

THE DROPOUT PROBLEM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP
TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by 500

CHARLES SETTERQUIST

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Approved by:


Major Professor

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INTRODUCTION

Jobless dropouts have been called "social dynamite" by James B. Conant, "a terrible waste" by Secretary Abraham Ribicoff, and "potentially the most dangerous social condition in America today" by Secretary Arthur Goldberg.¹ There has been a growing concern in recent years over the number of students who leave school prior to high school graduation. Much space has been devoted in the national press to the problem of the school dropout. Probably the greatest impetus to action has come from concern for the social consequences of unemployment among the dropouts that has continued from generation to generation.

Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz stated that the inability of our economy and society to absorb the dropouts is one of the most explosive social problems in our nation's history.² The threat of a burgeoning delinquency problem created partially by unemployment, has made the dropout problem a matter of serious national concern. So great was this anxiety that the late President Kennedy appointed a number of national groups to study the problem, and research from one group, the Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime,

¹William P. Lineberry, The Challenge of Full Employment (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1962), p. 17.

²Lucius Cervantes, The Dropout, Causes and Cures (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 5.

showed a high correlation between the school dropout rate and the incidence of delinquency.

Today's youth are the adults of tomorrow. For most the admission into our world is a job. Today it is much harder for a youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one with limited training and education to secure a job. The jobs that they used to fill have rapidly disappeared; and many of the jobs that are available, they are unqualified to fill. Lack of the high school diploma inevitably shuts the door to many work opportunities. It has become increasingly difficult for a person to prove his ability through performance unless he first holds the magical paper called the secondary school diploma. In our urbanized, affluent, and highly automated society in which the demand for unskilled labor has been reduced, there have remained fewer jobs for unskilled workers and more unfilled jobs demanding higher levels of education.³

No one who had been working on or connected with this particular problem thought that school dropout was a new phenomenon. It was the particular conformity, the necessary style of our incessantly modern life that had made an individual's dropping out of school, in our day, in our decade, a momentous tragic social event. Dropping out indicated a

³Illinois Department of Public Instruction. I Quit . . ?. (Springfield: The Department, 1967), p. 10.

youngster's unwillingness or incapacity to absorb society's more refined tools and knowledge.⁴

In this light, the large number of dropouts was especially significant. These unambitious workers were not unemployed because they were high school dropouts. It was because of the kind of jobs for which their preparation qualified them were fast disappearing due to the impact of automation and technological advancements.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purposes of this study were: (1) to review literature and studies concerning the dropout problem; (2) to survey what has been done to help alleviate the dropout situation; and (3) to determine what may be done by the schools to encourage boys and girls to continue their education.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The dropout is one of the greatest single problems facing educators today. A million boys and girls, young men and women, each year make the wrong decision and drop out of school. By doing so, they doom themselves. These persons will have trouble finding work since they are able to compete only for the dwindling opportunities in unskilled labor.

⁴Daniel Schreiber, Guidance and the School Dropout (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1964), p. 1.

They are the last to be hired, receive the lowest pay, and are the first to be laid off. Frequently their jobs are taken over by machines.

The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare statistics indicate that about 30 per cent of the pupils now in the fifth grade will leave school before high school graduation. The future, in most cases, is exceedingly bleak for these persons. In this day of increasing automation and dwindling job opportunities for unskilled labor, school dropouts are hard put to become productive and participating adults in our society.⁵ In addition to a better job, more pay, and greater job security, the person who finishes high school will have a more personally satisfying life and make a useful contribution to society.

Society's concern, buttressed by rising rates in live births, unemployment, delinquency, youth crime and welfare costs, have catapulted the dropout problem forward and made it one of education's major problems.⁶ For these reasons it is hoped that by further study of the problem that schools will be able to provide more effective programs and aid the

⁵United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Selected Reports on School Dropouts. Washington: United States Printing Office, 1967.

⁶Daniel Schreiber, School Dropouts (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1967), p. 5.

potential dropout in adjusting successfully to school life thereby enhancing his future happiness.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

A dropout was a pupil who left school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school.

