distribution with the total school population in a large metropolitan school, presumably in the East. The results of this study are listed:

1. Since few students are sufficiently retarded to reach age sixteen while still in the eighth grade, the percentage of withdrawers who are in this grade is less than the percentage of eighth grade non-withdrawers.
2. The percentage of students who withdraw while in the ninth grade is greater than the percentage of ninth graders in the total school population. This condition probably results from the fact that the bulk of the withdrawing students

reach the age of sixteen while in the ninth grade. The effect of the maximum compulsory attendance age is best indicated by the fact that fifty-four and eight tenth per cent of the withdrawers involved in this study were, at the time of their withdrawal, sixteen years of age.

3. The percentage of male withdrawers in the ninth grade exceeds the percentage of non-withdrawers.
4. Withdrawers in the eighth, ninth, and tenth grades are older than the non-withdrawers in that grade.
5. Youngest children are less likely to withdraw and children who are between older siblings are more likely to withdraw than those in other family positions.
6. The records of withdrawers reveal more high school transfers than do non-withdrawers.
7. Withdrawers exhibit greater education retardation than do non-withdrawers.
8. Non-withdrawers have earned higher scholastic marks than have withdrawers.
9. Non-withdrawers exhibit better attendance records than do withdrawers.
10. Withdrawers earn failing marks in a larger number of their courses than do non-withdrawers.
11. Non-withdrawers score higher measured I. Q.'s than do withdrawers.
12. The personal adjustment of the withdrawer toward their school, home, and family, and health is poorer than that of the non-withdrawer.

Cook's interviews with the dropouts revealed a wide difference between the reasons for withdrawing initially given by students and the factors school counselors believed to be basic causes for withdrawing from school. This may be seen in Table I (6:195).

Cook summarizes that most high school dropouts are motivated by failures and deficiencies in the school program. At least twenty-eight

TABLE I
REASONS GIVEN FOR WITHDRAWAL AND COUNSELOR JUDGMENT
OF REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

Given by Student	%	Clinical Judgment of Counselor	%
Administrative request	2.3	Failure & retardation	34.9
Don't like school	20.9	Home circumstances	28.1
Failing courses	9.4	Marriage	20.2
Left home	2.3	Conflicts with teacher	7.2
Marriage--male	4.6	Feelings of rejection	9.6
female	16.3		
Needed at home	4.6		
Going to work	39.6		

per cent were forced to drop out by home and family circumstances which could not have been influenced by the school or its program. However, in this study measurable differences do exist between withdrawers and non-withdrawers. No one factor or simple combination of factors distinguished the two groups. It would seem, rather, that in most cases school withdrawals result from a multiplicity of factors. Operating together, these present the individual student with seemingly insoluble problems he can most easily meet by withdrawing from school.

The results of a 1955-56 study of the two hundred and eight dropouts from the Evansville, Indiana, high schools reported by Sneep (18:49-54) found seven factors which frequently influenced students to drop out of school. These were truancy, poor home environment, socio-economic maladjustment, education maladjustment, poor orientation, low reading ability, and frequent failures.

As a result of this study the following hypotheses were set up and attempts were made to correct or alleviate the disturbing factors:

1. Behind every case of chronic absenteeism lies a social problem of some kind. Homes of first offenders were visited by an attendance counselor. If the situation continued, follow-up visits were made. The cooperation of social agencies and the juvenile court were enlisted in extreme cases.
2. Home conflicts often produce emotional flare ups in school. Anti-social attitudes develop which often lead to behavior which will involve the police or the juvenile courts. In order to resolve delicate family situations members of the counseling staff visit homes. Sometimes they recommend that the child be transferred to a school outside his district or they refer the case to a social agency or the juvenile court.
3. The schools have cut their costs to the students to the lowest possible point. However, there are still many voluntary,

self-imposed costs such as class rings, school sweaters, and expenses connected with extra-curricular activities.

4. Aptitude tests are administered to all entering freshmen. Counselors review the past grades of all students scoring in the upper and lower decile. If these grades confirm the test results, special programs with special subjects are arranged and the students are assigned to teachers who have the understanding and the preparation for handling such cases.
5. Freshman orientation meetings are held for both parents and students prior to entrance into high school. Orientation is continued throughout the year in homerooms, classrooms and assemblies.
6. Remedial reading programs have been introduced in grades four through eight with very satisfactory results. A developmental reading program, entirely voluntary, is a part of the high school curriculum.
7. Counselors watch the potential dropouts carefully. Program changes are recommended if circumstances seem to indicate a need.

The report of the Evansville study and the program that evolved from the study did not indicate how successful the new program has been in reducing dropouts.

Educators in Hastings, Nebraska, concerned about the number of students not finishing their education, not only studied the characteristics of the potential dropouts but also used this information to reduce early withdrawals. Following is the criteria for the early identification of the potential dropout (11:39-40):

1. Excessive absence
2. Placement in the lowest decile on mental ability tests
3. Broken home
4. Failure in school subjects
5. Minimal family education

6. Low family economic status
7. Male sex
8. Lack of participation in school activities
9. School retardation
10. Low score on a standardized reading test

Using this list the Guidance Committee of this school system prepares a list of the students who have four or more of the above characteristics. These potential dropouts are assigned to teachers for whom they are doing their best work or teachers of subjects of greatest interest. The results of this procedure are not conclusive because of the many variables involved. However, the results are definitely encouraging.

Based upon the hypothesis that personality traits might be related to school persistence, a study was conducted in the Arsenal Technical High School of Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1955 (1:107-109). The researcher used comparative groups of twenty-five graduates and dropouts. The California Mental Health Analysis was administered to each participant and followed by personal interviews. The mothers of both groups were also interviewed.

A significant difference was found in the personality adjustment between graduates and dropouts as measured on the mental health analysis. A difference in the statements of the two groups of mothers indicated that there was a relationship between the scholastic attainment of the pupils and the attitudes of the mothers toward the school. More mothers of graduates than mothers of dropouts responded "yes" to the questions

about whether--when the child started high school they expected him to graduate;--they thought the child was happy in high school;--they would or would not have been concerned about his dropping out before graduation; --they feel that he has made good adjustment since leaving high school;-- and they enjoyed school when they were young.

All of the graduates thought the decision to finish high school had been wise. All except one had been happy in school. Over one-half of the dropouts felt that the decision to withdraw had been wise. All except two dropouts said that they were happier out of school than they had been in school. Neither group thought that they had been given adequate preparation for employment. Graduates felt they had received considerable preparation for life in general, but they wanted more specific training for employment. It was the opinion of the dropouts that their time in high school had been wasted.

It is apparent from the studies cited that there is a basic agreement as to factors influencing leaving school early. Another question often raised is whether the size of the secondary school has any relationship to its effectiveness. Since the subject here is school dropouts, this phase of the small school versus the large school will be considered.

