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A Survey of the Causes for Suspensions in the Junior High Schools of the Highline School District

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A SURVEY OF THE CAUSES FOR SUSPENSIONS
IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OF THE
HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

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

by
James A. Rick
June 1966

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A difference of opinion has existed regarding the relative effectiveness of suspension in the junior high schools of the Highline School District #401. Parents of the suspended students have made claims to the Director of Attendance and the Attendance Counselor that suspensions are not an effective way of handling the school problems of the junior high school students.

The increase of suspensions has caused the parents of suspended students to claim the schools are not facing their responsibilities in handling the problems of the students. The school administrators have answered these parents by stating the position of the schools is to eliminate the student problems through a close working relationship between the home and the school.

Administrators and other school personnel claim suspension is one means of eliminating some of the recurring problems related to student control of the junior high schools.

The problem of suspension is complicated by compulsory attendance laws which, in Washington, require regular attendance at a public or private school until completion of the eighth grade or until the age of sixteen, or unless gainfully employed after age fifteen.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The population of the Highline School District has increased dramatically during recent years. The accompanying increase in population of the junior high schools has resulted in a greater number of suspensions. The result is that parents of some suspended students have openly criticized the schools and the school administrators for not being able to cope with the disciplinary problems and for failure to have valid evidence to support their actions of suspending students.

Purpose of the study. This study was undertaken to (1) relate compulsory attendance to the problem of suspension, (2) survey the frequency of and causes for suspensions of junior high school students, (3) survey the course of action taken by the school, school district and/or the parents of the suspended student, and (4) to study the number of cases in which pupils were affected by multiple suspensions.

This study was based on the hypothesis that suspensions are an ineffective means of dealing with student problems in the junior high schools. The writer hoped to prove or disprove the hypothesis by surveying (1) the number of students suspended, (2) the causes for the suspensions, (3) the action taken by the school, school district, or parents of the suspended student, and (4) by showing that students disregard suspension by having to be suspended more than one time.

Limitations of the study. This study was limited to the junior high schools in the Highline School District, King County, Washington, for the school year of 1962-63. This includes any students in grades seven, eight, and nine who were suspended for any of the various reasons listed with the office of the Director of Attendance of the school district. The data gathered were compiled through the records of the attendance office suspension list of the eight junior high schools in the Highline School District.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Suspension. The temporary forced withdrawal of a pupil, resorted to by school officials for various disciplinary and other reasons which shall be interpreted as "suspension." The purpose of this is to give sufficient time to consider all factors including a conference with parents, thus insuring the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

Expulsion. The action by the school board of directors that removes a student from the school for refusing to comply with school rules, school district policy, and the state law.

Reinstatement. A student's being allowed to return to his or her former position in the school previously attended under special conditions.

Self-improvement class. A special class for students who have been suspended due to anti-social behavior in school. The class allows the

student an opportunity to prove to himself and the school that he wants to continue in school in a manner which is socially and academically acceptable.

Withdrawal. Action taken by the parents of a suspended student, removing him or her from school.

School rules. The policy set by the state, school district, and the school personnel governing the actions of the students attending the school.

Defiance. Insolence shown toward any school personnel while under the jurisdiction of the school.

Fighting. Engaging in physical contact of a combative nature while under the jurisdiction of the school.

Truancy. Absence, without permission from the proper authority when required by law to be in attendance at a designated place.

Misbehavior. Actions of a student that are not in accordance with the school rules.

Home Study Plan. A course of study set up by the teachers and principal of the school from which a student has been suspended. The student is to complete this study course and present it to the proper school personnel at a designated time. The assignment is then treated in the manner that all class work is evaluated.

Causes. The actions or behavior of the student that result in a suspension from school.

Action taken. The result that takes place, after a student has been suspended from school, by the school, school district, and/or the parents of the suspended student.

III. METHOD OF PROCEDURES AND SOURCES OF DATA

The data included in this work were gathered at the office of the Director of Attendance of the Highline School District from reports of suspensions sent from the junior high school principal at the time of suspending a junior high school student. The data were then classified into the following categories:

1. Total suspensions from the junior high school of the Highline School District for the school year of 1962-63.
2. Total causes for suspending all students.
3. Percentage of students suspended for each cause listed.
4. Per cent of suspensions for each month of the school year.
5. Total number of boys suspended.
6. Total number of girls suspended.
7. Per cent of boys suspended.
8. Per cent of girls suspended.
9. Monthly chart of suspensions for boys.
10. Monthly chart of suspensions for girls.