Voluntary dropouts are those over which school administrators can exercise a certain amount of control.

Involuntary dropouts are those over which school administrators have no control, including such reasons as physical disability, deceased, marriage, pregnancy, drafted, etc.

A dropout problem, as stated by John H. Rohrer, was one of the young adolescents characterized as follows:

. . . one who has grown to mistrust other individuals; one who has had no significant adult figure to offer him emotional support; one who has been inculcated with the most primitive kinds of social values; one who has had to turn to peer groups in order to find someone to relate to emotionally; one who has developed feelings of isolation; one who because of frustrations strikes back at the perceived sources of frustration
...⁷

⁷Daniel Schreiber, The School Dropout (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1964), p. 73.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The method of research used for this report was primarily library research. The references for this study were obtained from the Kansas State University Library, the Manhattan Public Library, and a personal file of educational materials.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Concern for the school dropouts did not develop overnight. As early as 1872, when the high school graduate, rather than the dropout, was the exception, a paper entitled "The Early Withdrawal of Pupils from School: Its Causes and Its Remedies" was presented to the annual session of the National Education Association, Department of Superintendence. Since that time an overwhelming number of articles of opinion and reports of empirical research on the subject have been published.

The past half century has been a period of great social and industrial change in America. The nature of our economic, political, and cultural life has made it increasingly important that all youth stayed in school for as long a period as the educational program contributed significantly to the development of their talents and their abilities. This was desirable for the welfare of society as well as the welfare of the individual. There has been an increased demand for

workers who have higher levels of skill, and for those who can learn to adapt to new technological developments and acquire new skills. There is a decreasing need for workers who cannot meet these standards. A sense of national urgency requires that every person utilize his abilities at as high a level as possible.

Youth out of school and out of work, youth without a sense of achievement and worthwhileness may become youth in trouble; certainly they are less likely to develop into successful adults.⁸ The obligations of citizenship likewise require an increasing educational level for our population. In other words, society suffers when youth are not educated. Youth also suffer, and our democratic concern for each individual as well as the common needs of society require that we try to help them achieve their full potential.

A multiplicity of studies have been conducted to seek information concerning the dropout problem. One of the earliest studies in 1870 revealed that the high school graduate composed only two per cent of the seventeen year old youths. By 1890 it was found that only seven per cent of the youth ages fourteen to seventeen were enrolled in any type of school. From a study in 1900-1904 it was pointed

⁸Robert W. Stroughton, Early School Leavers in Connecticut (Hartford: Connecticut State Department of Education, 1966), p. 20.

out that 82 per cent of the children in certain cities left school before completing the ninth grade, however, twenty-five years later only about 39 per cent had been eliminated.

Later studies indicated that the number of dropout students had actually decreased. In 1940 eighty-nine out of every one hundred students entered the eighth grade; whereas, thirty-four years earlier, only sixty-three out of every one hundred students entered the eighth grade. In the period of 1940-41, four hundred, eighty-one students were graduated from high school for every one thousand who were in the fifth grade. In 1949, the number of dropouts amounted to more than fifty per cent of the nationwide high school enrollment. However, in 1950, there were more high school graduates than high school dropouts. A 1959 study pointed out that fifty-nine per cent of the seventeen year old youth were high school graduates. The percentage of dropouts was reduced, by 1964, to only thirty-five per cent, but this is still larger than the number of jobs which can be offered to dropouts.⁹

In a study of 10,000 dropouts, it was found that they left school at the following ages: 10 per cent under age sixteen, 34 per cent at age sixteen, 27 per cent at age seventeen, 17 per cent at age eighteen, and 12 per cent at age

⁹Gene V. Campbell, "A Review of the Dropout Problem," Peabody Journal of Education, V. 44, September 1966, p. 103.

nineteen years and over. Dropouts tended to leave school upon reaching the legal permissible age of sixteen. It was found that one out of three had left school at this age.¹⁰ The fact that a large group drops out at an age already beyond the usual graduation age points to a substantial amount of retardation in school activities. Later studies found that 85 per cent of them were behind their age group by at least one year, and 53 per cent were behind two years.

