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## **An Investigation of Public School Policies and Practices Regarding Married or Pregnant High School Students in the State of Washington**

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AN INVESTIGATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICIES AND PRACTICES  
REGARDING MARRIED OR PREGNANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington State College

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

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by  
James L. Hoff  
April 1971

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

In years past it was the general opinion of school officials and others that married or pregnant students had no place in public education. This thinking was in complete contrast with the American way of life where all men are considered to have a chance for equal opportunity.

The importance of education is becoming more pronounced. In many cases, unskilled working positions as well as skilled positions are placing more emphasis on education. Because of this increased emphasis and changing social patterns, many school administrators and school boards realize the importance of married and pregnant students being permitted to complete their education.

This study deals with the policies and practices regarding married or pregnant students in the public high schools of the state of Washington.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Among the many current situations that American high schools are being forced to adjust to in one manner

or another are married or pregnant students. Some authors believe the average age of first marriage is dropping each year, and the rate of illegitimate births in the 14 to 19 age group is increasing each year (30:171; 11:113).

Often in the past, high school students who were married or became pregnant were looked upon with contempt and treated little better than delinquents. Figuratively speaking they may have been cast out of their society in an attempt by that society to be rid of the special difficulties, problems, and the needs of these students by trying to forget that they exist when in reality they had special educational needs to be fulfilled.

One of the needs of all young people is education. Becoming involved in the added responsibilities of marriage and/or pregnancy magnifies the necessity of acquiring adequate education or training. High school student marriage or pregnancy is still not looked upon with public favor, but education and training are highly approved goals for all teen-agers. As a result the public high school, by nature of its position, is being forced to deal with matters both approved of and disapproved of by society. The problem thus becomes, how can the school deal with this situation and make adjustments that will best accomplish the goal of providing for continuing education or training?

### Importance of the Study

With the increasing number of married or pregnant students attending the nation's schools, there seems to be a need for definite policies covering the problems that may be caused (11:113). An education is as important to married or pregnant students as it is to other students since educational attainment is clearly related to success of marriage as well as success in other aspects of life. The present study should (1) serve as a guide for review of the existing policies and practices and (2) assist in forming future school policies that would help to keep students in school with the fewest problems for the school personnel, pregnant students, and married students.

### Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the present study are to determine what policies exist for married or pregnant students, and how the policies are presently being applied. The study will also attempt to assess administrator opinion of the effects of current practices.

### Procedures for the Study

Material was gathered from books, periodicals, and other studies to determine the historical background of the study. A questionnaire was formulated and sent to principals of all public high schools in the state of Washington. The questionnaire was directed mainly to the

principals, however, the superintendents of some of the smaller schools responded.

### Limitations

The study was confined to the public high schools of Washington State and administrative officials of these schools.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

### High School

Within this study, the term "high school" will be understood to refer to public schools in the state of Washington as listed in the 1969-70 "Educational Directory" of the Washington Council on High School College Relations.

### Public Performances

This must be understood to include anything, whether extra-curricular or directly connected with a class, which would involve the student's performing, either as an individual or as a member of a group, in the name or under the auspices of the school.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### I. CAUSES FOR YOUNGER MARRIAGES

Today's early marriages are brought about by physical, economic, and social factors. Audrey Rieger stated that physical maturity occurs earlier now than a generation ago, and as a result, interest in the opposite sex develops earlier. This interest causes sexual curiosity which in turn often leads to a marriage which neither party desires. An informal survey taken by Rieger among eighth-graders indicates that as many as a third of these 13-year-olds are "going steady" (27:74-76). If this relationship lasts, the result is that many of these youngsters find themselves wanting to marry, or being forced into marriage by the age of seventeen. Jack Gaskie stated: "More than 1500 Denver area girls of high school age have babies every year. Typically, there will be a handful of mothers under the age of 15; 50 to 75 mothers aged 15; some 200 or more aged 16; 500 or more aged 17; and as many mothers aged 18 as in all the younger ages combined. Six percent of the births in Colorado are known to be illegitimate, and many more may be. Most of these illegitimate births occur to girls in their teens" (26:3).

Economic factors, as well as earlier maturity, favor earlier marriages now to a greater extent than a generation ago. Jobs are more plentiful and pay is better now than for the parents of these children at the same age a generation ago. Duvall in her research on young marriages listed "prosperity" as a factor permitting early marriages. Now, "both husband and wife can get jobs to finance their marriage" (5:76-77).

Social factors tend to outnumber those physical and economic reasons for early marriage. Green in his article listed the following as major social reasons why couples are marrying younger: "Protracted education and military service, which make unreasonably long the waiting period until the husband is financially established, the search for certainties, in the form of home and marriage, in an era beset with uncertainties, escape from unhappy home situations, and rebellion against parents, and society" (12:182-83).

Many parents push their children into activities that the children would not choose for themselves because the parents feel that if their children are popular the parents will gain social status. Young people have a wider range of experience than those of the past. This is brought about by television and also by the schools themselves which expose junior-high pupils to training which was formerly given high school students, and high school students



to the training which was formerly given in college. As a result, young people today are gaining a social education faster than in previous generations.

## II. PROS AND CONS REGARDING EARLY MARRIAGE

There are arguments for and against early marriages. Leo Garber stated the following reasons why young marriages could succeed: "Biologically, the human being is capable of marriage in the late teens. Psychologically, a young husband and wife, who jointly and warmly struggle against life's problems, form a lasting partnership. That is partly the reason the pioneer home succeeded" (7:66).

The arguments against early marriage are probably stronger and outnumber those for early marriages. Hansen believed that young people are not able to cope with problems which come with married life, so they still depend on parents for solutions and begin married life as dependent people. For many students, early marriages or pregnancy means that their education will be shortened to the extent that they will not be able to hold the kind of position for which an education might qualify them. The divorce rate is higher among these young marriages. Hansen said lastly that "the children who come to these early marriages will be hurt seriously and permanently if their parents are too young to know how to care for them properly" (14:510). This is an important argument against young marriages.

### III. SCHOOL POLICIES AND ATTITUDES

In 1954, indications were that about three percent of the students in the nation's senior high schools were married. The majority of these were girls married to older, out-of-school men. The sociologists were predicting that a trend toward increased enrollment of married students can be expected (9:79).

In a poll taken of superintendents in 1956 by The Nation's Schools, it was found that only 15 percent of these superintendents would have barred married students from attending high school (2:69). Four years later, 1960, in an identical poll, The Nation's Schools found that the percentage had increased to 25 percent. The 1960 poll also found the following:

1. Pregnant wives should be suspended temporarily --yes-62%--no-20%.
2. Pregnant wives should be expelled--yes-22%--no-66%.
3. Married students should be granted a leave of absence for personal adjustment or honeymoon --yes-22%--no-65%.
4. Married students should be permitted to partake in allied-activities--yes-47%--no-39%.

The poll in 1960 was based on a four percent proportional sampling of 16,000 school administrators in the continental United States. That survey brought a 53 percent response (2:69).

Ivins made two studies of how New Mexico schools handled the problem of married students. In his first

study in 1952-53, one-fifth of the responding schools had written policies dealing in some manner with married students. In the study made five years later, it was found that the majority of the schools had well formulated or established policies. Ivins also found in both studies that the majority of the school's policies were to remove from school, for temporary or permanent periods of time, all students who married (17:71-74).