The United States Office of Education in 1950 published a report of a nationwide study, "Holding Power and Size of High Schools" (8), which had significance especially in relation to Conant's evaluation of the small school. This study reveals that of each 100 students enrolled in the fifth grade in 1938-39, 20 dropped out prior to the ninth grade, 15 more dropped out during the first year of high school or before the

beginning of the tenth grade, 12 more left during the second year or before the beginning of the third year, 9 during the third year or before the beginning of the fourth year, and 2 more left before they successfully completed the last year. This report states:

A question of why pupils drop out of high school and when involves a wide variety of causes and forces. A few of these are: distances from a suitable high school, the unavailability of instructional programs sufficiently differentiated to meet the specialized needs of all types of boys and girls, poor attendance records and retardation in elementary schools, the need to supplement the family income or to help out at home, the lure of jobs, the lack of teachers and other educational specialists capable of helping youth understand themselves and the community in which they live, and the failure of so many high schools to deal with problems which are meaningful to youth or related to their experience. Many of these causes and forces are influenced by the size of the high schools, their staffs and their facilities, and others are not. The larger schools can, and often do, offer a wider variety of subjects and other educational services; they usually have better leadership; their staffs contain a variety of specialists; they are better situated to develop a broader cooperative school-work program. The smaller schools, however, are often located closer to the homes of the pupils attending them; they can more easily know all of their boys and girls and the homes from which they come. These schools often retain many of the values of an intimate, closely knit family setting. Rural communities are also simpler in social and economic structure. The high schools serving them can more easily than those of the cities become true community centers (8:19-20).

The following statements summarize the findings of the federal report related to this study:

1. From whatever angle this problem is studied, the high schools fall far short of their announced goal of serving all youth.
2. Two of every five boys and girls drop out after entering high school.
3. Well over one-half of all youth either do not enter high school or drop out before they graduate.
4. The indices of most of the states show few significant holding power differences between the reorganized and the traditionally organized high schools; those recording significant

differences are more often in favor of schools organized as junior-senior high schools.

5. No clear, consistent evidence was found to demonstrate the superiority in holding power of the large high schools over the small ones. In many states the small high schools seem to retain youth better than the middle-sized schools; in a few states the smallest schools excel even the large schools in holding power.

Table II (8:14-15) shows the number of pupils remaining in the twelfth grade per one-hundred who enrolled in the ninth grade of public high schools by size in 1946. This shows the holding power of Washington state secondary schools compared to the national average.

Methods of Reducing the Percentage of Dropouts

As has been previously stated, the decision to leave school prior to graduation usually is the result of more than one factor. Bent and Kronenberg have compiled a list of suggestions which might be effective in reducing the number of high school dropouts:

1. The school curriculum should be adapted to the intellectual capacities, interests and needs of the pupils. It appears that we cannot make the pupil fit the curriculum. A more functional course of studies built upon the immediate needs and interests of modern youth will increase the holding power by creating more interest.
2. Increased guidance service which might help to direct pupils into courses more suited to their abilities should be provided.
3. The introduction of more vocational training would hold some students.
4. Improved child-labor laws would no doubt keep some children in school.
5. Increased health service should be provided in the schools.
6. Making secondary education accessible to all by means of consolidation and transportation would undoubtedly hold some pupils.

TABLE II
RELATIVE HOLDING POWER OF HIGH SCHOOLS
ACCORDING TO SIZE

Total Number of Students Enrolled	Number Graduating per 100 Enrolled in Ninth Grade	
	Washington	National Average
10-99	61	64
100-199	60	61
200-299	61	61
300-499	67	62
500+	63	70

7. Tuition of nonresident pupils should be paid by the district in which they live or by the state.
8. Reduction in the number of failures would reduce retardation and elimination. There is a recent tendency to permit all pupils to pursue a grade a year and not maintain definite subject-matter standards as a basis for promotion.
9. Compulsory attendance laws should be extended to include secondary education, and these should be rigidly enforced.
10. Better articulation between divisions of our school system and between grades should be provided.
11. Closer home and school relationships will gain greater cooperation on the part of parents in keeping pupils in school.
12. Schools can and should reduce the cost of personal expenses. They can absorb the cost of various activities, decrease emphasis upon expensive uniforms and class jewelry, and require less material and supplies in many cases.
13. The school should provide more opportunities and help students find more opportunities to earn money by part-time work.
14. In most cases, the only honors given by the school are limited and of an academic nature, which does not act as an incentive for the majority. The school could provide for more honors of various types so that each pupil would have a chance to earn one.
15. Pupils who are required to be absent from school for long periods because of illness or accidents, but who are able to study at home or in a hospital, should be kept in continued contact with the school and aided in keeping up with their courses without. If this plan is followed, such pupils will be able to rejoin their classes without loss due to absence. Many schools are employing "home teachers" who devote their full time to this work.
16. Watch for symptoms of withdrawal, and make an effort to retain those who show the symptoms. Various symptoms have been found by several investigators which help indicate potential withdrawees. Students are potential withdrawees who show regression in attendance and in scholarship; who are overage for their grade and who repeated grades in elementary school, which probably caused the overageness; who failed one or more subjects in high school and had to

repeat; and who take little interest in the school and engage in few extracurricular activities (3:180-181).

Guidance Implications

The guidance implications for any study of dropouts is adequately stated in the National Education Association pamphlet, "High-School Dropouts" (13:17-19):

The role of guidance in holding the potential dropout in school is a vital one. Being in an ideal position to study the whole child and to work with individual teachers to help him, the guidance department can do much to identify potential dropouts by applying the criteria which have been found typical. Once identified, they can then proceed to apply measures to counteract the influences pulling the child away from school.

Part of the function of a constructive guidance program is, of course, the administration of a meaningful testing program. This is one means, together with cumulative records, for identifying areas of interest and ability, after which the pupil can be helped to find the classes of major interest to him. Too often the pupil who lacks general interest in school does not even know that there are courses he might find useful. He can also be helped to develop attitudes which will fit him for success both in school and in later life. He can be encouraged to channel his aggressive attitudes into acceptable behavior.

In one school, the drop-out rate fell from 45 per cent to 26 per cent between 1943 and 1954. This result was attributed largely to a comprehensive guidance program aimed at drawing youths into the curriculum for which they were particularly suited and at making the most of their own natural interests and abilities.

Some schools have found that orientation classes help meet the needs of the potential dropout, in that they enable him to learn, in a pleasant way, what the school has to offer to him as an individual and to all young people as they prepare to take their place in the world.

Some attention should be given to the matter of school-to-school transfers. This creates a problem for many children, who find it difficult to adjust to their new school, and who therefore experience a feeling of hopelessness which may lead to the desire to withdraw. It is believed that an appropriate guidance program on the part of the new school could greatly reduce this problem by helping to make

the pupil feel at home and by eliminating as many of the problems he faces as possible.