In looking at the highest grade the dropouts attained it was found that 31 per cent attained eighth grade or less, 30 per cent reached ninth grade, and 39 per cent dropped out in the tenth or eleventh grade. These figures reveal that one in three dropouts did not get beyond eighth grade, and two out of three never reached senior high school. They had dropped out before most kinds of information on vocational guidance and other facets of counseling normally were available.

A study by states of ninth graders in 1959-60 compared with the number of high school graduates four years later, showed that California led the nation with a 87.5 per cent holding power through four years of high school. Kansas was fourth with a holding power of 84.5 per cent. The state with

¹⁰ Seymour L. Wolfbein, "Transition from School to Work: A Study of the School Leaver," Personnel and Guidance Journal V. 38 (October, 1959), p. 100.

the lowest per cent of holding power was Georgia with 56.8 per cent, while the average was 72.7 per cent for the fifty states.¹¹

The southeastern states tend to have the highest drop-out rate with South Carolina being the state with the highest. The midwestern states were described as having the lowest rate with Utah being in the enviable position of having the lowest rate in the nation.

WHY DO THEY DROP OUT?

A number of studies have been made on the reasons why pupils drop out of school. These studies have usually combined information from various sources, and the reasons generally varied from state to state. In some states the reasons included "work", "truancy", "not gaining much from school", "non-attendance", and "disinterest". In other states such reasons as "academic difficulty", "financial need", "marriage", "pregnancy", "parental indifference", and "non-interest in extracurricular activities" were the ones most often given. Many of these studies were made on the assumption that the number of dropouts could be greatly reduced if it were once learned why boys and girls left

¹¹South Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Dropouts in South Carolina Schools (Columbia, S.C.: The Department, 1964), p. 13.

school before graduating from high school. Thomas Millard summarized the studies when he said:

Students are willing to master feelings of defeat; therefore, they overcompensate for feelings of inadequacy or failure by withdrawal of self from the education environment.¹²

Mildred Berلمان found the following reasons for high school dropouts in a study she conducted: (1) dissatisfaction with school, 47.7 per cent, (2) economic need, 19.4 per cent, (3) lure of a job which was highest for boys ages fifteen to sixteen, 11.7 per cent, (4) marriage and pregnancy which was highest for girls ages fifteen to seventeen, 6.6 per cent, and (5) other reasons, 14.6 per cent.¹³

Harold J. Dillon's study disclosed 54 per cent of the dropouts were boys, and of the total who left school in grades nine and ten, 69 per cent were boys. However, in grade eleven, more girls dropped out of school. Of the dropouts he studied, two main reasons were given for dropping out. They were:¹⁴

1. The cost of high school (this included fees, dues, annuals, pictures, and money to spend to be 'one of the crowd') was too high.

¹²Thomas Millard, "Some Clinical Notes on Dropouts," Journal of Secondary Education, V. 39, December, 1964, p. 343.

¹³Chester Harris, Encyclopedia of Educational Research, (New York: MacMillan Co., 1960), p. 98.

¹⁴Harold J. Dillon, Early School Leavers (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 94.

2. Poor reading ability--there were three times as many poor readers as good readers.

Financial needs outside of the school and a dislike for school in general were two other reasons equated by the dropouts. Financial need included anything from buying an automobile to assisting in the support of the family. The dropout stated that he disliked school because he was very discouraged over his academic progress or because he did not like a certain teacher or subject. This probably meant that he saw no practical value in the subjects he was studying or that he felt excluded from the social life of the school. Some dropouts preferred work and felt that they could get better on-the-job training than training in the schools.

Schreiber found drop outs are non-conformists to our present day society. He also pointed out that the majority of the dropouts are usually found in the lower socio-economic classes. Emphasis was given in this study to the fact that the term 'dropout' was not synonymous with the term 'juvenile delinquent', however, many of their characteristics were found to be the same.¹⁵

Another influential fact regarding school attendance recognized by Schreiber was that of parental attitude toward

¹⁵Daniel Schreiber, "The School Drop Out--A Profile," Educational Digest, XXX, (September, 1964), p. 11.

an education.¹⁶ This was expressed by the statement that two-thirds of the dropout's parents had either a negative or indifferent attitude toward school, whereas, almost 100 per cent of the parents of the stay-ins felt that a young person would be seriously handicapped if he did not possess a high school education. The social and economic status of the family probably influenced this particular situation more than was realized.