11. Action taken for all suspensions.
12. Action taken for suspended boys.
13. Action taken for suspended girls.
14. Per cent of students listed in each category of action taken.
15. Per cent of students suspended for the school year of 1962-63.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Little has been written in regard to the question of suspension at the junior high school level. The field of attendance is vast, and suspension is just one of the areas included in this field. Suspension from the public school is not a new form of action, but the connotation has become distorted by the increasing amount of suspensions during the past few years.

The State Manual of Washington (9:197-206) specifically defines the reasons for suspending students:

In any case of misconduct or insubordination when the teacher deems it necessary for the good of the school, he may suspend a pupil . . . Willful disobedience, habitual truancy, vulgarity and profanity, the use of tobacco on or about the school premises, stealing, the carrying of deadly weapons, or the carrying or using of dangerous playthings shall constitute good cause for suspension or expulsion . . . Pupils shall comply with the regulations of the schools, shall follow the prescribed course of study, and shall submit to the authority of the teacher.

Suspension from school prior to and during the Second World War was considered a serious act by the public as well as the school officials. Today, suspensions are a common practice of the public school and are not viewed with the same seriousness that it once has had. This is borne out by the increasing number of students suspended each day. Douglass (2:275-6) pointed out the seriousness when he stated, "This punishment should be reserved for the most serious offense or the most chronic and incurable cases. So long as the pupil is not seriously corrupting his companions, dismissal from school should not occur."

The reasons for suspensions vary greatly, although non-attendance and truancy are near the apex of reasons for suspensions.

Attendance has been a problem in the public school system for many years. As early as 1642, Massachusetts Colony enacted the first compulsory-education law in America. This law stated: (8:262)

The selectman in every town shall have the power to take account of all parents and masters as to their children's education and employment . . . They (the selectmen) are to see that the children can read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of the country.

The first compulsory-attendance law was passed in 1852 in Massachusetts. This was over two hundred years after the passing of the first compulsory-education law. The state of Washington passed a similar law in 1871.

In the early history of compulsory-attendance laws, little or no attempt was made to ascertain the causes of non-attendance and to remove them. Non-attendance was regarded as a crime, and force was looked upon as the only weapon which could be used effectively to combat it. The parents and students were threatened when the students failed to attend school, and the students were "strong-armed" to school by the attendance officer.

With the problem of non-attendance there must be a cause. Faunce and Clute (3:68-9) stated that some of these causes may be eliminated through classroom atmosphere. They stated: "The ideal climate is one in which pupils are too busy at such self-imposed tasks to have the time or desire to create problems."

Yeager (13:92-3) lists the following as some of the single causes for non-attendance:

- Both parents employed
- Church services
- Domestic social maladjustments
- Emergencies at home
- Family moved
- Funerals
- Geographical location of the home
- Illness of others in the home
- Lack of proper or adequate clothing
- Malnutrition
- Parental apathy
- Poverty
- Private lessons
- Pupil accompanying parents on vacation
- Pupil belonging to migratory family
- Quarantine of the home
- Weddings

Causes of non-attendance for which the pupil is responsible:

- Pupil-pupil controversy
- Shame (or pride) of pupil in which probation is involved
- Parole
- Immorality
- Alcoholism
- Crime of parent, self, or relation
- Temporary unconfining absence of pupil
- Transportation by individual pupil
- Truancy by group of pupils
- Truancy by individual pupil

Today, through the use of personnel trained in the areas of school counseling, psychology, and social work, educators are using newer and more effective methods of combating the attendance problems of the junior high school students.

"A large number of the single factors listed above do not in themselves cause a student to be absent from school. It is rather a combination of

several of these causes occurring at the same time that usually results in the student's being absent. However, some of the above-mentioned reasons for non-attendance are far more prevalent than others. It is the duty of the home and school to exercise extensive effort to prevent these absences."

Reeder (8:477-9) analyzed the problem well when he stated:

Many studies have shown that sickness, especially the common cold, is the chief cause of non-attendance. Teachers and school officials can do much to remove this cause by helping the pupils to maintain a high standard of health. Other factors being equal, school systems which have a thorough going plan of health supervision have a smaller amount of sickness, and consequently a less amount of non-attendance than school systems which do not have an efficient plan of health supervision.

Necessity for the pupil to do work at home is another chief cause of non-attendance. If such work is necessary for the support of the child's family, society is obligated to give financial assistance to such a child and his family.