Parents should also be encouraged, as far as possible, to move from area to area only between school years. Although moves are inevitable and although they are usually attended by certain discouragements on the part of the children, this could be diminished by eliminating mid-year moves when possible. It is always easier for a child to transfer at the beginning of a year than during the term, at which time his feelings of strangeness are increased by being behind in some of the work.

In one school, which recognized that the break between junior high school and senior high school was a major encouragement to withdraw from school, a guidance program was instituted which began with the pupils preparing to leave junior high school. They were indoctrinated in what the high school had to offer and the ultimate value of completing their education. Emphasis was placed on social and emotional development as well as on the importance of success in academic work. This program was followed by frequent checks on the pupils after they entered the high school, with the result that the freshman curriculum was revised in the light of the pupils' needs and interests, special programs were developed for slow learners, and instruction was given in career and professional opportunities, with stress upon the value of formal training. As a result of this new approach, the percentage of dropouts decreased sharply.

Many dropouts trace the beginnings of their school troubles to their elementary years. Failures during the early years are magnified as the pupil progresses in school. Then, even if he chooses to attend a vocational school, he finds that this early record is against him, so that there is nothing for him to do but "kill time" in a program adapted neither to his interests nor to his abilities. The earlier these steps to drop-out identification and remedy can be taken, the more constructive and successful their effect will be.

Some schools have experimented with plans in which a few pupils were assigned to individual teachers, who were then to take a particular interest in them and their problems. As a result, these pupils came to feel that at least one teacher was especially interested in them, and accordingly, this personal relationship which developed out of such intensive work resulted in improved education and adjustment. This is another expression of the need of the pupil to feel that he "belongs."

Limitations of Many Studies

There are factors that need to be considered when evaluating any dropout study. Some of these are stated by Livingston:

Many previous studies have been hampered by the fact that relevant data were incomplete and unrecorded. Many examples of generalizations based on complete data may be found in the literature. Where comparisons have been made, a limited range of data has been often used. Few if any studies have attempted to describe the degree of relationship found between early school-leaving and the factors studied. In general, the researcher had been content to test for statistical significance an observed difference between graduates and dropouts based on a particular index nor has evidence been available concerning the relationship between combinations of characteristics or composite indices and the persistence of students in school (12:196).

According to Livingston, other factors which limit some of the previous studies are (12:202):

1. The effect of the philosophy and climate of the school on the decision of the student to withdraw is not known.
2. It is possible only to speculate as to the inter-relationship of the school and the student's family and home background.
3. No means of identifying the level of motivation of the individual student to achieve at a given level of education has been included in previous research.
4. Inferences as to the influence of the socio-economic level of the student's family may lead to erroneous conclusions.

Summary of Background Material

American secondary education is changing from the rigid college preparatory curriculum of the 1870 for-the-select-few to a curriculum which will meet the needs of all the high school aged youth. Evidence that this ideal has not been reached may be seen in the high per cent of students who find the school program so inadequate that they withdraw before graduation.

Many studies have been conducted attempting to find the basic causes of high school dropouts. These studies seem to indicate that often many factors combine to make leaving school desirable. Some of the factors involved are broken homes, school retardation, failure in high school subjects, minimal family education, low family economic status, lack of participation in school activities, and low scores on standardized reading tests. Studies also seem to indicate that excessive absences frequently precede complete withdrawal.

Awareness of the factors contributing to early school leaving can be helpful in identifying the potential dropout. A teacher or counselor who will take a personal interest in a student, a comprehensive curriculum which will allow for individual differences, and opportunities for working part-time would encourage some students to stay in school. The key to the situation, however, seems to be a constructive guidance program.

CHAPTER III

APPROACH TO THE STUDY

Setting of the Study

The Moxee Consolidated School district is located just east of Yakima, Washington. The patrons of this district represent almost every socio-economic strata. In the northern part of the district many professional people live near the Yakima Country Club. Nearer the Yakima River are the homes of laboring people. Residents of both of these areas work in Yakima. The central part of the Moxee School District was settled by Dutch farmers. This area is still occupied by farms. Most of these are diversified open farms although there are a few hop ranches and orchards. The southern part of the district is also a farming area. However, most of the ranchers are French Catholics and the farms are generally devoted to hops or open farming. Usually the children from these families attend the Holy Rosary School until they complete the eighth grade, and many of them attend the parochial high schools in Yakima. Residents of Moxee City in general work either for nearby ranchers or in the service stations or grocery stores in the area. Also in this region are several Mexican families employed on the ranches. The seasonal work on these hop ranches brings in several transient families during the fall and spring.

Review of Literature

A survey of professional periodicals revealed a growing concern with the number of students failing to complete their high school education.

Educators, sociologists, and economists are concerned with the impact the uneducated will have on our schools, government, culture, and future economy. Much is being written on the subject of high school dropouts. However, because of the many variables involved, any attempt to reduce the percentage of dropouts in a school district must begin with an analysis of the situation within the particular district. With this in mind the investigator read intensively to determine the best procedure to be followed in setting up the present study, to establish criteria against which the findings of the present study might be compared, and to find how the percentages of dropouts had been reduced in other school districts.

Procedure Selected for This Study

It was felt that if this study was to have significance for the Moxee Consolidated School District, it must be current. Therefore the scope of this study was limited to those enrolled at Moxee High School in September, 1956, who withdrew before June, 1960.

Attendance records of the Moxee Consolidated School District for the period covered by the study were analyzed first, to determine the value of the study to the district and second, to secure the names of former pupils who had withdrawn before graduation. Those students who were known to have transferred to other schools were not considered as part of this study. Cumulative record files were used to find addresses of the former students; in several instances it was necessary to consult friends still in school to locate the dropouts. Some of the boys had enlisted in the armed services; it was possible to interview some of them

when they visited school on furlough. Since some were in the service or had moved out of the area, it was impossible to contact all of the dropouts.

An interview questionnaire was decided upon as the most effective method for securing the necessary data. It seemed that this type instrument would overcome some of the weaknesses of the unstructured interview or the questionnaire alone. This method of information gathering made it possible for the investigator to present the questions to each person interviewed in the same manner. It also allowed the subject of the interview to ask for an explanation if he did not understand the question completely. This research technique also eliminated any follow-up procedures. The interview questionnaire, found in Appendix A, was developed after a careful analysis of several questionnaire and reports of previous studies of dropouts.

The personal interviews were sometimes conducted in the dropouts' homes and, as mentioned above, sometimes conducted in the counseling office of the school while the former student was visiting or at the time of withdrawal.

Additional information concerning each of the dropouts interviewed was secured from the permanent record cards. The Juvenile Court of Yakima County provided information concerning possible court records of the individuals interviewed.