Millard analyzed the causes for dropouts psychologically. He found students drop out of school for reasons of self-preservation, hostility and self-pity, inability to draw realistic inferences from what is happening to them, fantastic notions of self-marketability and ideas of being exceptional, and illusory and illogical self confidence.¹⁷ The study also stressed the relation of mental health to basic causes for early school withdrawal. Recognizing that academic retardation is a factor which causes students to drop out of school, educators should be urged to take what ever remedial steps seem necessary and applicable to see that retardation does not become repetitious when preventive measures can be used.

Many educators believe that participation by the

¹⁶Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁷Thomas Millard, Some Clinical Notes on Dropouts, Journal of Secondary Education, V. 39 (December, 1964), p. 347.

students in the activities provided by the school, both in the class and in activities outside the regular school day program, contributes to the potential dropout's feeling of being an integral part of the school.

Cervantes found that usually dropouts were "loners", and that many did not take part in extracurricular activities provided by the school. Cervantes also felt that most of the dropouts were more dissatisfied with their social relationships in school when compared with the nonleavers.¹⁸

A frequent change in schools has been found to contribute to students dropping out of school. A high per cent of the dropouts in many studies were found to have transferred from one to five different schools while in attendance. Poor and irregular attendance, sometimes brought on by such transfers, is another prime reason for leaving school. Many times the degree to which parents have encouraged or required school attendance has had an important influence upon high school completion.

The month of September showed a high percentage of dropouts due to the monetary gain of summer employment. January was another month in which the dropout rate was high because of semester grades. This evidence was uncovered in a study of Ohio Schools which also revealed that the largest

¹⁸Lucius Cervantes, The Dropout, Causes and Cures (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 103.

per cent of dropouts occur in or before the ninth grade, and of those who drop out in the tenth grade, at least 66 per cent are average or better than average students. Other factors pertaining to this study were that the attendance of dropout students tends to deteriorate from the elementary to the secondary school; and that the discipline-problem-dropouts consisted of 10 per cent of boys and 3 per cent of the girls in the elementary school, and in the high school, 27 per cent of the boys and 11 per cent of the girls were discipline problems.¹⁹

In a dropout study conducted in Connecticut the reasons for leaving school were analyzed as follows:²⁰ 39 per cent preferred to leave school, although they had adequate ability to complete high school; 38 per cent decided to leave (mostly for employment) and were judged to have a level of academic ability such that they would find it difficult to complete the scholastic work of high school; 7 per cent found it necessary to leave school because of illness or financial necessity; 8 per cent quit because of disciplinary reasons; and 8 per cent left school because of marriage or pregnancy.

A study conducted in Kentucky gave lack of interest,

¹⁹Leonard Nachman, Pilot Study of Ohio High School Drop Outs (Cleveland, Ohio: F. J. Heer Printing Co., 1963), p. 56.

²⁰Robert W. Stroughton, Early School Leavers in Connecticut (Hartford: The Department, 1963), p. 10.

marriage, lack of scholastic success, and parental indifference as the four main reasons for quitting school.²¹

A dropout study done in Utah listed the following reasons for withdrawing from school:²² marriage and/or pregnancy, unwillingness to obey rules and regulations of the school, consistent failure to achieve in regular school work, and general dislike of school.

Investigators do not agree as to the importance of intelligence as a factor in dropping out of school. Some studies found that intelligence was not particularly important, while others showed that low scholastic aptitude was one of the characteristics of the potential dropout. A study conducted in Maryland showed 50.2 per cent below average in mental ability, 43.4 per cent average, and 6.4 per cent were above average. In Louisiana, the number of superior, high average, and average students who left school was slightly less than the number of dropouts who were reported as being below average, borderline, and retarded.²³ This would seem to indicate that, while many students of low ability are

²¹Harold J. Dillon, The Dropouts (New York: MacMillan Company, 1962).