Slow progress in school and low marks constitute another great cause of non-attendance. The pupil who has failed, or who is not getting along well at school, is likely to become discouraged and to want to quit school. The school, therefore, should do everything possible to help the child to succeed. Failure of pupils should be reduced to a minimum; in fact, under ideal conditions it would be eliminated. Promotions on condition or probation should be practiced more frequently, because several studies have shown that a larger percentage of pupils who are promoted on condition or probation, do the work of the next grade very acceptably. It is more humane to give the pupil a chance to succeed than to fail him before giving him a chance.

It should be pointed out that when a student is absent from school and classed truant, he is breaking the State Law of Washington which was adopted in 1952 from The Thomas Code of Public Education (11:181) which stated:

All parents, guardians, and other persons in this state, having or who may hereafter have immediate custody of any child between eight and fifteen years of age (being between the eighth and fifteenth birthdays), or of any child between fifteen and sixteen years of age (being between the fifteenth and sixteenth birthdays) not regularly and lawfully engaged in some useful and remunerative occupation, shall cause such child to attend the school of the district in which the child resides, for the full time when such school may be in session, or to attend a private school for the same time, unless the superintendent of the school or the school district in which the child resides, if there be such a superintendent, and in all other cases the county superintendent of common schools, shall have excused such child from attendance because the child is physically or mentally unable to attend school or has already attained a reasonable proficiency in the branches required by law to be taught in the first eight grades of such school, or for some other sufficient reason.

The local school district must decide whether it assumes the obligation of complying with the law.

In 1920 Cubberley (1:581) named some problems related to enforcement of attendance and methods of combating them. They were:

(1) Better plans for the registration of children of the compulsory attendance age. (2) Better means and methods for the enforcement of attendance. (3) Provision of specialized instruction to meet the needs of new children brought into the schools.

In a more recent study of school drop-outs and truancy, Nelson (7:275-6) cited these specific reasons as caused that contribute to both of the problems:

Cultural differentiation and deprivation
 Lack of individual motivation by the student
 Mobility and migrancy
 Lack of family encouragement and reinforcement
 Mental retardation and intelligence limits
 Poor environment and home problems
 Language problems and low reading and communication skills

There are many methods of discipline that are used in each situation.

Mr. Larson (5:11-17) listed the following as punishment used in the secondary schools:

1. The reprimand -- carried out in private if possible
2. After-school conferences with some school personnel
3. Enforced labor -- this must be handled with care
4. Temporary isolation in the classroom
5. Suspension from class or school
6. Expulsion from school -- used as a last resort

He then stated, "When properly handled in spirit of much light and little heat, these devices have proven to be effective."

After many problems in the New York City public schools, the superintendent of schools in that city issued the following memorandum:

(12:56:8) "Remove all troublemakers from school." After the plan to rid the schools of troublemakers was set into action, there were 1,669 students suspended in the school year of 1957-58. The reason for the above statement from the superintendent of schools in New York City was a statement made by Mrs. Lemon Hoyte, (12:56:8) a junior high school teacher of that city, after she had been beaten by a fourteen-year old girl in school. She said, "The blame lies in having to carry on the rolls, students who are confirmed troublemakers."

The writer, having worked as Attendance Counselor, agreed with Douglass (2:275-6) when he wrote of the value of suspending students from school and stated:

It merely transfers the problem from the school to a less favorable environment. Suspension or probation may often be employed as a warning of impending expulsion, a means of calling attention to the seriousness of the offender's situation.

The success of school discipline depends on the teacher and administrator. Muuss (6:52:9-11) made the statement, "Before deciding what disciplinary action to take one should investigate thoroughly, no snap judgments and be firm but fair." Time is needed to investigate any problem in the school and there seems to be a problem of scheduling the counselors' time so that they may do the job they are hired to do, counsel with the students. Ryden (9:14-17) made the statement, "Ask almost any counselor to tell you what he needs most in order to accomplish the purpose of guidance and his first response will be time."

The responsibility for solving problems in school can be divided among the home, the pupil, the school, and the community.

Some summarization of findings. In summarization, suspension is a serious act and should be thought through very carefully before it is acted upon. Students have many problems that affect their lives and the public school personnel is not always aware of these pressures. It is best to keep the student in school and not place him in the position of returning to the home or community where his true problem lies.

There are many students in the public school who have no control over their attendance. This is shown in the work by Yeager. The majority of students in junior high school today are not concerned with the reasons Yeager lists as non-attendance factors. Reeder's work points out that the school can improve the student's attendance through proper health education, school programs for the slow learner and personnel with an understanding of students and their problems.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data presented in this chapter are a result of a compilation of the study made concerning the suspensions of junior high school students of the Highline School District for the school year 1962-63.