After interviewing all available former students who had failed to graduate, the results were tabulated.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations in this study is that some of the interviews were conducted too soon after the withdrawal from school. In the opinion of the writer many of the students did not have a realistic viewpoint of the factors leading to withdrawal or of the employment situation they were facing.

Another factor which may have limited the accuracy of some of the responses is the fact that the researcher was for most of the students a former teacher and/or counselor. This may have inhibited some of the answers, particularly in the areas dealing with likes and dislikes of particular subjects and/or teachers.

In some of the areas investigated it would have been desirable to have had comparative responses or figures from students who did graduate or who are still in school.

The percentages of dropouts are not completely accurate because they do not include students who completed the eighth grade in the district but did not enroll in high school.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

Analysis of Enrollment and Dropout Figures

Since this study covers a period of four academic years, 1956-57 to 1959-60, inclusive, the enrollment and dropout figures have been analyzed for each year and then the figures for the four-year period tabulated.

Table III shows during the school year 1956-57 a total of 253 students, 137 boys and 116 girls, enrolled. Twenty of these students, 10 boys and 10 girls, or 7.9 per cent, withdrew during the year or did not re-enter at the beginning of the next year. In the ninth grade 40 boys enrolled and 3 or 7.5 per cent dropped out; 38 girls enrolled and 2 or 5.26 per cent withdrew. Six point forty-one per cent of the students enrolled in the ninth grade then terminated their high school career. The tenth grade had a total enrollment of 74, 38 boys and 36 girls. Three boys or 7.9 per cent and 6 girls or 16.67 per cent withdrew. This was a total loss of 12.16 per cent of the class. There were 61 juniors, 34 boys and 27 girls. Three boys, 8.83 per cent, and 2 girls, 7.41 per cent, dropped out. This represented class loss of 8.2 per cent. The smallest percentage of dropouts occurred in the senior class of 40. Only one boy withdrew; this was 4.0 per cent of the boys enrolled and 2.5 per cent of the class enrollment.

Table IV shows during the following year, 1957-58, 280 students enrolled, 148 boys and 122 girls. Twenty-three students, 11 boys and 12 girls, or 8.51 per cent, withdrew from school or did not re-enter in

TABLE III
ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENT AND DROPOUTS OF
EAST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL DURING 1956-57

Grade	Enrollment			:	Dropouts			:	Percentage		
	boys	girls	total		boys	girls	total		boys	girls	total
9	40	38	78	:	3	2	5	:	7.50	5.26	6.41
10	38	36	74	:	3	6	9	:	7.90	16.67	12.16
11	34	27	61	:	3	2	5	:	8.83	7.41	8.20
12	25	15	40	:	1	0	1	:	4.00	0	2.50
:											
Totals	137	116	253	:	10	10	20	:	7.30	8.61	7.90

TABLE IV

ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENT AND DROPOUTS OF
EAST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL DURING 1957-58

Grade	Enrollment			:	Dropouts			:	Percentage		
	boys	girls	total		boys	girls	total		boys	girls	total
9	58	40	98	:	4	5	9	:	6.90	12.50	9.18
10	43	31	74	:	6	3	9	:	13.95	9.67	12.16
11	23	28	51	:	1	2	3	:	4.34	7.14	5.88
12	24	23	47	:	1	1	2	:	4.17	4.35	4.26
				:				:			
Totals	148	122	270	:	11	12	23	:	7.43	9.84	8.51

the fall of 1958. This represented a loss of 7.43 of the boys and 9.84 per cent of the girls.

The ninth grade enrollment was 98. Four boys or 6.90 per cent and 5 girls or 12.50 per cent withdrew. The 9 who withdrew were 9.18 per cent of the class enrollment. There were 43 boys and 31 girls enrolled in the tenth grade. Six boys or 13.95 per cent and 3 girls, 9.68 per cent, withdrew. This was a loss of 12.16 per cent in the sophomore class. Fifty-one students entered the eleventh grade during the year, 23 boys and 28 girls. The 5.88 per cent of dropouts from this class was the result of 1 boy, 4.34 per cent, and 2 girls, 7.14 per cent, withdrawing. Again, the senior class had the smallest loss. One of the 24 boys, 4.17 per cent, and 1 of the 23 girls, 4.35 per cent, did not complete the year. Of the 47 enrolled, 2 or 4.26 per cent withdrew.

As shown on Table V, 264 pupils enrolled and 31, 11.74 per cent, terminated their high school education during the school year 1958-59. Eighteen, or 12.00 per cent, of the 150 boys and 13, or 11.40 per cent of the 114 girls left school. Figures for the freshman class indicate 46 boys and 37 girls enrolled for a total of 83. Eleven, or 13.25 per cent, dropped out--7 boys, 15.21 per cent and 4 girls, 10.81 per cent. The tenth grade enrollment, 51 boys and 28 girls, totaled 79. Four boys, 7.84 per cent, and 3 girls, 10.71 per cent, withdrew during the year. This was a class loss of 8.86 per cent. The withdrawal of 5 of the 33 boys and 5 of the 23 girls of the eleventh grade reduced the enrollment by 17.85 per cent. Fifteen point fifty-one per cent of the eleventh

TABLE V
ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENT AND DROPOUTS OF
EAST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL DURING 1958-59

Grade	Enrollment			:	Dropouts			:	Percentage		
	boys	girls	total		boys	girls	total		boys	girls	total
9	46	37	83	:	7	4	11	:	15.21	10.81	13.25
10	51	28	79	:	4	3	7	:	7.84	10.71	8.86
11	33	23	56	:	5	5	10	:	15.15	21.73	17.85+
12	20	26	46	:	2	1	3	:	10.00	3.84	6.52
Totals	150	114	264	:	18	13	31	:	12.00	11.40	11.74

grade boys and 21.73 per cent of the eleventh grade girls dropped out. The senior class of 46, 20 boys and 26 girls, lost 2 boys and 1 girl or 6.52 per cent of its enrollment. Ten per cent of the boys and 3.84 per cent of the senior girls dropped out.

Table VI summarizes the enrollment and dropout figures for the final year of this study. The total enrollment during 1959-60 was 280. One hundred fifty-six boys enrolled and 16 or 10.25 per cent dropped out. Ten, or 8.06, of the 124 girls enrolled withdrew. The total dropout percentage for this year was 9.29. An analysis of these figures reveals that there were 38 boys and 38 girls in the ninth grade enrollment of 76. Five boys and 4 girls withdrew during the year. The percentages of ninth grade dropouts were 13.16 per cent boys and 10.53 per cent girls, or a total of 11.84 per cent. Forty boys and 34 girls enrolled in the sophomore class, making the total 74. Of these, 3 boys, 7.50 per cent, and 3 girls, 8.82 per cent, withdrew. The percentage of class loss was 8.10 per cent. Eighty-two juniors entered school, 50 boys and 32 girls. Seven boys or 14.0 per cent withdrew as did 1 girl, 3.12 per cent. This reduced the junior enrollment by 9.76 per cent. Again the senior class lost the smallest percentage of its members, as only 6.25 per cent withdrew. Twenty-eight boys and 20 girls enrolled. One boy, 3.57 per cent, and 2 girls, 10.0 per cent, withdrew.