²²Utah Department of Public Instruction, Utah State Dropout (Salt Lake City: The Department, 1963), p. 33.

²³Louisiana Department of Public Instruction, The School Dropout in Louisiana (Baton Rouge: The Department, 1965), p. 12.

dropping out, there should also be concern for those who can satisfactorily achieve but who nevertheless terminate their education prior to high school graduation.

The forementioned studies are only a few of the very many which have been conducted and which are being conducted on the dropout subject. From all of the studies the basic conclusion can be drawn that there are multiple reasons for youth dropping out of school, and that the future outlook for these persons is not good.

WHO IS THE DROPOUT?

By definition, a person who had not completed twelve grades of school for reasons other than illness, death, transfer to other schools, commitment to correctional institutions, or expulsion was a dropout.²⁴ This person could not be identified by any particular code, he may have come from any walk of life, any social-environmental background, and every educational level.

Segel and Schwarm pointed out that dropouts could be classified as "voluntary" and "involuntary" dropouts. The voluntary dropouts in their study were those who (a) entered employment, (b) were needed at home, (c) enlisted in the

²⁴Gene V. Campbell, "A Review of the Drop Out Problem," Peabody Journal of Education, V. 44 (September, 1966), p. 102.

armed forces, (d) married, (e) dropped, not employed or needed at home, and (f) were unable to adjust, etc. The involuntary withdrawals were those over which the school were presumed not to have control and included those who (a) left school, whereabouts unknown, (b) were excused for being physically disabled or uneducable, (c) drafted or institutionalized, or (d) were deceased.²⁵

The NEA Project on School Dropouts, the U. S. Office of Education, and several other national educational organizations have cooperated in formulating a standard definition for the term dropout. The definition was expressed in this way:²⁶

A dropout is a pupil who leaves school, for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school. The description continues: The term "dropout" is used most often to designate an elementary or secondary school pupil who has been in membership during the regular school term and who withdraws from membership before graduating from secondary school (grade 12) or before completing an equivalent program of studies. Such an individual is considered a dropout whether his dropping out occurs during or between regular school terms, whether his dropping out occurs before or after he has passed the compulsory school attendance age, and, where applicable, whether or not he has completed a minimum required amount of school work.

²⁵David Segel, and Oscar Schwarm, Retention in High Schools (U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Washington: U. S. Printing Office, 1957).

²⁶Sherrell E. Varner, Research Summary of School Dropouts (National Educational Association, Research Division: Washington, D.C., 1967), p. 6.

Research has fairly well established the fact that, on the average, the early school-leaver is less talented academically than his contemporaries who graduated from high school. His performance in academic areas of the school program rated below that of his classmates who won high school diplomas. Almost every major study of dropouts indicated that the chief reason for leaving was dissatisfaction with school. They also stressed the interrelatedness and complexity of numerous factors which cause dropouts.

Studies show that more than half of all school dropouts are male. The largest number who did not finish high school left soon after their sixteenth birthday, usually when they were in the tenth grade. Many of them were found to be seriously retarded in reading and arithmetic performance. They were failing in one or more scholastic subjects, and described as not being active in athletics or other extra-class activities. However, a great proportion of them had IQ's which indicated they could have continued through high school graduation.

The majority of high school dropouts came from families where school attendance and achievement were not considered as having much value. A study in Maryland pointed out that 70 per cent of the mothers and 80 per cent of the fathers of the dropout children had never completed high school and that 25 per cent of the mothers and 30 per cent of the fathers had

not progressed beyond the sixth grade.²⁷ According to the same article the dropout's parents usually had jobs requiring only physical energy, and suffered frequent periods of unemployment. The family spent little time together and showed no appreciation for the good that comes from obtaining a full education.