The interpretation of these factual data are the views of the writer and are not necessarily the actual causative factors.

Some of the charts presented are for the convenience of the reader in determining the causes and results of the suspensions of students suspended.

Causes for suspensions. From the day of the first suspension, September 10, 1962, until the last suspension of the school year, May 29, 1963, there were 168 suspensions in the junior high schools of the Highline School District. This is nearly three per cent of the total junior high school population. Of the 168 suspensions, totaling 144 boys and 24 girls, there was a total of 21 different causes for suspending students. The causes were stated on the suspension form from the building principal and many of these causes are repetitious with others listed. The following is the list of the 21 causes, as stated by the junior high school principals, for suspending students during the school year of 1962-63.

1. Defiance
2. Destroying school property
3. Discipline problems

4. Disobedience
5. Failure in self-improvement class
6. Failure to comply to school rules
7. Fighting
8. Juvenile court action
9. Misbehavior
10. Non-attendance
11. Obscenity
12. Probation violation
13. Profanity
14. Refusal to conform to school rules
15. Referral to the sheriff's office
16. Smoking
17. Tardiness
18. Theft
19. Threatening school personnel
20. Truancy
21. Vandalism

The causes for suspensions among the junior high school students are presented in detail on Table I for the convenience of the reader.

THE CAUSES FOR SUSPENSIONS IN THE JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOLS IN THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1962-63

| | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | Total |
|---|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| Truancy | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 29 |
| Failure to comply to school rules | 0 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 28 |
| Smoking | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 23 |
| Fighting | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 22 |
| Misbehavior | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Disobedience | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| Obscenity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| Non-attendance | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Defiance | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Discipline problem | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Profanity | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Theft | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Destroying school property | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Probation violation | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Refusal to conform | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Tardiness | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Threatening school person | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Failure in self-improvement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Juvenile court | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Vandalism | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | 9 | 30 | 21 | 16 | 17 | 26 | 20 | 15 | 14 | 168 |

It appeared that students were suspended most often during the change of semesters in the month of February. The large amount of suspensions in the month of October could be caused by the fact the school policy had been set for the year and was being enforced.

May, having fourteen suspensions, was the full school month with the least amount of suspensions and this could have been because the students were more adjusted to the school rules and were preparing for the end of the school year.

The reader will note the suspensions by months in Table II.

TABLE II

PER CENT OF MONTHLY SUSPENSIONS IN THE JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOLS OF THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1962-63

| Month | Number Suspended | Per Cent Suspended |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. October | 30 | 17.8 |
| 2. February | 26 | 15.4 |
| 3. November | 21 | 12.5 |
| 4. March | 20 | 11.9 |
| 5. January | 17 | 10.1 |
| 6. December | 16 | 9.5 |
| 7. April | 15 | 8.9 |
| 8. May | 14 | 8.3 |
| 9. September | 9 | 5.3 |
| 10. June | 0 | 0.0 |

The data presented on Table III illustrate that 20.3 per cent of the suspensions were a result of discipline problems, misbehavior, disobedience, defiance, and refusal to conform. The writer with his experience as attendance counselor has shown these are the categories about which educators, as well as lay people, seem to be most concerned, rather than 60.5 per cent of the four leading causes for suspensions listed previously.

Causes for suspension of junior high school boys. Suspensions of junior high school boys in the Highline School District consisted of 85.8 per cent of all suspensions, or 144 of the total 168. The complete list of 21 causes was attributed to causes for suspending boys in the junior high schools, although failure to comply with school rules, as shown in Tables IV and V, is listed number one for boys, replacing truancy which was number one for total suspensions as shown on Table I on page 15.

The monthly distribution of suspensions followed closely to that of the total monthly distribution listed on Table II.

Tables III, IV, and V are presented for the reader's convenience if they desire a more detailed analysis in determining the causes for suspension of the junior high school boys.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF CAUSES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUSPENSION OF
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL
 DISTRICT FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1962-63

| Causes | Number Suspended | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Truancy | 29 | 17.2 |
| Failure to comply to school rules | 28 | 16.7 |
| Smoking | 23 | 13.6 |
| Fighting | 22 | 13.0 |
| Misbehavior | 14 | 8.2 |
| Disobedience | 11 | 6.4 |
| Obscenity | 7 | 4.1 |
| Non-attendance | 5 | 2.9 |
| Defiance | 4 | 2.3 |
| Discipline problems | 4 | 2.3 |
| Profanity | 4 | 2.3 |
| Theft | 3 | 1.7 |
| Destruction of school property | 2 | 1.1 |
| Probation violation | 2 | 1.1 |
| Refusal to conform | 2 | 1.1 |
| Tardiness | 2 | 1.1 |
| Threatening school personnel | 2 | 1.1 |
| Failure in self- improvement class | 1 | .5 |
| Juvenile court | 1 | .5 |
| Sheriff's office | 1 | .5 |
| Vandalism | 1 | .5 |