In a study by Landis, the school policy as reported by principals in California schools was not so stringent. Table 1 shows the school policies of 286 California schools. It also shows that, in 1953-54, California schools generally had not yet clearly defined their position on student marriages (18:128-29).

In Table 2, Landis summarized reasons the principals gave for considering married students a problem in school. Landis voiced skepticism toward the reason most principals gave for believing married students a problem. Landis believed that: "It is more probable that adults may fear married students will discuss their marital sexual experiences and go on to assume that they do, without real evidence" (18:131). Landis also felt that the high drop-out rate might be decreased had more positive programs for meeting the needs of married students been developed. In discussing the problem of married students encouraging others to marry, Landis said, "it is possible for it to

TABLE 1  
 NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS FROM 286 SCHOOLS  
 REPORTING SPECIFIC SCHOOL POLICY  
 DEALING WITH STUDENTS WHO MARRY

Number	School Policy
248	Married student not required to attend, regardless of age--legal requirement.
142	Do not take any action in regard to students who marry.
106	Conference or talk with married student, often includes parents and/or spouse.
35	Treat married students the same as other students; no special privileges.
16	Individual or group counseling on marital and/or school adjustment.
11	Encourage withdrawal.
9	Notation of marriage and name change on school records.
6	Exclude married students from offices and honors.
5	Require permission from board to continue in school.
4	Demand or request withdrawal.
2	Advise married student to take a brief honeymoon before returning to school.
2	Restriction on social activities.
2	Seniors allowed to graduate under normal conditions.
1	Girls excused from P. E., if they have household duties.
1	Board suspends permanently. (18:128-29)

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS FROM 286 SCHOOLS REPORTING SPECIFIC REASONS WHY MARRIED STUDENTS ARE A PROBLEM TO THE SCHOOL OR IF THEY ARE A PROBLEM

Number	Why a Problem to the School
178	Consider married students a problem to the school.
24	Married students are not a problem to the school.
80	Discuss marital sexual experiences with other unmarried students.
77	Irregular attendance and drop-out.
39	Bad influence on other students.
30	Get pregnant.
27	Encourages other students to marry.
24	Less interest in school.
16	Expect special privileges.
15	Criticism from parents of other students.
8	Semi-insubordination; discipline.
8	Create "talk" among unmarried students.
8	Necessitates extra administration and counseling.
6	Don't participate in school activities.
5	Verification of absences (who signs absence slip?).
4	Participation in school activities (tend to include spouse who usually is non-student) (18:130).

work just the opposite in that they have the opportunity to observe among their own friends some of the realities of marriage contrasted to former romantic ideas" (18:131).

Table 3, shows the problems teachers feel married students present to teachers in the classroom. Landis felt that married students who are serious enough about their education to want to finish high school, are not going to present major discipline or behavior problems. Landis felt that problem married students could be handled in the same way as unmarried students (18:132).

Landis points out that there seems to be less confusion and a more definite plan when it comes to school policy on pregnant married students as shown in Table 4. With such strong policies concerning married pregnant students and with the fact that some drop out of their own accord when they become pregnant, should the few that manage to finish four years of education be denied the right to participate in commencement exercises with their class? Hamilton stated: "The question of the right of pregnant students to participate in commencement exercises has arisen, but, as far as I am aware, has not been litigated." He further stated: "I am willing to say only that generally doubts are likely to be resolved in favor of the student by the courts" (13:47).

In a survey made by Lee G. Burchinal, it was found

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS FROM 286 SCHOOLS REPORTING SPECIFIC REASONS WHY MARRIED STUDENTS ARE A PROBLEM TO THE CLASSROOM TEACHER OR IF THEY ARE A PROBLEM

Number	Why a Problem in the Classroom
144	Married students are not a problem in the classroom.
111	Consider married students a problem in the classroom.
49	Additional outside duties of married students interferes with school work.
15	Interests are different from unmarried students.
15	Semi-insubordination; discipline.
13	Emotional disturbances of marital adjustment.
5	Teacher no longer has recourse to parents in enforcing discipline.
4	Expression of affection; petting.
4	Unmarried teachers feel inadequate or "threatened."
3	Teachers criticized by community for having married students in classes.
1	Teachers and students feel ill-at-ease in discussing topics on marriage and divorce in family life courses.
1	Married students dissatisfied if courses are not practical. (18:132).

TABLE 4

NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS FROM 286 SCHOOLS REPORTING  
SCHOOL POLICY IN DEALING WITH MARRIED GIRLS  
WHO BECAME PREGNANT

Number	School Policy for Pregnant Married Girls
103	Request or pressure to withdraw when pregnancy is apparent or known.
38	No action necessary because student drops out before too long.
32	Expel when pregnancy is apparent or known.
28	Eligible for home instruction (limited to seniors).
19	Concerned about the health and safety of the pregnant student in the school environment.
11	Concerned because pregnancy is embarrassing and "unsuitable" for school.
9	Grant leave of absence.
7	Special arrangements so that student can finish.
4	Suspend when pregnancy is apparent or known.
4	Permitted to attend as long as student's M.D. or the school nurse advises.
3	Required to inform school officials.
2	Permitted to finish the semester, then suspended for the balance of the year.
2	Permitted to attend until the 4th or 5th month of pregnancy, then suspended one year.
2	Not permitted to take part in graduation exercises.
1	Welcomes it as beneficial to the student and to other students. (18:134).



that restrictive policies were not successful in preventing or even curtailing high school marriages (4:72-73). The reason restrictive policies were not successful was probably due to the fact that most high school marriages are not planned, but are due to premarital pregnancies. "An article in the Rocky Mountain News stated: Forty-two percent of girls dropping out of senior high school gave marriage as the reason. In a Jefferson County school dropout study, marriage or pregnancy accounted for 35 percent of girl dropouts, of whom 75 percent were average or better in scholastic ability" (26:3).

John R. Phillips reports on a study by the North Central Association High Schools in Wyoming in 1960, 24 schools indicated that they had policies on married students and ten did not. He listed for a typical high school in Wyoming six recommended policies which employ the overall philosophy that it is best, when it is at all possible, to help the student remain in school and complete his or her education. Phillips stated: "Married pupils may not participate in allied-activities. However, some schools allowed married pupils to participate in only some types of activities; for example, Future Homemakers, Future Farmers, and Future Professionals. Such pupils could not, however, hold offices in any capacity" (26:13).

From these surveys it was found that, throughout the nation, school policies fluctuate all the way from very

restrictive to permissive with a few cases taking a favorable view of married students.

#### IV. FORMATION OF SCHOOL POLICIES

School policies may be formed in several ways. Boards of Education may take the problem in hand and form a policy; the administrator may recommend a policy to the board, or he may formulate a policy himself. Still another way might be through the cooperation of parent, teachers, administrators, and the board working together. In some cases students have even been asked to help formulate school policy on married students. Artesia, New Mexico formed their policy in the following way: (30:146-47)

In the 1955 school year thirty-two high school girls and two high school boys were married, which represented approximately six percent of the entire high school population in the school. The problem was presented to the Student Council for discussion and recommendations. The Council felt that the problem was strictly an administrative one and should be handled accordingly.