The school dropout does not exhibit a single behavior pattern, rather, he manifests one or more of such characteristics as low socio-economic status, poor scholastic aptitude, limited school achievement, emotional problems in the elementary school, difficulties with peers and parents, and resistance to help from existing guidance facilities. No dropout had all of the above characteristics in extreme, however, he had more than one, and to the degree that different patterns tend to emerge so that predictions of the potential dropout could be made.²⁸

While there is no prototype for the dropout, Dr. John W. Porter listed characteristics of the dropout as follows:²⁹

²⁷United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Selected Reports on School Dropouts. Washington: United States Printing Office, 1967.

²⁸Daniel Schreiber, Guidance and the School Dropout, Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1964), p. 62.

²⁹John W. Porter, "Delinquency, Dropouts and Related Problems," Michigan Education Journal, XL (January, 1963), p. 362.

1. Resides more often than not in a homogenous area of low socio-economic status.
2. Does not have the skill, responsibility, and personal and social adjustments necessary to obtain and hold a part time job while attending school, and he does not obtain a good job after leaving school. He does not hold one job for long and makes a relatively poor work record.
3. In personal adjustments, he lacks the ability to gain status, is socially immature, defensive, and pessimistic about his future.
4. Is sometimes socially withdrawn and sometimes more aggressive. Lacks stay-in friends and is not a constructive leader. The dropout seldom participates in extra-curricular activities.
5. If a girl often plans to marry early and is likely to be sexually precocious.
6. Academically below average, a poor reader, often absent from school, and clashes with certain middle-class teachers who reject him on the basis of social class or academic inadequacy.
7. If not below average academically, is more likely to exhibit a dislike for the school situation because of reasons not yet fully identified.
8. System of values tells him to reject school, self, and competitive situations.
9. Often regrets looking ahead to leaving school, but it is to him the lesser of two evils, for he feels frustrated and socially insecure in the school situation.
10. Has extremely difficult time seeing the possibility of education as a means to vocation success, and can find no suitable program in the schools as presently organized to meet his needs.
11. His parents are indifferent to school persistence by their children. While they may not express negative feelings concerning school persistence, they will act to intervene on the occasion of the school leaving.

12. Often was repeatedly absent from his classes and therefore handicapped in his studies and, as a result, becomes discouraged, bored, and uninterested. It then became much easier for him to make a decision to leave school and to avoid this unpleasantness.

Allen characterized the dropout as follows:

1. Most dropouts are unsuccessful in schoolwork and retarded by one or more grades; and many consequently are overage by the time they withdraw.
2. Most dropouts take little part in out-of-class activities.
3. Most dropouts place low value on schooling.
4. Most dropouts are from low income families and have difficulties meeting school costs.³⁰

A dropout study done in Illinois shows 53 per cent of dropouts to be boys, and that 45 per cent of the school leavers quit school at the age of sixteen when legal compulsion ceases in many states for school attendance. Eighty per cent of all dropouts were found to be behind at least one grade in school, generally retarded two or more years in reading ability and had received lower grades in their school work than the average student. The study also noted the following:

1. Three-fourths of the group were ranked in the lower one-half of the class in ability.
2. Four out of five were below the 50th percentile in reading achievement.

³⁰Charles M. Allen, Combating the Dropout Problem (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1956), p. 8.

3. Nine out of ten were in the lower one-half of their group scholastically.
4. At the time of withdrawal from school, two-thirds of the group were failing.³¹

IDENTIFYING THE POTENTIAL DROPOUT

Research has identified some of the characteristics of the dropout that are manifested in the school environment. The potential dropout was found to have certain clues that could be detected during the early years of his life. There is widespread recognition of the role played by the schools in combating the problem through guidance, counseling and early identification programs. Some of the characteristics listed in many studies included:³²

1. Old for the age group (over two years older)
2. Grade retardation (one year or more retarded)
3. Low learning rate (below 90 I.Q.)
4. Little or no interest in school work
5. Marks predominantly below average
6. Poor reading ability (two years below grade level)
7. Negative parental attitude
8. General adjustment poor
9. No participation in out-of-school activities
10. Chronic absenteeism (20 or more days per year)
11. Not liked by other pupils
12. Five or more children in family
13. Resents school authority
14. Educational level achieved by mother, grade 7 or below

³¹Ralph Lundgren, Juvenile Delinquency - So What? (Illinois Education, V. 56:301), March, 1968.