TABLE IV

MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION AND CAUSES FOR SUSPENDING
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS OF THE HIGHLINE
 SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE YEAR OF
 1962-63

| | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| Failure to comply to school rules | 0 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 24 |
| Truancy | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 21 |
| Smoking | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 21 |
| Fighting | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 18 |
| Misbehavior | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Disobedience | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| Obscenity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Non-attendance | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Defiance | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Discipline problem | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Profanity | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Theft | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Destruction of school property | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Probation violation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Refusal to conform | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Tardiness | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Threatening school person | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Failure in self-improvement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Juvenile court | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sheriff's office | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Vandalism | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

TABLE V

PER CENT OF CAUSES FOR SUSPENSION OF JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL BOYS OF THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1962-63

| Causes | Number Suspended | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Failure to comply to school rules | 24 | 16.6 |
| Smoking | 21 | 14.5 |
| Truancy | 21 | 14.5 |
| Fighting | 18 | 12.5 |
| Misbehavior | 14 | 9.7 |
| Disobedience | 10 | 6.9 |
| Obscenity | 5 | 3.4 |
| Defiance | 4 | 2.7 |
| Non-attendance | 4 | 2.7 |
| Profanity | 4 | 2.7 |
| Discipline problem | 3 | 2.0 |
| Theft | 3 | 2.0 |
| Destruction of school property | 2 | 1.3 |
| Refusal to conform | 2 | 1.3 |
| Tardiness | 2 | 1.3 |
| Threatening school personnel | 2 | 1.3 |
| Failure in self- improvement class | 1 | .6 |
| Juvenile court | 1 | .6 |
| Probation violation | 1 | .6 |
| Sheriff's office | 1 | .6 |
| Vandalism | 1 | .6 |

Table VI shows the large number of boys suspended in the month of October and the small percentage of suspensions in the first and last months of the school year, September and June.

TABLE VI
PERCENTAGE OF THE MONTHLY SUSPENSIONS OF THE JUNIOR
HIGH SCHOOL BOYS IN THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1962-63

| Month | Number Suspended | Per Cent Suspended |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| October | 29 | 20.1 |
| February | 19 | 13.1 |
| March | 17 | 11.8 |
| November | 17 | 11.8 |
| January | 16 | 11.1 |
| April | 15 | 10.4 |
| December | 14 | 9.7 |
| May | 9 | 6.2 |
| September | 8 | 5.5 |
| June | 0 | 0.0 |

Once again it is shown on Table VI that four major causes for suspending boys in the junior high schools are consistent with the total causes. There is a 58.1 per cent as compared to 60.5 per cent of the total. From the data presented it seemed apparent that suspension of boys parallels the suspensions of the total group as presented on Tables I and II on pages 15 and 16.

Misbehavior is 9.7 per cent among boys as compared to 8.2 per cent of the complete total, a gain of 1.5 per cent, while smoking among junior

high school boys is 0.9 per cent higher than the total.

Causes for suspensions of junior high school girls. Suspension of junior high school girls in the Highline School District is composed of 14.2 per cent of the total suspensions. Nine of the twenty-one causes, previously listed, are reasons for the suspensions of twenty-four girls during the school year of 1962-63.

The reader will again notice the four major causes are the same as those mentioned as major causes for boys as well as the over-all total and comprise 86 per cent of the causes for suspending junior high school girls as shown on Tables VII and VIII.

Of the nine causes for suspending junior high school girls, eight are in the upper fifty per cent of the causes presented on Table I, page 15. Probation violation is the only cause in the lower 50 per cent of total causes to be listed as a cause among the girls.

Truancy, the cause for eight suspensions, 33.3 per cent, is by far the leading factor in the area of suspensions among the junior high school girls in the Highline School District as shown on Table VII, while fighting and failure to comply to school rules when combined equal the 33.3 per cent of suspensions for truancy.

Since the percentage of girls suspended was relatively small, it is difficult to make a conclusive statement regarding the mitigating circumstances leading to their suspensions.

Tables VII, VIII, and IX on pages 24, 25, and 26 are presented for the convenience of the reader.