As a first step toward a plan of action, a meeting of the high school faculty was held for the purpose of deciding what action was needed. Many of the group felt that such drastic measures as suspension or expulsion should be applied. After considerable discussion it was agreed that a committee should be appointed for further

study of the question.

At the first meeting of the committee it was agreed that an invitation should be given Dr. Wilson of the University of New Mexico to meet with the committee and faculty. The report of the committee was given and accepted by the faculty with the reservation that some refinement be made and that the revised report be submitted at a later meeting of the faculty. After acceptance by the faculty, it was officially adopted by the board of education as school policy. It was then made a part of the student handbook and became effective with the opening of the school term September, 1956.

Artesia High School felt that this policy was effective to a certain extent as there were only four marriages in the first half of the 1957 school year, but felt that continued study of the problem was needed. The policy is as follows:

Artesia High School discourages marriage of high school students. We do not feel that the best educational interests can possibly be served through marriages which take place at such an early age. The adjustments and responsibilities should not be taken lightly. Happy and successful marriages form the basic foundation of our country. Such marriages require maturity of judgement and considerable knowledge and understanding. It is important that the most favorable circumstances possible attend each and every marriage. Attending school with the demands and responsibilities of the classroom does not provide such favorable circumstances. Because of these reasons and many others unexpressed, we urge all students to complete their high school education before planning marriage. Marriage is a full-time job, especially during the early days

when there are so many adjustments to be made. If there are those who plan to be married and continue in school, the following statement of policy must be understood and adhered to:

1. Before getting married, the student will have a conference with the high school principal or counselor.
2. As soon as a student returns to school after marriage, he will be required to have a conference with the principal.
3. If after the conference, the student continues in school, he will have the same status as other students except in those extracurricular organizations where special provisions have been adopted concerning married students.
4. In accepting equal status with other students, it is to be understood that married students will not be given special consideration with respect to school policy. Attendance must be regular. An undue amount of absence regardless of cause may result in dismissal from school. If it becomes necessary to withdraw from school, the student will lose the work for the semester in which he withdraws. Since we have no personnel for home-bound students, it will not be possible to complete work outside the classroom (30:146-47).

## V. COURT DECISIONS

Due to the alarming number of high school marriages, boards of education have tried to enact rules and regulations concerning married students attending public schools. This has raised the question of the legality of such rules and regulations. Boards of education have been taken to court because of their policies concerning high school marriages; if the policies are upheld there, they are quite often looked upon as a law. The courts' primary interest is whether the policy is "reasonable and not arbitrary."

Roach, in discussing board rules concerning married students, states: "There is no legal question as to the authority of local school boards to adopt reasonable rules and regulations for the day-to-day operation of its schools. There may be a legal question as to the reasonableness of a specific regulation on some particular aspect of board operation or, perhaps, on the reasonableness of the rule's application under a given set of circumstances" (28:56).

Generally there have been four legal questions which have been raised by student marriages and have been answered by court decisions. First, can a school board, under a compulsory education law, require a minor who has married before attaining the age when he may legally withdraw from school to continue his attendance in school? To answer this question reference was made to the court case of the State of Louisiana vs. Priest. Louise Priest, a married girl of 15, was committed to the State Industrial School for being truant from school. She applied for a writ of Certiorari saying that Juvenile Court was without jurisdiction to charge her with violation of the compulsory school attendance regulation on the grounds that she was legally married and that she was emancipated by this marriage. The Louisiana Court ruled: "Although until she reaches the age of 18 she is not relieved of all the disabilities that attach to minority by this emancipation, she is relieved of parental control and . . . is no longer

amenable to the compulsory attendance law of this state" (26:17).

The second question to be answered is whether a school board can refuse admission to one who has married or become pregnant before completing his or her public school education. The cases of McLeod vs. State of Mississippi, and Nutt vs. Board of Education answer this question. In the case of McLeod the board of Moss Point was barring the attendance of one Wanda Dodge Myers, a married student, who was 15 years old. The board's contention was that a married student attending school was detrimental to the welfare of the school. To which the Supreme Court of Mississippi said: "It is argued that . . . the marriage relation brings about views of life which should not be known to unmarried children; that a married child in the public schools will make known to its associates in the schools such views, which will therefore be detrimental to the welfare of the schools. We fail to appreciate the force of argument. Marriage is a domestic relation highly favored by the law. When the relation is entered into with correct motives, the effect upon the husband and wife is refining and elevating, rather than demoralizing. Pupils' association in school with a child occupying such a relation, it seems, would be benefited instead of harmed" (26:18).

In the case of Nutt vs. Board of Education, Dorothy

Nutt, a married sophomore in the Goodland, Kansas, high school was being barred from attending school on the grounds she was of immoral character. The Court found in her favor, stating: "It is proper . . . to see that no one within school age should be denied the privilege of attending school unless it is clear that the public interest demands a denial of his rights to attend. . . . We are of the opinion the evidence was insufficient to warrant the board in excluding the plaintiff's daughter from the schools of Goodland. It is the policy of the State to encourage the student to equip himself with a good education. The fact that the plaintiff's daughter desired to attend school was of itself an indication of character warranting favorable consideration. Other than the fact that her child was conceived out of wedlock, no sufficient reason is advanced for preventing her from attending school. The child was born in wedlock, and the fact that her husband may have abandoned her should not prevent her from gaining an education which will better fit her to meet the problems of life" (26:18).

In the two previously stated cases Hamilton had this to say: "The argument of the board in the Mississippi case is naive indeed. Even when there is evidence of immorality, as in the Kansas case, the child should not be excluded from school. Any school worthy of the name should render every possible assistance to such a child rather

than 'kick her when she is down.' She was unfortunate. Are we really prepared to say that every pupil in our schools who does not 'get caught' has a 'lily-white' character? Are we willing to say that it is not the immoral act but the public consequences thereof that determines character? If not, we should be very reluctant to predicate admission to school upon judgement of character" (26:18-19).

To find the answer to the third question of whether a board has the right to temporarily suspend married students, reference is made to the court case of State vs. Marion County Board of Education. The court ruled that, while a board may not provide permanent expulsion for students who marry, it may bar them for a reasonable length of time if it believes this necessary for the well-being of the school. The Court made this statement: "Boards of education, rather than courts, are charged with the important and difficult duty of operating the public schools. So, it is not a question of whether this or that individual's judge or court considers a given regulation adopted by the board as expedient. The court's duty, regardless of its personal views, is to uphold the board's regulation unless it is generally viewed as being arbitrary and unreasonable. Any other policy would result in confusion detrimental to the progress and efficiency of our public school system" (26:19).



The case of Kissick vs. Garland Independent School District was referred to for the answer to question four (26:20), which is whether school boards have the right to restrict or exclude the student from partaking of allied-activities. The court found in favor of the board on this situation.

From Court cases studied, it was found that school boards do not have the right to bar high school students who marry from attending school. They do have the right, however, to suspend a student for a reasonable length of time for the good of the school and the board can also impose restrictive policies upon married high school students in the schools.

## VI. SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

How do married and unmarried students compare scholastically? Garner and Sperry made a study for a more accurate comparison of the scholastic achievements of married and unmarried students as to attendance, subject grades, achievement test scores, conduct grades and subject choices (9:80-81).