Table VII reveals that during the four-year period covered by the study, 99 students, or 9.28 per cent of the 1067 students enrolled, did not complete their high school education. The percentages of dropouts by grades were ninth grade boys, 10.44; girls, 9.80; and total,

TABLE VI
ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENT AND DROPOUTS OF
EAST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL DURING 1959-60

Grade	Enrollment			:	Dropouts			:	Percentage		
	boys	girls	total		boys	girls	total		boys	girls	total
9	38	38	76	:	5	4	9	:	13.16	10.53	11.84
10	40	34	74	:	3	3	6	:	7.50	8.82	8.10
11	50	32	82	:	7	1	8	:	14.00	3.12	9.76
12	28	20	48	:	1	2	3	:	3.57	10.00	6.25
Totals	156	124	280	:	16	10	26	:	10.25	8.06	9.29

TABLE VII

ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENTS AND DROPOUTS OF
EAST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL DURING FOUR-YEAR
PERIOD 1956-1960

Grade	Enrollment			Dropouts			Percentage		
	boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total
9	182	153	335	19	15	34	10.44	9.80	10.15
10	172	129	301	15	15	30	8.72	11.63	9.97
11	140	110	250	16	10	26	11.43	9.09	10.40
12	97	84	181	5	4	9	5.15	4.76	4.97
Totals	591	476	1067	55	44	99	9.31	9.24	9.28

10.15; tenth grade boys, 8.72; girls, 11.63; and total, 9.97; eleventh grade boys, 11.43; girls, 9.09; and total 10.40; and twelfth grade boys, 5.15; girls, 4.76; and total, 4.97.

Subjects of the Interviews and Some of Their Characteristics

The 99 listed as dropouts will give a slightly inaccurate picture because 9 of this number entered and withdrew from school twice. This would mean actually that only 90 students dropped out. Of these 90 dropouts it was possible for the researchers to locate and interview 37. Twenty-six boys and 11 girls were interviewed. Table VIII indicates the grade level at which these students withdrew. Of the boys interviewed, 6 had left school during their freshman year, 10 during their sophomore year, 8 during their junior year, and 2 during their senior year. Of the girls interviewed, 1 had dropped out during the ninth grade, 7 during the tenth grade, and 3 during the eleventh grade.

The ages of the dropouts ranged from 15 to 18 for the girls and from 15 to 19 for the boys. In comparing the grade level at the time of withdrawal with the age, it can be seen that 3 girls who dropped out in their sophomore year were at least one year overage for their group and 1 eleventh grade dropout was overage. In other words, 36.3 per cent were at least one year retarded.

Table IX shows the elementary grade level at which these retardations and failures occurred. Fourteen of the 26 boys interviewed had failed one grade in the elementary school and 1 boy had failed two grades. This means that 57.7 per cent of the male subjects of this

TABLE VIII
AGE AND GRADE LEVEL OF DROPOUTS
AT TIME OF WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

Grade Level	Boys					Girls					Total					
	Age 15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18	Age 19	Age 15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18	Age 19						
9	2	3	1	1	:	7	:	1	:	1	:	8				
10		4	3	3	:	10	:	3	3	1	:	17				
11		1	5	1	1	:	8	:	2	1	:	11				
12					1	:	1	:			:	1				
Totals	2	8	9	5	2	:	26	:	1	3	5	2	:	11	:	37

TABLE IX
GRADES FAILED IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Grades Repeated	Boys	Girls	Total
	Number Repeating	Number Repeating	
1	7	1	8
2	3	3	6
3	1	0	1
4	2	1	3
5	1	0	1
6	2	0	2
Totals	16*	5	21

*One student repeated two grades.

study had failed at least once. Five of the 11 girls, 45.4 per cent, had failed one grade, none had failed more than one.

Table X reveals that the pattern of failure continues in high school for most dropouts. Three boys and 1 girl had not remained in school long enough to have semester grades recorded. Six students, 4 boys and 2 girls, had no failures. One failure was recorded for 4 boys and 1 girl. Five boys and 2 girls had two failures recorded and 1 girl had three. Four failures were recorded for 2 boys and 1 girl. Three boys and 1 girl had a record of four failures. Two boys and 1 girl had failed six subjects and 1 boy and 1 girl had failed eight subjects. One boy had recorded nine failures and one had nineteen.

These figures might lead one to the assumption that all the dropouts were below average in ability. However, a comparison of IQ scores of the dropouts with those of the East Valley High School graduating class of 1960, as shown in Table XI, reveals that only 11.77 per cent of the dropouts had IQ's lower than any of the graduates. The IQ scores were determined by the California Test of Mental Maturity or the Otis Quick Score Test. Scores were not available for three of the dropouts who had transferred into the district.

None of the dropouts had IQ scores above 110. Seven of the graduates, 17.07 per cent, had scores above this point. Twenty-two dropouts, 64.70 per cent, and 29 graduates, 70.73 per cent, had scores in the average range of from 90 to 110. Eight dropouts, 23.53 per cent, and 5 graduates, 12.20 per cent, had IQ's ranging between 80 and 89. Four dropouts, or 11.77 per cent, had IQ's below 80.

TABLE X
NUMBER OF FAILURES RECORDED IN SEMESTER REPORTS

	Boys	Girls
0	4	2
1	4	1
2	5	2
3	0	1
4	2	1
5	3	1
6	2	1
7		
8	1	1
9	1	
19	1	
Grades not available	3	
Total	26	11

TABLE XI

I. Q. SCORES OF DROPOUTS COMPARED WITH
THOSE OF 1960 GRADUATING CLASS OF E. V. H. S.

Range	Dropouts		1960 Graduates	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
111-125			7	17.07
90-110	22	64.70	29	70.73
80-89	8	23.53	5	12.20
Below 80	4	11.77	0	0
Not available:	3			
	37	100.00	41	100.00

Based on 34, the number of scores available.

These figures may then be interpreted to mean that while a large percentage of dropouts have below average IQ scores, other students with comparable ability have graduated.

School Subjects Most Enjoyed and Least Enjoyed

Each person interviewed was asked to state the subjects they most enjoyed and least enjoyed. He was also asked whether this was because he liked the subject, the teacher, or both. As can be seen in Table XII, it is evident that no conclusions can be drawn from the results. The subjects least enjoyed seem to be in the areas of required courses, as shown in Table XIII.