TABLE VIII

PER CENT OF CAUSES FOR SUSPENSION OF JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL GIRLS OF THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1962-63

| Causes | Number Suspended | Percentage |
|---|------------------|------------|
| Truancy | 8 | 33.3 |
| Failure to comply to school rules | 4 | 16.5 |
| Fighting | 4 | 16.5 |
| Obscenity | 2 | 8.3 |
| Smoking | 2 | 8.3 |
| Discipline problem | 1 | 4.1 |
| Non-attendance | 1 | 4.1 |
| Probation violation | 1 | 4.1 |

The monthly distribution among girls did not follow the same pattern that the total and boys' distribution had. The months of February, May, and November, in that sequence, were the months in which 66.6 per cent of the girls were suspended as shown on Table IX.

TABLE IX

PERCENTAGE OF THE MONTHLY SUSPENSIONS OF THE JUNIOR
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS IN THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1962-63

| Month | Number Suspended | Percentage |
|-----------|------------------|------------|
| February | 7 | 29.1 |
| May | 5 | 20.8 |
| November | 4 | 16.6 |
| March | 3 | 12.5 |
| December | 2 | 8.3 |
| January | 1 | 4.1 |
| September | 1 | 4.1 |
| October | 1 | 4.1 |
| April | 0 | 0.0 |
| June | 0 | 0.0 |

The action taken concerning suspensions in the junior high schools of the Highline School District consisted of eight categories and is shown on Table X. The school principal or Director of Attendance is responsible for the outcome of suspension.

TABLE X

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE HIGHLINE
SCHOOL DISTRICT COVERING ALL SUSPENSIONS IN
THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS FOR THE SCHOOL
YEAR OF 1962-63

| | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | Total |
|--|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|
| Reinstated | 8 | 17 | 16 | 14 | 9 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 0 | 105 |
| Referred to the self-improvement class | 0 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Student withdrawn | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 16 |
| Reinstated on district probation | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 14 |
| Referred to Juvenile Court | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Placed on Home Study Plan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Referred to the Psychological Services Dept. | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Expelled | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

Reinstatement as a means of action taken was selected 105 times from the possible 168 suspensions. October, November, February, and December were the months that had the largest number of students allowed to return to school.

The Self-Improvement Class was selected eighteen times and was the second largest choice of the action taken, while fourteen students were placed on probation and allowed to return, thus making a total of 137 students who were given a second opportunity to prove to the school and their parents they would be able to maintain the standards prescribed by the school and the school district.

The School Board of Directors acted on four of the suspensions, which accounts for the four expulsions.

Only two students were referred to the Psychological Services of the Highline School District after they were suspended from school.

The sixteen students who were withdrawn through the agreement of the schools and the parents of the suspended students became classed as school drop-outs.

Action taken resulting from suspended junior high school boys. The results of the action taken in cases involving junior high school boys, closely follows Table X.

There were eighty-six boys allowed to return through the action of the school personnel selecting reinstatement, as presented on Table XI.

TABLE XI

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE HIGHLINE
SCHOOL DISTRICT COVERING THE SUSPENSION OF BOYS
IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR
OF 1962-63

| | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | Total |
|--|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|
| Reinstated | 7 | 16 | 13 | 12 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 86 |
| Referred to the self-improvement class | 0 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Student withdrawn | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 15 |
| Reinstated on district probation | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 13 |
| Referred to Juvenile Court | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Placed on Home Study Plan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Referred to the Psychological Services Dept. | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Expelled | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

It should be noted that of the sixteen withdrawals, fifteen were boys. Four additional boys left school through the action of the school board. The two referrals to the Department of Psychological Services were also from the male population of suspended students. Five of the six court cases were concerning suspended boys.

Action taken resulting from suspended junior high school girls. From the twenty-four girls who were suspended, nineteen were reinstated, Table XII, two placed in the self-improvement class, and one resulted in each of the categories following: placed on district probation, selected to withdraw from school, and referred to the Juvenile Court.

The selection of reinstatement for the majority, 62.5 per cent and the 10.7 per cent chosen for the self-improvement class has allowed 73.2 per cent of the suspended students to have a second chance along with the 8.3 per cent placed on probation as shown on Table XIII.

There was a total of 2.3 per cent of the suspended students excluded from school and 1.7 per cent were not allowed to return to school but were able to complete the school year at home through the home study plan. Those students who were withdrawn make up 9.5 per cent of the total group of suspended students for the school year of 1962-63.