They found that very little research had been conducted with married high school students and none was found which compared them with unmarried students. In the surveys reviewed, they discovered that most high schools had married students, but the majority of schools lacked

definite policies for dealing with them.

The survey showed that married students had poorer attendance records. The married students' mean grade average was 82.1 percent, which was slightly poorer than that of unmarried students, whose mean was 85.2 percent. For married students, the mean score on the achievement test was 53.4 percent as compared to the mean score of unmarried students at 60.7 percent. There was no significant difference between the two groups in conduct grades. It was found that unmarried students made more extensive subject choices than did married students (9:80-81).

Their survey showed that unmarried students made better scholastic achievements than those who were married and continued in school, but it was felt that additional research was needed before the question could be answered adequately.

CHAPTER III  
PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY

I. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire sought to elicit responses from principals in regard to what policies exist, how the policies are applied, and whether or not the principal felt the policies and practices were appropriate for their particular situation.

The first section of the questionnaire contained questions which pertained to married students in high school. Generally the questions attempted to discover who developed the policy, what the provisions of the policy were, and what special practices were used in regard to married students.

The second section of the questionnaire contained questions which pertained to students involved in pregnancies. The questions attempted to discover who developed the policy, what the provisions of the policy were, and what special practices were applied in regard to students involved in pregnancy. The questions in this section were divided into the following categories: married father, married female, unmarried father, and unmarried female.

The final set of questions pertained to the principals' opinion of the effects of married or pregnant students on the school, and if marriage or pregnancy had detrimental effects upon the particular student. This section also provided the principal with an opportunity to respond at the feeling level about the appropriateness of the school's policies and practices regarding married or pregnant students.

## II. GATHERING THE DATA

The questionnaire was submitted to 298 principals of high schools in the state of Washington. The questionnaire was mailed to all principals except those in the Seattle School District on October 5, 1970. The questionnaire was mailed to the 13 Seattle School District Principals on November 12, 1970. Studies in the Seattle School District must have prior approval from their Director of Research. Approval was requested on October 2, 1970 and granted on November 12, 1970.

Each principal received the questionnaire accompanied by a cover letter and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. By November 18, 1970, the principals had returned 236 completed questionnaires.

## III. TREATMENT OF THE DATA

The responses to each question of the questionnaire

were tabulated. The results were analyzed and compared in the general categories of married student policies, married student special practices, policies for students involved in pregnancies, special practices regarding students involved in pregnancies, and principals' opinions of problems with married or pregnant students. Each general category was sub-divided into sub-categories depending upon the particular questions asked via the questionnaire. The items in each sub-category were then formed into a table with the number of responses and percent of response calculated for each item within the sub-category.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### I. RETURNS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Originally it had been determined that the period of time during which replies would be tabulated would be one month; it seemed highly probable that those recipients sufficiently interested to provide worthwhile information would do so within this period. However, the delay in approval from the Seattle School District Research Department caused an extension of the reply time. When the termination date arrived seven weeks after the original mailing, 236 replies had been received, which meant a response of 79.5 percent. The following facts are based upon these figures. Apparent discrepancies arise from partially filled questionnaires, from statements that this problem had not arisen or no policy had been made, from lack of knowledge concerning the category of students, and from other similar causes.

#### II. MARRIED STUDENT POLICIES

The importance of the problem of married students is shown by questionnaire results which show 84 percent of

the schools have an official policy for dealing with such students.

In most cases, 65.1 percent of the responses, principals reported that their school's married student policy was established by the school board. Among principals, 21 percent indicated that their school's married student policy was established in a cooperative manner involving the principal, superintendent, and the school board. In the other schools, as shown in Table 5, policies were established by administrators alone or in combination with the school board.

TABLE 5

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHING OFFICIAL SCHOOL  
POLICY FOR DEALING WITH MARRIED STUDENTS

Who Established Policy	No.	%
School Board	127	65.1
Superintendent	7	3.6
Principal	4	2.1
All three combined	41	21.0
School board and superintendent combined	13	6.6
Superintendent and principal combined	3	1.6

III. POLICY PROVISIONS REGARDING ATTENDANCE  
OF MARRIED STUDENTS

Table 6 summarizes the responses of principals as to which phrase applies to the policy provisions concerning married students. Regular attendance, but with restrictions on the students' activities was the most frequent response

for both males and females, 59.7 percent responded for males while 56.6 percent responded for females. The second most frequent response was regular attendance with no restrictions, 29.8 percent responded for males and 26.7 percent responded for females. The lowest response which seemed quite significant was for the provision of immediate and final expulsion with two principals indicating the provision for both males and females. It should also be noted that some schools require the married couples to register with the principal and other schools provide extra counseling service to married students.

TABLE 6  
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO POLICY PROVISIONS  
CONCERNING MARRIED STUDENTS

	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate and final expulsion	2	1.0	2	.9
Suspension for a definite period of time; re-entry permitted	20	9.4	35	15.8
Regular attendance allowed, but with restrictions on the students' activities	126	59.7	125	56.6
Regular attendance; no restrictions	63	29.8	59	26.7

#### IV. SPECIAL PRACTICES FOR MARRIED MALE STUDENTS

Of the 224 principals responding to the question about whether their school used any special practices in



regard to married students 58.5 percent indicated they used special practices while 41.5 percent of the principals indicated they did not use special practices.

Of the 131 principals who said they used special practices for married students, 91.6 percent do not allow married males to participate in athletics while 80.9 percent of the schools do not allow married male participation on the yell staff, and 76.3 percent do not allow participation in school dramatic productions. Student council was denied by 60.3 percent of the schools, and 59.5 percent do not allow married male participation in pep clubs. School sponsored public performances were not allowed for married males in 58.8 percent of the schools with special practices for married students. Other special practices reported included denial of participation in dances, school paper, annual staff, and the band.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES FROM 131 PRINCIPALS REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF MARRIED MALE STUDENTS IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Married Students Not Allowed to Participate in:	No.	%
Athletics	120	91.6
Yell staff	106	80.9
Dramatic productions	100	76.3
Student council	79	60.3
Pep club	78	59.5
School public performance	77	58.8
Dances	49	37.4
Annual staff	40	30.5
School paper	39	29.8
Band	31	23.7

## V. SPECIAL PRACTICES FOR MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS

Among principals who use special practices for married females, 90.1 percent restricted their participation on the yell staff. Athletics are not allowed for married female participation in 87 percent of the schools with special practices for married students. Of the principals, 78.6 percent do not allow married female participation in school dramatic productions. Student council was denied by 61.8 percent of the schools, and 61.1 percent do not allow married female participation in pep clubs. School sponsored public performances were not allowed for married females in 61.1 percent of the schools with special practices for married students. Other special practices reported included denial of participation in dances, school paper, annual staff, and the band.

TABLE 8

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES FROM 131 PRINCIPALS REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Married Students Not Allowed to Participate in:	No.	%
Yell staff	118	90.1
Athletics	114	87.0
Dramatic productions	103	78.6
Student council	81	61.8
Pep club	80	61.1
School Public Performances	80	61.1
Dances	50	38.2
Annual staff	48	36.6
School paper	45	34.4
Band	35	26.7

Six principals or 4.6 percent of those who reported the use of special practices in regard to married students indicated that the husband and wife were not allowed to enroll in the same classrooms.