The dropouts were also asked whether there were subjects they would like to have taken which were not offered. Twenty-two replied negatively. Five expressed a desire for French; three for Spanish; four for auto-mechanics; one for diesel mechanics, agriculture, speech, debate, drama, physiology, and additional business courses. Four would like to have had art. (Art and Spanish were added to the curriculum in September, 1959.)

Reasons Given for Leaving School

A list of reasons for leaving school was read to each person interviewed. The respondent was asked to indicate his reasons for leaving school. If more than one factor influenced the decision, he was asked to state his reasons in the order of their importance. The summary of this data appears in Table XIV.

TABLE XII
FAVORITE HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECTS OF DROPOUTS AND
REASONS FOR LIKING THE SUBJECT*

Subject	: Liked : Subject	: Liked : Teacher	: Liked Both : Subject & Teacher	: Total
Industrial Arts	8		4	12
English	6	1	2	10**
History	8		1	9
Biology	3	1	4	8
Math	5	1	3	9
Band	4		1	5
Choir	3			3
Home Economics	1		1	2
Bookkeeping			1	1
Typing			1	1
Economics			1	1
Latin			1	1
Sociology	1			1
Science	1			1
Literature			1	1
None				1
Totals	40	3	21	64

*Several persons indicated more than one choice

**One person did not give a reason for their preference

TABLE XIII
REASONS GIVEN BY DROPOUTS
FOR DISLIKING HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Subject	Disliked Subject	Disliked Teacher	Disliked Both Subject & Teacher	Total
English	11	1		12
History	5	1		6
Math	9	2	1	12
Biology	2		3	5
General Science	1	3		4
Consumer Economics	2			2
Spanish	1			1
P. E.		1		1
None				2
Totals	31	8	4	45

TABLE XIV
REASONS GIVEN FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

	Order of Importance		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Suspended or Expelled	8		
Marriage	7	1	
Had trouble with or failed a certain subject	4	4	3
Wanted to work	3	2	2
Illness or physical defect	2		
Courses didn't meet needs	2	1	1
Lacked credits, couldn't graduate with class	2	1	
Family needed financial help	1		
Discouraged because couldn't learn	1	2	2
Lacked funds, wanted spending money	1	2	
No opportunity to work part time			1
School didn't offer the subjects wanted	1		
Friends were out of school		1	
Felt too old for school	1	1	
Change from school of 2700 to one of 240 too great	1		
Wanted to service requirement met	1		
Was looking for job, walked into recruiting office	1		
No answer		13	24

How School Might Have Prevented Dropout

This question should have been very revealing but may have been inaccurate because of the time lapse.

As shown in Table XV, ten of the dropouts felt that they would have profited from smaller classes with more individual help. Since none of the classes in East Valley High School are very large, the important part of this response is "more individual help." This is substantiated by the indication of six respondents that more contact with the teachers would have been beneficial. One indicated that he had needed more help with subjects. Eight persons in the study would have liked to have had more information about different jobs and professions; four asked for more specific training on a job; and six would have liked the opportunity of working part time. Five of the dropouts felt that more participation in school activities would have encouraged them to remain in school. Two persons would liked to have had more specific advice on getting along with people and more help in choosing school courses and activities. One indicated that changing to another course or subject would have helped him. Six of the persons interviewed felt that the school could have done nothing to help them stay in school.

Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

Twenty, or 54.06 per cent, of the dropouts participated in extra-curricular activities; four participated in two activities. Seventeen, or 45.94 per cent, of the dropouts did not take part in activities. Those who did take part in activities selected a wide range, as can be

TABLE XV
DROPOUTS RESPONSES AS TO HOW THE SCHOOL MIGHT HAVE
BETTER MET THEIR NEEDS

	Number*
Smaller classes with more individual help	10
More personal contact with teachers	6
More information about different jobs and professions	8
Opportunity of working part time	6
More specific training for a job	4
More participation in school activities	5
More specific advice on getting along with people	2
More help in choosing school courses and activities	2
More personal help with subjects	1
Changing to another course or subject	1
None of the above	6

*Several persons indicated more than one response

seen in Table XVI. Two of those who took part in activities did not feel that there had been any value in the activity and two did not respond to this question. Sixteen felt that the participation in activities had been enjoyable, valuable or both.

Present Occupations of Dropouts

The first question asked each respondent was, "What is your present occupation?" The replies as shown in Table XVII indicated that only one of the girls was employed and this was as a domestic. Five girls stated their occupation as housewife, and four girls were unemployed. Ten boys had enlisted in the armed services, four each in the Army and Navy, and one each in the Coast Guard and Air Force. Three boys were laborers, two in seasonal farm work and one in a lumberyard. Two boys were doing general farm work for their fathers, one was a cement mason apprentice to his father. One was employed as a stockboy in a jewelry store, one was playing in a dance band, one was selling apples from door-to-door. Two boys listed their occupation as truck driver. Five were unemployed.

Only one girl and twelve boys were interested in a change of occupation. The girl would like to become a practical nurse. Two boys would like to become mechanics, and two would like to become truck drivers. One boy expressed a desire to be each of the following: fireman, salesman, flight engineer, service station attendant, farmer, office worker, and photographic equipment repairman. One boy expressed the desire to re-enter high school.

TABLE XVI
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OF DROPOUTS

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Number</u>
Band	2
Science Club	1
Traffic Control	1
Class offices	1
Class committees	1
Choir	2
Athletics	3
Girls' Athletics	3
Drill Team	1
Future Homemaker	1
Band and athletics	1
School paper and athletics	1
Drill Team and F. H. A.	1
Dramatics and Class offices	1

TABLE XVII
EMPLOYMENT AT TIME OF INTERVIEW

Boys	Number	Girls	Number
Armed Services			
Army	4	Housewife	6
Navy	4	Domestic	1
Air Force	1	Unemployed	4
Coast Guard	1		
Laborer			
Seasonal farm work	2		
Lumberyard	1		
General farm work for father	2		
Cement mason apprentice:	1		
Stockboy--jewelry store:	1		
Dance band	1		
Door-to-door selling (apples)	1		
Truck driver	2		
Unemployed	5		
Total	26		11

It was impossible to get a realistic estimate of the yearly income from enough of the dropouts to make the question worthwhile.

The girl doing domestic work stated she was satisfied with her job. Seven boys, three in the service, indicated that they are satisfied with their present jobs.

Twelve of the boys, or 46.15 per cent, do not have steady employment. This is alarming when it is realized that this percentage will increase as these boys become older. This seems to indicate that Dr. Pettit's predictions of unemployment figures mentioned previously may be conservative.

Family Education Background

In considering the educational level of the parents it was found that of the eleven girls interviewed four had both parents who had at least completed high school. Two were from families in which at least one parent had graduated from high school. Five were from homes where neither parent had gone beyond the ninth grade. None of the girls were from families in which both parents had gone beyond high school. One father had attended business college, one mother was a Registered Nurse. Of this group one father and two mothers had less than eighth grade educations.