³²Jay Courtney, A Study on School Dropouts (Unpublished Report by Mr. Courtney, Manhattan High School Counselor), 1968.

15. Father's occupation, unskilled or semi-skilled
16. Student frequently ill or easily fatigued
17. Pattern of 'jumping' from school to school
18. Student's size, small or large for his age group.

Pupils with five or more of the above characteristics become dropouts.

Greene describes the typical potential dropout in this way:³³

1. The potential dropout is more likely to be a boy than a girl.
2. He perceives himself as not fitting in as other students do.
3. He is not interested in school or school activities. The school program consists of very few activities which hold his interest.
4. He is relatively unsuccessful in performing school tasks.
5. He is usually below grade level in reading and has little opportunity to gain feelings of security and worthiness from school activities.
6. He will seek association with other youngsters who find themselves in the same position. His activities will be centered outside of school.
7. He will tend to miss school frequently.
8. He is likely to be labeled a 'discipline' problem.
9. He will have been retained in a grade at least once in the elementary school.
10. He will have difficulty relating to his teacher or any authority figure.
11. He will feel the need for more personal help, but will be fearful of asking his teacher for help.

The Michigan State Curriculum Committee on school holding power prepared a study in which they listed twenty factors which characterized potential dropouts. The report pointed out that many of the characteristics of the potential

³³Bert I. Greene, "Dropouts and the Elementary School," The National Elementary Principal, Vol. XLII (November, 1962), p. 53.

dropout could be detected in elementary school children. The list was as follows:³⁴

1. Consistent failure to achieve in regular school work
2. Grade level placement two or more years below average age for grade
3. Irregular attendance and frequent tardiness
4. Active antagonism to teachers and principals
5. Marked disinterest in school, with feeling of "not belonging"
6. Low scholastic aptitude
7. Low reading ability
8. Frequent changes of schools
9. Non-acceptance by school staff
10. Non-acceptance by schoolmates
11. Friends much younger or older
12. Unhappy family situation
13. Marked difference from schoolmates, in size, interests, physique, social class, dress, nationality, or personality development
14. Inability to afford the normal expenditures of schoolmates
15. Non-participation in extracurricular activities
16. Inability to compete with, or ashamed of, brothers and sisters
17. Performance consistently below potential
18. Serious physical or emotional handicap
19. Being a discipline case
20. Record of delinquency

In a study conducted in Iowa the dropout was found to be retarded two or more years in reading ability. He had received lower grades in the elementary years, and the average course marks of the dropout had gone down each year during the eighth, ninth, and tenth years of school. In Iowa 84 per cent of the male dropouts and 80 per cent of the

³⁴Michigan Department of Public Instruction, State Curriculum on Holding Power, "Quickie Kit" on School Holding Power, Publication No. 507 (Lansing: The Department, 1963), p. 17.

males who graduated were successfully predicted by considering intelligence, achievement test results, grade point average, number of extracurricular areas participated in, and the educational attainment of the parents. Eighty-one per cent of the female dropouts and 79 per cent of the female graduates were identified by use of grade point average, per cent of time absent, and participation in extracurricular activities.³⁵

It is still a moot question as to which combination of factors seem most likely to produce the pupil-school break as no single characteristic or pattern of characteristics seemed to describe all dropouts or identified all potential dropouts. However, most of the studies showed that varying combinations of a number of identifiable characteristics appeared to be related to dropping out of school.

PROGRAMS TO HELP ALLEVIATE THE DROPOUT PROBLEM

The urgency of the need to alleviate some of the problems created by the dropouts was demonstrated by the fact that two Presidents of the United States found it necessary to call Congress' attention to the situation. First President Kennedy referred to it in his State of the Union Message in 1963. In his message to Congress in 1965, President Johnson

³⁵Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Dropouts (Des Moines: The Department, 1964), p. 11.

said: "In our fifteen largest cities, 60 per cent of the tenth grade students from poverty neighborhoods drop out before finishing high school. The cost of this neglect runs high both for youth and for the Nation."³⁶

The late President Kennedy is considered the founder of the movement to provide educational aid for the potential dropouts and the dropouts. He issued a plea to the students to return to school and complete their education, and he gave former Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel the task of working with selected superintendents to formulate a plan or plans to discourage students from dropping out of school.