TABLE XIII

PER CENT OF THE DISTRIBUTION SHOWING THE ACTION TAKEN
 CONCERNING THE SUSPENSIONS OF STUDENTS IN THE
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OF THE HIGHLINE
 SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE SCHOOL
 YEAR 1962-63

| Action Taken | Number Suspended | Percentage |
|---|------------------|------------|
| Reinstated | 105 | 62.5 |
| Referred to the self-improvement class | 18 | 10.7 |
| Student Withdrawn | 16 | 9.5 |
| Reinstated on district probation | 14 | 8.3 |
| Referred to Juvenile Court | 6 | 3.5 |
| Expelled | 4 | 2.3 |
| Placed on Home Study Plan | 3 | 1.7 |
| Referred to the Psychological Services Department | 2 | 1.1 |

There was a total of 59 per cent of the boys who were reinstated and 11.1 per cent placed in the self-improvement class. To be readmitted on district probation consisted of 9.7 per cent and coupled with those reinstated and the self-improvement class admittance, there was a total of 79.1 per cent of the boys suspended given a second chance to prove their worth, as shown on Table XIV.

TABLE XIV
ACTION TAKEN CONCERNING THE SUSPENSIONS OF BOYS
IN THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE
SCHOOL YEAR OF 1962-63

| Action Taken | Number Suspended | Percentage |
|--|------------------|------------|
| Reinstated | 86 | 59.0 |
| Referred to the self-improvement class | 16 | 11.1 |
| Student withdrawn | 15 | 10.4 |
| Reinstated on district probation | 13 | 9.7 |
| Expelled | 4 | 2.7 |
| Placed on Home Study Plan | 3 | 2.0 |
| Referred to the Psychological Services Dept. | 2 | 1.3 |

There was a total of five court cases involving junior high school boys. From the one hundred and forty-four boys suspended, nineteen were either removed or chose to leave school.

From the twenty-four girls suspended, nineteen of those were reinstated, two were placed in the self-improvement class, and of the remaining three, one was placed on probation, one selected to withdraw, and the other was referred to the Juvenile Court, as shown on Table XV.

TABLE XV

ACTION TAKEN CONCERNING THE SUSPENSIONS OF GIRLS
IN THE HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE
SCHOOL YEAR OF 1962-63

| Action Taken | Number Suspended | Percentage |
|--|------------------|------------|
| Reinstated | 19 | 79.1 |
| Referred to the self-improvement class | 2 | 8.6 |
| Referred to Juvenile Court | 1 | 4.1 |
| Reinstated on district probation | 1 | 4.1 |
| Student withdrawn | 1 | 4.1 |

Girls having a second chance after suspension, show an increase of 12.7 per cent over the boys.

Those students who were suspended during the school year and allowed to return to school consisted of 82.6 per cent of the total 168 suspensions.

A total of thirty students, 17.8 per cent, had two or more suspensions throughout the course of the school year. The most any one student was suspended during the school year of 1962-63 was four.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

In this study, the data obtained from an examination of suspension reports of all suspended junior high school students of the Highline School District for the school year of 1962-63 has been surveyed. The summarization is based on the data obtained from the study dealing with suspensions of junior high school students as a method of handling some of the problems created by students at the schools.

Authorities in the field of attendance and suspensions agree that suspensions should be employed as a last resort. Most authorities agree that there is a prime reason for the problems created by the students of the junior high schools, and it is the duty of the educators to determine the causes of the problems. A student should be given every chance to overcome the difficulties he is experiencing and not be excluded from the school unless he is disturbing other students in the class.

The state law of Washington explains the duties and limitations of the teacher in handling discipline problems, and it is the obligation of the teacher to carry out the laws when broken by the students.

Suspension reports from the eight junior high schools of the Highline School District revealed that of the 168 suspensions, twenty-one reasons, as compiled from the survey of report, were given for suspending students for

the school year of 1962-63.

The following list summarizes the results of this study regarding purposes stated in Chapter I from data gathered in this study:

1. Truancy was the major cause of suspension among the junior high school students during the school year of 1962-63.

2. There were more boys suspended for failing to comply to the school rules than for any other single reason. All suspensions were caused by the infraction of some school rule, but the suspension reports listed this as a cause for suspension.

3. Girls were suspended for truancy more than any other cause listed.

4. Truancy and smoking were the reasons for suspending more than one fourth of the boys. Smoking was ranked highly as a cause for suspending junior high school boys. To be suspended for smoking, the student must be smoking on the way to or from school or on the school premises.