One principal reported suspension for a definite period of time with re-entry permitted as a special practice for married males and females, while four principals indicated they used regular attendance with no restrictions, except for the married couple registering their marriage with the principal, as a special practice for married students.

Other special practices indicated by individual principals were: married students could complete school and were only allowed to participate in commencement activities; married students could not hold any position of leadership; married students were counseled more than other students; married students were not allowed to participate in the National Honor Society; married students were allowed to attend night school or a school away from the regular school setting.

#### VI. POLICIES FOR STUDENTS INVOLVED IN PREGNANCIES

Of the 232 principals who responded to the question of whether or not their school had an official policy for dealing with students involved in pregnancies, 182 or 78.5 percent responded "yes" while 50 or 21.5 percent of the

principals responded "no".

School boards were the main establishers of policies dealing with students involved in pregnancies, with 66.3 percent of the principals indicating their policies were established by the board. Of the principals, 20.5 percent indicated that their school's pregnant student policies were established in a cooperative manner involving the principal, superintendent, and the school board. In the other schools, as shown in Table 9, policies were established by the administrators alone or in combination with the school board.

TABLE 9

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHING OFFICIAL  
SCHOOL POLICY FOR DEALING WITH STUDENTS  
INVOLVED IN PREGNANCY

Who Established Policy	No.	%
School Board	120	66.3
Superintendent	6	3.3
Principal	7	3.9
All Three Combined	37	20.5
School Board and Superintendent Combined	9	4.9
Superintendent and Principal Combined	2	1.1

VII. RESPONSE TO CATEGORICAL PROVISIONS OF POLICY  
FOR STUDENTS INVOLVED IN PREGNANCY

Table 10 shows the response of principals to the provisions of their school's policy for dealing with students involved in pregnancies. Of the responding princi-

pals, 76.4 percent indicated that their policy did not deal with married fathers while 33.6 percent of the principals indicated their school's policy involved married fathers. Among the principals, 88.3 percent reported that their school policy for pregnancy involved married females while 11.7 percent indicated their policy did not deal with married females. Of the 119 principals who responded to whether or not their school's policy for pregnancy involved a provision for the unmarried father 73.1 percent did not have such a provision while 26.9 percent of the responding principals indicated their school's policy for pregnancy involved a provision for unmarried fathers. Also, 89.4 percent of the principals indicated their school's pregnant student policy had provisions that deal with the unmarried female, while only 10.6 percent did not have such a provision.

TABLE 10

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSE TO CATEGORICAL PROVISIONS  
OF POLICY DEALING WITH STUDENTS  
INVOLVED IN PREGNANCY

	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
Married fathers	43	33.6	85	76.4
Married female	151	88.3	20	11.7
Unmarried father	32	26.9	87	73.1
Unmarried female	152	89.4	18	10.6

### VIII. POLICY PROVISIONS FOR MALES INVOLVED IN A PREGNANCY

Table 11 summarizes the responses of principals as to which phrase applies to the policy provisions concerning males who are involved in pregnancy. Regular attendance, but with restrictions, was listed by 46.9 percent of the 145 responding principals. The most frequent response for unmarried fathers was regular attendance with no restrictions indicated by 59.4 percent of the 106 principals who responded. Regular attendance with no restrictions was indicated by 43.4 percent of the principals who responded for married fathers. Regular attendance, but with restrictions was indicated by 32.1 percent of the principals who responded for unmarried fathers. The lowest response which seemed quite significant was for the provisions of immediate and final expulsion with one principal indicating the provision applied to married fathers and two principals indicated such a provision for unmarried fathers. One should note the difficulty of gathering and comparing statistics between married and unmarried fathers. Many of the principals indicated their policy applied to unmarried fathers when known, but the usual situation would find the unmarried father not being identified.

TABLE 11

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO POLICY PROVISIONS CONCERNING  
MARRIED FATHERS AND UNMARRIED FATHERS

	Married Fathers		Unmarried Fathers	
	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate and final expulsion	1	.8	2	1.9
Suspension for a definite period of time; re-entry permitted	13	8.9	7	6.6
Regular attendance allowed, but with restriction on students' activities	68	46.9	34	32.1
Regular attendance; no restrictions	63	43.4	63	59.4

Other statements indicated by principals as policy provisions for married and unmarried fathers included: extra counseling; night school or adult education; having to register with the principal; and dealing with each situation as an individual case with no set of exact provisions applied to all cases.

IX. POLICY PROVISIONS FOR FEMALES  
INVOLVED IN A PREGNANCY

One hundred ninety-six principals responded to policy provisions for married pregnant females and 181 principals responded to policy provisions for unmarried pregnant females. Suspension for a definite period of time with re-entry permitted was the most frequent response for both married and unmarried pregnant females. Among respond-

ing principals 38.2 percent responded such for married pregnant females while 43.9 percent responded such for unmarried pregnant females. The second most frequent response was regular attendance but with restrictions on the students' activities, 36.2 percent of the principals responded such for married pregnant females and 29.1 percent responded such for unmarried pregnant females. Of the principals responding, 25 percent indicated regular attendance with no restrictions for married pregnant females while 22.5 percent responded for unmarried pregnant females. The lowest response which seemed significant was for the provisions of immediate and final expulsion with one principal indicating the provision for married pregnant females and seven principals indicating such a provision for unmarried pregnant females.

TABLE 12

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO POLICY PROVISIONS CONCERNING  
MARRIED AND UNMARRIED PREGNANT FEMALES

	Married Pregnant Female		Unmarried Pregnant Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate and final expulsion	1	.6	7	3.8
Suspension for a definite period of time; re-entry permitted	75	38.2	80	43.9
Regular attendance allowed, but with restrictions on the students' activities	71	36.2	53	29.1
Regular attendance; no restrictions	49	25.0	41	22.5



Other statements indicated by principals as policy provisions for married and unmarried pregnant females included: extra counseling; registering with the principal; night school or adult education; home tutor until end of pregnancy; and dealing with each situation as an individual case with no set of exact provisions applied to all cases.

#### X. SPECIAL PRACTICES REGARDING STUDENTS INVOLVED IN PREGNANCIES

Table 13 shows the responses of principals to the question of whether or not their school used special practice in regard to students involved in pregnancy. Of the 204 principals who responded about special practices for married fathers 46.1 percent use special practices while 53.9 percent do not use special practices with married fathers. Among the principals 68.8 percent use special practices with married pregnant females and 31.2 percent do not use special practices with married pregnant females. Of the 184 principals who responded about special practices for unmarried fathers 85.9 percent do not use special practices and 14.1 percent do use special practices with unmarried fathers. Special practices with unmarried pregnant females are used by 67.7 percent of the principals, and 32.3 percent do not use special practices with unmarried pregnant females.

TABLE 13

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO SPECIAL PRACTICES CONCERNING  
STUDENTS INVOLVED IN PREGNANCIES

	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
Married father	94	46.1	110	53.9
Married pregnant female	139	68.8	63	31.2
Unmarried father	26	14.1	158	85.9
Unmarried pregnant female	132	67.7	63	32.3

XI. SPECIAL PRACTICES FOR MARRIED FATHERS

Of the 94 principals who reported the use of special practices in regard to married fathers 100 percent do not allow them to participate in athletics or the yell staff, while 90.4 percent of the principals do not allow married fathers to perform in dramatic productions and 75.5 percent of the principals using special practices do not allow married fathers to participate in student council. School public performances were not permitted by 71.3 percent of the 94 principals who use special practices with married fathers, and 65.9 percent of the principals do not permit participation in pep clubs. The four items receiving the lowest response from the principals who indicated they used special practices for married fathers were: denial of participation in school dances, annual staff, newspaper and band.