Among the boys interviewed, only three sets of parents had completed high school. Of these, two fathers and one mother had attended college. Seven were from families in which one parent had graduated from high school. Fifteen boys were from families in which neither

parent had completed the twelfth grade. Of this group, only one parent, a mother, had less than an eighth grade education. One Mexican boy did not know his parents' educational background, but it was assumed to be very limited. These statistics are significant because, as was reported earlier, family attitudes toward the importance of education play a large part in determining the student's attitude. Not only this but these are the patrons or future patrons who are being asked to support the schools financially. If a person does not feel that an education was important for him, how can he be expected to help finance an adequate educational program for others?

It is also interesting to note the wide variety of family educational background as reflected by siblings of the dropouts. Among the girls in this study it was found that two were the oldest in their families. Two had had one older brother or sister who failed to finish high school. Two had two older siblings, one of whom had graduated and one had dropped out. Four girls had older siblings who had graduated. One girl had one older sister who had graduated and three who had dropped out. Among the boys three were only children and six were the oldest in the family. Five boys had older brothers and/or sisters, all of whom had withdrawn from school prior to graduation. Nine boys were from families in which all of the older children had completed high school. Three boys had older siblings, some of whom had dropped out of school and some of whom had graduated.

In other words, thirteen of the dropouts were from families in which older children had not completed their high school education.

Another factor some authors have considered of importance in studies of dropouts is the number of times a student has changed schools. In this study, as shown in Table XVIII, only two of the dropouts had spent all their school years in the Moxee school district. Four students had been in two school districts, twelve in three, seven in four. Five of the dropouts had changed schools five times; two, six times; two, seven times; and two, eight times. One youngster had been in twelve different schools. Realizing that each time a student changes schools means adjusting to a new curriculum, new teachers, and making new friends, it is easy to see how this could lead to frustration and a feeling that education isn't really important.

Educational Plans of Dropouts

Nine, 81.81 per cent, of the girls would like to return to school. Only two have no interest in returning. Of those who would like to return, six would prefer a general course of study and three would like a business course.

Fifteen, 57.69 per cent, of the boys would like to return to school. Seven have no desire to return and four would like to attend night school. One boy is taking correspondence work and three stated that they plan to finish their high school work while in the service. Most of the boys stated a preference for a general course leading to graduation.

It seemed difficult for the persons interviewed to objectively answer the questions concerning which high school subjects had been most

TABLE XVIII
NUMBER OF SCHOOL TRANSFERS BY DROPOUTS

Number of Transfers	:	Boys	:	Girls	:	Total
0	:	2	:	0	:	2
1	:	2	:	2	:	4
2	:	9	:	3	:	12
3	:	7	:	0	:	7
4	:	3	:	2	:	5
5	:	0	:	2	:	2
6	:	2	:	0	:	2
7	:	1	:	1	:	2
11	:	0	:	1	:	1
Total	:	26	:	11	:	37

or least helpful in other phases of their lives than their jobs. Many times the responses seemed to correlate highly with the areas in which they had done their best or poorest work. Some were unable to answer the questions at all. For these reasons the responses seem to be too insignificant to report.

Only five had specific ideas concerning any way in which the school could be of service to them now. One girl suggested that half-day schedules be arranged for mothers of small children. Three boys asked that the school help them plan a course of study that could be completed through Armed Services correspondence work. One boy asked that he be allowed to return to school and take only those subjects he selected.

Juvenile Court Records of Dropouts

Another evidence of the anti-social behavior of the dropouts of the study may be found in a report prepared for the writer by Constance Little of the Yakima County Juvenile Department. (See Appendix B). This report states that seventeen of the thirty-seven persons in this survey are known to the Yakima County Juvenile Court. This represents 45.9 per cent. The offenses were as follows: Three individuals were cited once for traffic; two individuals were cited twice for traffic; one individual was cited for traffic three times; one boy was cited seven times for traffic, once for burglary, once for a sex offense, and once for violation of curfew; one boy was cited twice for being incorrigible, once for shoplifting, and once for theft; another individual

was cited for five thefts; still another for two thefts and one runaway charge. The report continues by listing one individual for a burglary and a liquor offense, another for a burglary and a traffic offense; another had two thefts and two traffic matters on his record; another had two traffic matters and one theft; another had two liquor violations and a sex offense. Two individuals were charged for one liquor violation each.

This report did not indicate which of these offenses had occurred previous to the time the individual had left school and which had occurred later. Neither are any figures available at this time to indicate how this percentage of dropouts with records compares with the percentage of those still in school who have court records.

Two factors which were identified did not appear on the interview questionnaire. However, the writer felt that these were significant. These were: (1) Parental attitudes in general were not favorable toward higher education. (2) Dropouts tended to associate with peers with negative attitudes toward education.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The future of today's high school dropouts is a problem of great concern to educators, sociologists, and economists. The survival of our democratic form of government is dependent on an educated citizenry. The economic future of our country depends upon each person being able to support himself. The American educational system is dependent upon the financial support of the people. Most uneducated persons are unable to accept these responsibilities in our highly technological society. Another aspect of the dropout problem is the high percentage of high school dropouts involved in juvenile court proceedings.

In the past ninety years the philosophy of American secondary education has changed from high school education only for the college bound to the present democratic belief in at least a twelve year education for all the youth of the nation. This change has brought many problems in curricula planning. The comprehensive high school is attempting to meet the needs of all these youth.

Approximately fifty years ago some American educators began to realize that the dropout rate was an indication that the ideal of education for all was falling short of the goal. Since that time many dropout studies have been conducted. Some common factors leading to early withdrawal from school can be identified from these studies. These are:

1. curricula that did not meet the needs of the youth
2. poor attendance records
3. retardation in elementary school and failures in high school subjects
4. low family economic status
5. the lure of jobs
6. lack of teachers capable of helping youth understand themselves and their community
7. minimal family education
8. lack of participation in school activities
9. lack of adequate reading skills
10. unfavorable parental attitudes toward higher education
11. peer groups with negative attitudes toward higher education

Some of the previous studies also included below average mental ability as a factor. However, this was not proven true in all of the studies.

The United States Department of Education feels that improved guidance services could substantially reduce the percentage of high school dropouts. This department proposes that an adequate guidance program should include the early identification of potential dropouts and taking steps to reduce the conflicts leading to withdrawal from school; adequate testing programs and cumulative records for identifying areas of interest and ability; and orientation programs for all incoming students including transfers.

Findings of the Present Study

This survey was conducted in an attempt to determine whether a better educational program could be planned for the youth of the Moxee Consolidated School District. Attendance records for the four year period from September, 1956, to June, 1960, were used to secure the names of students who had terminated their education prior to graduation.