5. Failure to comply to the school rules and fighting were the causes for suspending one third of the girls.

6. October was the month with the highest per cent of suspensions among the boys.

7. February was the month with the highest per cent of suspensions among the girls.

8. June, with only nine school days, had no suspensions for either boys or girls.

9. Reinstatement of the suspended student was the course of action taken by the school personnel more than any other possible action that could have been taken.

10. Four students, boys, were permanently removed from school by the action of the School Board of Directors.

11. Sixteen boys and one girl selected to withdraw from school through the action of their parents and/or the school personnel.

12. Two students were referred to the psychological services department for aid in working with the school and student to remove or help the cause for suspension.

13. Six students were referred to the King County Juvenile Court as a result of their suspensions.

14. One student was suspended a total of four times, while thirty-two others were suspended more than once.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the information gathered:

1. Of the 168 suspensions, boys outnumber the girls six to one.
2. Students who were reinstated seemed to adjust to school after the first suspension.
3. Nineteen per cent of the students were suspended more than once.
4. The suspension of four students with the outcome of expulsion from school, through action of the School Board of Directors, seemed to justify their suspensions.
5. The suspension of 32 students more than once but only one student more than twice does show the need to treat each problem individually and not use suspension as the only means.

The data gathered for this study failed to prove or disprove the effectiveness of suspension in the junior high schools of the Highline School District.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has left many incompletely drawn conclusions on the mind of the writer. The authorities who have written on the field of suspensions have stressed the importance and seriousness of suspending a student. It is the duty of the school personnel to see that the state laws are completely and properly supported. They must take advantage of any opportunity they have to see that the children who are in school obey the rules and regulations established by the state, school district, and the school.

In summary, it appears to this writer that lack of communication between the school and special departments of the school district and/or the home needs to be improved. Specific examples of these needs and recommendation to remedy these situations are as follows:

1. That all school problems created by the students be handled very carefully and not use suspension as the only tool for solving these problems.
2. There be a closer working relationship between the attendance department and Psychological Services to combat the problems of junior high school students.
3. A complete file on every student should be kept by the school. These files should include any and all information that has been gathered by the

elementary school about the student. Files should be passed on to the junior high school when the student leaves the sixth grade. A brief written sketch of the student should be placed in the front of the file to enable the counselor to determine those students in need of his services.

4. Junior high school counselors should be trained in their field and be willing to work before school begins and after school is dismissed. They should never be placed in the position of disciplinarian at any time. They should be free to schedule conferences with parents and not have the administrator present at all conferences.

5. A written copy of the school rules, schedules, and other important information should be given to the parents and students at time of enrollment. This should include all rules concerning dress, discipline, school office hours, and schedules of all extra-curricular activities. There are many other important facts to be included which will be of assistance to the parents and students.

6. There should be a close relationship between the home, school, and community. If a student is to be absent from school for a long period of time, the parents should notify the school. The school should, in turn, notify the home when a student is absent from a class or all day. The parents should also be notified when a student is having problems at school other than attendance. The people of the community should be aware of the school days and the hours school is in session. They should not allow any person of school age to remain on their premises during school time if at all possible.

7. The school should offer the students an interesting, but challenging, course of study throughout the entire school year. There should be an equal distribution of activities offered so all students may participate.

8. The teachers in the junior high schools should have access to the student files. There should be an effort made by the teachers to know their students and attempt to aid them in all areas and not just scholastic.

9. The counselors and school administrators should do everything in their power to determine the causes of student problems before taking any action in attempting to eliminate the problem. To remove the student from school does not eliminate the social problem the student is having, it just postpones the problem until he returns to school. An effort to determine the cause is what the student needs.

10. There should be an attempt by the counselor or school administrator to seek advice from the psychological services department to aid them in working with some students. Psychologists should work closely with the junior high school counselors in determining the causes of problems the students are having. Testing and sending the test results to the school are not the answer, but giving the student guidance is what is needed.

11. There should be an evaluation of teachers who are continually having students truant from their classes. The teacher as well as the students may be creating problems in the class and as a result, some student may be suspended for the teacher-caused problem.

12. Suspensions should not be passed out as a punishment, but only as

a last resort while the school personnel is working to determine a cure or way of working with the student to eliminate the problem. Suspending a student may very well add to the problem he is having.

These conclusions are also held by the writer in support of most authorities who have written on suspensions in the public schools. It is believed that further study of the effectiveness of suspensions is needed and future research in this area should include the following variables:

- a. Achievement
- b. I.Q.
- c. Age
- d. Prior School Problems
- e. Home Situations
- f. Training of School Personnel

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