TABLE 14  
 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES FROM 94 PRINCIPALS  
 REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF MARRIED FATHERS  
 IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Student Not Allowed to Participate in	No.	%
Athletics	94	100.0
Yell Staff	94	100.0
Dramatic Productions	85	90.4
Student Council	71	75.5
School Public Performances	67	71.3
Pep Club	62	65.9
Dances	43	45.7
Annual Staff	35	37.2
Newspaper Staff	30	31.9
Band	26	27.7

## XII. SPECIAL PRACTICES FOR MARRIED PREGNANT FEMALES

Table 15 shows the distribution of responses from the 139 principals who reported that they use special practices with married pregnant females. The most frequent response was not allowing married pregnant females to participate as yell leaders with 76.3 percent of the responses reporting this as a special practice, while 74.1 percent of the principals do not allow married pregnant females to participate in athletics and 64 percent do not allow them to participate in dramatic productions. Student council is not open for participation by married pregnant females in 56.1 percent of the schools reporting special practices while 53.9 percent of the schools do not allow married pregnant females to participate in school public

performances. Among the principals 52.5 percent reported they denied married pregnant females participation in the pep club. Other items reported included denial of participation for married pregnant females in school dances, annual staff, school paper, and the band.

TABLE 15

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES FROM 139 PRINCIPALS  
REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF MARRIED PREGNANT  
FEMALES IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Student Not Allowed to Participate in	No.	%
Yell Staff	106	76.3
Athletics	103	74.1
Dramatic Productions	89	64.0
Student Council	78	56.1
School Public Performances	75	53.9
Pep Club	73	52.5
Dances	48	34.5
Annual Staff	40	28.8
School Paper	35	25.2
Band	32	23.0

XIII. SPECIAL PRACTICES FOR UNMARRIED FATHERS

Of the 26 principals who reported the use of special practices in regard to unmarried fathers 100 percent do not allow them to participate in athletics and 84.6 percent deny them from the yell staff. Of the reporting principals 76.9 percent do not allow unmarried fathers to perform in dramatic productions while 61.5 percent of the principals using special practices do not allow unmarried fathers to participate in student council. School public

performances were not permitted by 61.5 percent of the 26 principals who use special practices with unmarried fathers. One half of the principals do not permit participation in pep clubs. It seems a significant factor that only 26 principals responded to the section dealing with unmarried fathers while five times the number of principals responded to the same section for unmarried pregnant females. One can reasonably assume there would be some difficulty in determining who the unmarried fathers are.

TABLE 16

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES FROM 26 PRINCIPALS  
REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF UNMARRIED  
FATHERS IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Student Not Allowed to Participate in	No.	%
Athletics	26	100.0
Yell Staff	22	84.6
Dramatic Productions	20	76.9
Student Council	16	61.5
School Public Performances	16	61.5
Pep Club	13	50.0
Dances	11	42.3
Annual Staff	11	42.3
Band	8	30.8
School Paper	7	26.9

#### XIV. SPECIAL PRACTICES FOR UNMARRIED PREGNANT FEMALES

Table 17 shows the distribution of responses from the 132 principals who reported that they use special practices with unmarried pregnant females. The most frequent response was not allowing unmarried pregnant females

to participate as yell leaders with 67.4 percent reporting this as a special practice, while 66.7 percent of the principals do not allow unmarried pregnant females to participate in athletics and 56.1 percent do not allow them to participate in dramatic productions.

TABLE 17

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES FROM 132 PRINCIPALS  
REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF UNMARRIED  
PREGNANT FEMALES IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Student Not Allowed to Participate in	No.	%
Yell Staff	89	67.4
Athletics	88	66.7
Dramatic Productions	74	56.1
Student Council	65	49.2
School Public Performances	64	48.5
Pep Club	62	47.0
Dances	43	32.6
Annual Staff	38	28.8
School Paper	34	25.8
Band	30	22.7

Two principals or 1 percent of those who reported the use of special practices in regard to students involved in pregnancies indicated that the fathers and pregnant females were not allowed to enroll in the same classrooms.

Other special practices reported by individual principals were: students involved in pregnancy could not hold any position of leadership; pregnant females were informed of health and safety problems with some reports of removing them from P. E. classes. Students involved in

pregnancy were not allowed to participate in the National Honor Society; pregnant female is placed on home tutor until delivery; and some principals indicated increased counseling and working with the individuals particular problems.

One should also note that a number of principals indicated that they probably would use special practices with some students involved in pregnancies, but the unmarried father and unmarried pregnant female are not always known. Many principals commented that the pregnant females either married or unmarried often leave the school before the school could apply any policy or special practices.

#### XV. PRINCIPALS OPINIONS OF PROBLEMS WITH MARRIED OR PREGNANT STUDENTS

Among the principals who responded to the question of whether or not they believed marriage had ill affects upon the student, 44.1 percent said yes and 55.9 percent said no for the males, while 45.8 percent said yes and 54.2 percent said no for the females. The question of whether or not being involved in pregnancy had any ill affects upon the student was answered with a yes by 43.3 percent and no by 56.7 percent of the principals for males. Among answering principals 68.2 percent said yes and 31.8 percent answered no to the same question for females.

TABLE 18

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSE TO ILL AFFECTS OF MARRIAGE  
OR PREGNANCY UPON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

	<u>Male</u>				<u>Female</u>			
	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
Marriage	82	44.1	104	55.9	86	45.9	102	54.2
Pregnancy	64	43.3	84	56.7	116	68.2	54	31.8

Most of the principals who answered the question of whether or not married or pregnant students present more problems to the classroom teacher than other students indicated that they did not. No was the answer of 85.6 percent and 14.4 percent said yes for married males presenting more problems to the classroom teacher, and 82 percent said no, and 18 percent said yes for married females presenting more problems to the classroom teacher. Of the 189 principals responding to the question regarding males who are involved in a pregnancy presenting more problems to the classroom teacher, 83.9 percent said no and 16.1 percent said yes. Of the 178 who responded to the same question for females 65.2 percent said no and 34.8 percent said yes.

TABLE 19

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSE TO INCREASED CLASSROOM PROBLEMS  
FROM MARRIED OR PREGNANT STUDENTS

	<u>Male</u>				<u>Female</u>			
	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
Married	27	14.4	161	85.6	34	18.0	155	82.0
Involved in Pregnancy	25	16.1	130	83.9	62	34.8	116	65.2



The vast majority of principals who answered the question of whether or not married or pregnant students tend to request more special privileges indicated that they do not. Among the principals 75.8 percent said no and 24.2 percent answered yes to whether or not married males requested more special privileges. The same question for females found 66.8 percent of the principals answering no while 33.2 percent of the principals answered yes. No was the answer of 77 percent of the principals and 23 percent answered yes to whether or not males involved in a pregnancy requested more special privileges. The same question for females found 57.1 percent answering no while 42.9 percent of the principals answered yes.