An interview questionnaire was developed as a basis for securing information from thirty-seven of the ninety-nine dropouts. This information was supplemented by material from the school's permanent record files and from the Yakima County Juvenile Court records.

Tabulation of the enrollment figures for the four year period of the study reveal that of a total enrollment of 1067 students, 99 withdrew before graduation. There was no significant difference between the percentage of boys and girls who withdrew. The largest percentage of dropouts occurred during the eleventh grade. Ninth grade percentage of dropouts was next highest followed by the tenth grade. The senior classes had the smallest percentage of loss.

An analysis of the dropouts interviewed indicated that most of them were at least one year overage for their grade level and most of them had recorded one or more failures in high school. This, however, did not mean that these students were all below average in mental ability. Only 11.77 per cent had IQ's below 80, and the rest of those for whom scores were available rated at least as well as the graduating class of 1960.

The reasons given for leaving school were varied, as were the responses concerning favorite and most disliked subjects. However, many of those interviewed felt that they could have profited from more individual help and attention from the teachers.

Forty-six per cent of the dropouts did not have steady employment. This figure does not include the boys in the armed services. This would seem to be one of the most significant figures in this study, when it is realized that these young people have most of their lives ahead of them.

Only seven of the thirty-seven dropouts were from homes in which both parents had completed high school. Thirteen of the dropouts had older brothers and/or sisters who had not graduated from high school. Thirty-five of the dropouts had changed schools at least once.

Seventeen of the thirty-seven dropouts interviewed have juvenile court records, another evidence of their anti-social behavior.

In general, it seems that the dropouts from East Valley High School follow the basic pattern of dropouts reported in previous studies.

Recommendations

In an attempt to provide an educational program that will better fit the needs of all youth of the Moxee Consolidated School District, the writer would like to propose the following recommendations:

1. That grade school students showing evidence of factors leading to early withdrawal be given special attention. This may need to include remedial and developmental reading instruction.

2. That the present orientation program introducing the students to the high school be expanded to give each student more individual attention and to include the parents to a greater degree.
3. That the high school curriculum be expanded to include remedial and/or developmental reading programs.
4. That a greater attempt be made to find an area of interest for each potential dropout in which he can be reasonably successful.
5. That an in-service training program for teachers be established to acquaint the staff with the seriousness of the problems confronting the dropouts and that a cooperative program for reducing the percentage of dropouts be undertaken.
6. That a program be set up which will provide for an early identification of the potential dropout and that each of these students be assigned to a teacher for special attention.
7. That more courses be offered which will provide job training and/or actual job experiences. These might include such courses as auto mechanics, welding, appliance repair, and a distributive education program.
8. That the guidance program be expanded to give the counselor more time to work with the students and teachers in an attempt to reduce the number of conflicts facing the youngsters.

9. That an attempt be made to relate the content of all the required courses to the needs of the students.

It is the opinion of the writer that the future economy and the educational climate of Yakima County could be considerably improved by the provision of a vocational high school. Since most of the school districts in the county are too small to finance an adequate vocational program, it is felt that much could be accomplished by a cooperatively financed program.

Such a school could provide a wide variety of courses. Perhaps the trade unions could be induced to cooperate in an apprenticeship program. Beauty culture and barbering courses for high school credit might be possible as well as a distributive education program. Appliance and office machine repair, welding, and auto mechanics offer other possibilities.

In such a school many of the required courses of English and mathematics could be directly related to the immediate interest of the individual and therefore would be more meaningful to him.

It is hoped that this proposal will become the subject of a future study.

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A P P E N D I X E S

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEW

Name _____

Present Occupation

Full time _____ Part time _____

What other jobs have you held since leaving school?

Have you left any full time job? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, why?

Are you satisfied with your present job? Yes _____ No _____

Where did you get the training for your present job?

_____ 1. In school _____ 2. On job
_____ 3. Elsewhere _____ Where? _____

Marital status

_____ Single _____ Separated
_____ Married _____
_____ Divorced _____ Date of Marriage _____

Check the reason or reasons for leaving school. Underline most important.

- _____ Family needed financial help.
- _____ Became discouraged because you could not learn.
- _____ You wanted to work.
- _____ Because you could not get along with teachers.
- _____ Lack of personal funds; wanted spending money.
- _____ Because you had few friends in school.
- _____ School cost too much.
- _____ Had trouble with or failed a certain subject.
- _____ Transportation to school was difficult.
- _____ School didn't offer subjects you wanted.
- _____ Parents wanted you to leave.
- _____ Felt too old for school.
- _____ Didn't like school building.
- _____ Suspended or expelled.

APPENDIX A

- The courses did not meet your needs.
 Friends were out of school.
 No opportunity to work part time.
 Illness or physical defect.
 Others, please explain.

What subjects did you most enjoy?

What subjects did you enjoy least?

Which of the following might have helped or encouraged you to stay in school?

- Changing to another course or subject.
 More specific training for a job.
 More personal contact with teachers.
 More participation in school activities.
 More specific advice on getting along with people.
 More information about different jobs and professions.
 More help in choosing school courses and activities.
 Smaller classes with more individual help.
 Opportunity of working part time.

What subjects would you have liked, which were not offered?

Did you participate in any extra-curricular activities?

Yes No

If yes, what?

APPENDIX A

_____ In all your years of attending school, how many schools have you attended?

_____ What elementary grades did you fail, if any?

_____ What was the last school grade completed by your father?

_____ What was the last school grade completed by your mother?

_____ Do you have older brothers and/or sisters who have dropped out of school before graduation?

APPENDIX B

The Superior Court of the State of Washington
for the County of Yakima
Juvenile Department

July 14, 1960

Re: Statistical material

Margaret Ray, Counselor
East Valley High School
807 South 15th Avenue
Yakima, Washington

Dear Mrs. Ray:

Regarding the letter you wrote requesting information on "dropouts" in the East Valley High School, the following information is from our files which were checked for thirty-seven names furnished by you.

Three individuals were cited once for traffic. Two individuals were cited two times for traffic. One individual was cited for traffic three times.

One boy was cited seven times for traffic, for one burglary, one sex offense, and once for violation of curfew.

One boy was cited for being incorrigible two times, shoplifting, and theft.

Another individual was cited for five thefts. Another for two thefts and one count of runaway. Another individual was cited for burglary and a liquor offense. Still another for a burglary and a traffic offense. Another had two thefts and two traffic matters on his record. Another individual had two traffic matters and one theft. Another had two liquor violations and a sex offense. Two individuals were charged for liquor violations one time each.

This amounts to seventeen individuals from your list of thirty-seven whose names are known to this department.

Sincerely,

H. T. Armstrong
Chief Probation Officer

(signed) Constance F. Little