TABLE 20

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSE TO INCREASED SPECIAL PRIVILEGES  
FROM STUDENTS INVOLVED IN MARRIAGE OR PREGNANCY

	<u>Male</u>				<u>Female</u>			
	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
Married	46	24.2	144	75.8	64	33.2	129	66.8
Involved in Preg- nancy	35	23.0	117	77.0	76	42.9	101	57.1

A large majority of the principals who answered the question of whether or not married students or students involved in a pregnancy have an increase in absences from

school indicated that they did. Among married students, 62.2 percent of the responses said that there was an increase in absences among married males while 37.8 percent of the responses said there was not an increase. The same problem for married females was indicated as yes by 71 percent of the principals while 29 percent indicated they did not increase their absences. Among the principals 55.6 percent indicated males involved in pregnancy increased their absences while 44.4 percent said they did not increase absences. The same question for females found 83.3 percent of the responses indicating yes and 16.7 percent of the responses indicating that females involved in pregnancy did not increase their absences.

TABLE 21

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSE TO INCREASED ABSENCES FOR STUDENTS INVOLVED IN MARRIAGE OR PREGNANCY

	<u>Male</u>				<u>Female</u>			
	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
Married	115	62.2	70	37.8	132	71.0	54	29.0
Involved in Preg- nancy	69	55.6	55	44.4	140	83.3	28	16.7

Two hundred five principals answered the question about whether or not they believed the present policies and practices used in their school were appropriate. One hundred forty-nine, or 72.7 percent, answered yes and

and 56, or 27.3 percent, answered no.

A surprising number of principals indicated that they would like to modify their present policies and/or practices in regard to married students or students involved in pregnancy. Three general areas seemed to dominate as recommended modification or general comment. Many principals did not like restrictions on student participation in activities particularly keeping boys from participating in athletics. Some principals desired an official policy for dealing with unwed mothers, and other principals without any official policy desired an official policy for consistency and guidelines of action. Ten principals indicated that their present policy and practice situation was under close scrutiny and they hoped to have revisions completed by the end of the school year. Other comments or suggested revisions from principals included the following: Equal policies and practices for both males and females; Married and unmarried students should be treated equally; Continuing education or home tutor for pregnant females including weekly group counseling; No restrictions or set policy except to handle each case individually; Pregnant females should be provided a school away from school. Probably the greatest contrast was provided by the comments of two different principals. One principal wishes the student community would come forth with a policy making second class citizens of unmarried males and females

involved in pregnancy. The other principal had completely open and nonrestrictive policies and practices toward married students or students involved in pregnancy; he said, "the rest of the state better get with it."

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine what school policies exist for married or pregnant students, and how those policies were being applied. The study also attempted to sample administrator opinion of the effects of current practices. A questionnaire was submitted to the high school principals of the public schools in Washington state. Two hundred thirty six, or 79.5 percent, of the principals responded to the questionnaire. The responses were tabulated and analyzed by sex in relation to whether or not they were policies or practices.

#### I. SUMMARY

##### Married Student Policies

The large majority of high schools reported having an official policy for dealing with married students. Only 16 percent of the responding principals reported no official policy.

Official married student policies have been established by either the school board or a combination of the board, superintendent, and principal in 86.1 percent of

the situations reporting the existence of an official school policy for married students.

There was little difference between policy provisions for males or females with a large majority of the schools reporting a policy provision of regular attendance but with restrictions on student activities or a policy of regular attendance with no restrictions.

#### Married Student Special Practices

More than half of the responding principals indicated that they used special practices with married students at their high school.

Special practices for married male students were mainly in the area of activities with 91.6 percent of the schools using special practices reporting they denied married males participation in athletics. The most common other practices reported by principals were the denial of participation for males in the yell staff, dramatic productions, student council, pep club, and other school public performances.

Special practices for married female students were reported to be the same as for married male students with one exception. That difference reported was that a slightly larger number of schools denied married females from participation on the yell staff which made that practice more common for females than for males.

### Policies for Students Involved in Pregnancies

A large percentage of the reporting principals indicated that their school had an official policy for dealing with students involved in pregnancy. Only 21.5 percent of the responding principals reported no official policy for dealing with students involved in a pregnancy.

An official policy for students involved in a pregnancy has been established by either the school board or a combination of the board, superintendent, and principal in 86.8 percent of the situations reporting the existence of such an official school policy.

Over 90 percent of the schools having policy provisions concerning married or unmarried fathers allow them to continue with regular school attendance. More schools restrict activities for married fathers than for unmarried fathers as a part of their policy provision. A significant percentage of the schools reporting a policy with provisions for married or unmarried fathers did not restrict activities with 43.4 percent reporting no activity restrictions for married fathers while 59.4 percent reported no activity restrictions for unmarried fathers.

The responses by principals to their policy provisions concerning married and unmarried pregnant females were about the same, but quite different than for married or unmarried fathers.

Suspension for a definite period of time with re-

entry permitted is a policy provision in 38.2 percent of the schools having a policy for married pregnant females while 43.9 percent follow the same policy for unmarried pregnant females. Regular attendance, but with restrictions on activities was the second most frequent response for both married and unmarried pregnant females in schools reporting a policy for dealing with students involved in a pregnancy.

#### Special Practices Regarding Students Involved in Pregnancies

Among the schools responding to the question of the use of special practices with students involved in pregnancy 53.9 percent do not use special practices for married fathers, and 85.9 percent reported that they did not use special practices for unmarried fathers. Among the same responding schools 68.8 percent indicated that they did use special practices for married pregnant females, and 67.7 percent indicated that they did the same for unmarried pregnant females.

The majority of principals who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they did not use special practices for married fathers. The most common special practices among schools using such for married fathers were: denial of participation in athletics, yell staff, dramatic productions, and the student council, in that order.

Among the principals who responded to the question-



naire indicated that they did not use special practices for married fathers. The most common special practices among schools using such for married fathers were: denial of participation in athletics, yell staff, dramatic productions, and the student council, in that order.

Among the principals who responded to the questionnaire, 58.9 percent indicated that they did use special practices for married pregnant females. The special practices most frequently reported among schools using such for married pregnant females were: denial of participation in yell staff, athletics, dramatic productions, and the student council, in that order.

Only 26 of the principals who responded to the questionnaire reported the use of special practices for unmarried fathers. The special practices reported in use for unmarried fathers were the same as for married fathers.

Of the principals who responded to the questionnaire, 55.9 percent indicated that they did use special practices for unmarried pregnant females. The special practices most frequently reported for unmarried pregnant females were the same as for married pregnant females.

#### Principals' Opinions of Problems with Married or Pregnant Students

Generally the principals did not feel that marriage or pregnancy involvement had ill affects upon male students.

Marriage was not considered to have ill affects upon female students by a majority of principals, but a wide majority indicated they felt pregnancy did have ill affects upon academic achievement for females.

Over two-thirds of the principals responding to the question about whether married students or students involved in pregnancy caused increased classroom problems indicated that they did not.

Most principals indicated that they did not feel that students who were involved in marriage or pregnancy requested increased privileges.

Increased absence among students who are married or involved in a pregnancy was the response of a majority of principals with the largest response of principals indicated for females involved in pregnancy followed by married females.

Among the principals answering the question about the appropriateness of their present policies and practices for married or pregnant students, 72.7 percent indicated they felt their's were appropriate. Many principals did indicate a desire to change or modify their school policy and practices for married or pregnant students and some schools are currently going through a complete change.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

The questionnaire responses indicated that about

80 percent of the public high schools in the state of Washington have official policies for dealing with married students or students involved in a pregnancy. More schools have official policies for married students than for students involved in a pregnancy.

A careful analysis of this study indicates that there is a lack of uniformity in the policies and practices of Washington state public high schools involved with married students or students involved in a pregnancy.

Generally one could conclude from this study that most schools allow married students, both male or female, to continue in school, but with restrictions on their activities.

Among schools that use special practices with married students it can be concluded that the vast majority deny participation by males and females in the most popular public activities and leadership roles.

It would be justifiable to conclude from this study that boards of education and school administrators were in favor of married students being permitted to continue their academic education, but restricting them somewhat in their social education.

One could further conclude from this study that most public high schools in the state of Washington allow married males and females and unmarried fathers and pregnant females to continue in school. However, about four

out of ten schools suspend for a definite period of time pregnant females either married or unmarried, while less than one out of ten high schools suspend for a definite period of time either married or unmarried fathers.

Another conclusion that can be made from this study is that a large majority of principals do not believe married students or students involved in pregnancy cause more classroom problems or ask for special privileges.

One problem does increase in the opinion of a majority of the principals. The principals indicated an increase in absence from school as a result of student marriage or involvement in a pregnancy.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

After completion of this study and consideration of problems confronting married students or students involved in a pregnancy, the following recommendations are made.

1. Married and pregnant student policies should be established and adopted by all schools.
2. The policies should be the same for all married students or students involved in a pregnancy.
3. Allied activities are a very important part of the total educational process and should not be denied any student as long as he maintains a favorable attitude.
4. Special attempts should be made to provide the pregnant female with an opportunity to continue her high

school education, particularly during the later months of pregnancy.

5. Since principal opinion indicated no problems with married students or students involved in a pregnancy that could not be handled by the school, the writer strongly recommends all schools adopt policies and practices that encourage married students or students involved in a pregnancy to continue their high school education.

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## APPENDIX

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

I. Does your school have an official policy for dealing with married students? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes; was this policy established by the:

- a. School board \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Principal \_\_\_\_\_

II. Select the phrase or phrases which apply to the policy provisions concerning married students.

	Male	Female
a. Immediate and final expulsion.	_____	_____
b. Suspension for a definite period of time; re-entry permitted.	_____	_____
c. Regular attendance allowed, but with restrictions on the students activities.	_____	_____
d. Regular attendance; no restrictions.	_____	_____
e. Other (explain briefly if possible)	_____	_____

III. Does your school use any special practices in regard to married students? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes; check which of the following apply in your situation:

- a. Husband and wife not allowed to enroll in same classrooms. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Married students not allowed to participate in:

	Male	Female
1. Athletics	_____	_____
2. Dances	_____	_____
3. Dramatic productions	_____	_____
4. Student council	_____	_____
5. Pep club	_____	_____
6. School paper	_____	_____
7. Annual staff	_____	_____
8. School public performances	_____	_____
9. Band	_____	_____
10. Yell staff	_____	_____
11. Other _____	_____	_____

- c. Immediate and final expulsion \_\_\_\_\_

- |  | Male  | Female |
|--|-------|--------|
| d. Suspension for a definite period of time; re-entry permitted. | _____ | _____  |
| e. Regular attendance; no restrictions.                          | _____ | _____  |
- IV. Does your school have an official policy for dealing with students involved in pregnancies? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes; was the policy established by the:
- a. School board \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Principal \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes; does the pregnant student policy have provisions that deal with:
- a. Married father            Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Married female            Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Unmarried father        Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
d. Unmarried female        Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- V. Select the phrase or phrases which apply to the policy provisions concerning married father, married pregnant female, unmarried father, and unmarried pregnant female.
- a. Immediate and final expulsion: Married Father \_\_\_\_\_  
Married Female \_\_\_\_\_; Unmarried Father \_\_\_\_\_;  
Unmarried Female \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Suspension for a definite period of time; re-entry permitted: Married Father \_\_\_\_\_; Married Female \_\_\_\_\_; Unmarried Father \_\_\_\_\_; Unmarried Female \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. Regular attendance allowed, but with restrictions on the students activities: Married Father \_\_\_\_\_; Married Female \_\_\_\_\_; Unmarried Father \_\_\_\_\_; Unmarried Female \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. Regular attendance; no restrictions: Married Father \_\_\_\_\_; Married Female \_\_\_\_\_; Unmarried Father \_\_\_\_\_; Unmarried Female \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. Other (explain briefly if possible) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- VI. Does your school use any special practices in regard to married father students? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- Does your school use any special practices in regard to married pregnant female students? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Does your school use any special practices in regard to unmarried father students? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Does your school use any special practices in regard to unmarried pregnant female students? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes; check which of the following apply in your situation:

- a. Husband and wife not allowed to enroll in same classrooms.  
 b. Students not allowed to participate in:

	Married Father	Married Female	Unmarried Father	Unmarried Female
1. Athletics	___	___	___	___
2. Dances	___	___	___	___
3. Dramatic Productions	___	___	___	___
4. Student Council	___	___	___	___
5. Pep Club	___	___	___	___
6. School Paper	___	___	___	___
7. Annual Staff	___	___	___	___
8. School pub- lic per- formances	___	___	___	___
9. Band	___	___	___	___
10. Yell Staff	___	___	___	___
11. Other _____				

- c. Immediate and final expulsion: Married Father \_\_\_; Married Female \_\_\_; Unmarried Father \_\_\_; Unmarried Female \_\_\_.
- d. Suspension for a definite period of time; re-entry permitted: Married Father \_\_\_; Married Female \_\_\_; Unmarried Father \_\_\_; Unmarried Female \_\_\_.
- e. Regular attendance; no restrictions: Married Father \_\_\_; Married Female \_\_\_; Unmarried Father \_\_\_; Unmarried Female \_\_\_.

VII. In your opinion does (a. marriage, b. pregnancy) have any ill affects upon the married or pregnant students academic achievement?

Male	a.	Yes ___	No ___	b.	Yes ___	No ___
Female	a.	Yes ___	No ___	b.	Yes ___	No ___

VIII. Do the (a. married, b. pregnant) students present any more problems to the classroom teacher than other students?

Male	a.	Yes	___	No	___	b.	Yes	___	No	___
Female	a.	Yes	___	No	___	b.	Yes	___	No	___

IX. Do (a. married, b. pregnant) students tend to request more special privileges than other students?

Male	a.	Yes	___	No	___	b.	Yes	___	No	___
Female	a.	Yes	___	No	___	b.	Yes	___	No	___

X. Is there an increase in absences with (a. married, b. pregnant) students who are enrolled in school?

Male	a.	Yes	___	No	___	b.	Yes	___	No	___
Female	a.	Yes	___	No	___	b.	Yes	___	No	___

XI. Do you believe that present policies and practices regarding married or pregnant students in your school are appropriate? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If no; what modifications would you suggest?

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