To carry forth the President's plan two general approaches were used. The first consisted of a nationwide publicity campaign through which the importance of remaining in or returning to school was stressed; the second was to utilize counselors and other personnel to identify potential dropouts and persuade them to continue their education.³⁷

President Kennedy, through the United States Congress, made funds available immediately for the dropout study. Many federal agencies, including the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and Labor worked with schools, communities,

³⁶Daniel Schreiber, "700,000 Dropouts," American Education, Vol. 4 (June, 1968), p. 5.

³⁷_____, "Results of the 1963 Dropout Campaign," Education Digest, Vol. 30 (September, 1964), p. 27.

and the National Education Association to bring about some immediate results which found over fifty-one per cent of 59,000 dropouts and potential dropouts returning to school at the beginning of a new school term. There was community wide recognition of the dimensions and seriousness of the dropout problem, and there was a fresh look by school personnel at a need for some revision in the school programs.

New York City's "Higher Horizons" program was one of first to awaken interest in education among potential dropouts from the socially deprived homes. The project was initiated in a Junior High School from which 60 per cent of the students quit before graduating and only 4 per cent went on to college. Through a guidance type program an effort was made to identify students with low I.Q.'s whose natural gifts were hidden because of destructive experiences in early childhood. Results proved to be beneficial as two-thirds of the members of the first class remained in school until they graduated and one-third continued on in higher education.³⁸

A program financed by the Ford Foundation entitled Detroit's Great Cities Improvement Program was designed to improve the aspiration level of people in culturally deprived areas. This undertaking used methods and forms prepared by

³⁸John W. Porter, "The Heart of the Dropout Problem: Early Identification," Michigan Education Journal, XL (January, 1963), p. 362.

the Michigan Committee on School Holding Power and endeavored to identify the potential dropout while he was still in the lower grades. They also experimented with various aspects of the school program, probed into the failures and dropout problems, worked through guidance counselors, and studied remedial reading and arithmetic classes.³⁹

The Livingston, Montana, project inaugurated under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was one of the first programs to be supported by federal funds. The objectives of this program were to serve a three fold purpose, namely: (1) to identify the potential dropout before he entered high school, (2) to develop a counseling relationship with the identified students during the summer, and (3) to absorb these students as an identifiable group into the school counseling program. Joint effort by the counselor, teachers, and administrators determined the needs of these students, and the school resources were then mobilized to meet these needs through instructional and guidance functions of the school.⁴⁰

A federal funded project conducted in Ohio that gained nation wide attention was labeled Project D U D, referring to delinquency, underachievers and dropouts. In this

³⁹Ibid., p. 362.

⁴⁰Bruce Patrick, "Identifying Potential High School Dropouts," Montana Education, XLIII (November, 1966), p. 23.

operation attempts were made to identify the potential delinquent, underachiever, and dropout, and to determine how pupil characteristics, teacher characteristics, educational characteristics, and community characteristics inter relate with urban, semi-urban, and rural areas to produce the delinquents, underachievers, and dropouts. Briefly the plan was to bring non-participating students into active roles in the classroom using a three step process: (1) reorientation of classroom teachers toward student-centered teaching; (2) intensive counseling and small group counseling with the less active students; (3) extensive interaction among teachers and counselors regarding the students, theory, and the application of theory in a particular case. Since this project was initiated only recently it was too early to realize results.⁴¹

Another program in New York was launched at the kindergarten level and continued through the third grade. This was an experimental program aimed at the early identification of pupils having academic trouble and providing them with special assistance. Its major objective was to determine the talents of these pupils and offer activities that would encourage their development. Follow up services were also provided for those pupils who needed them beyond the third grade level.

⁴¹Richard Porter, "A Study of One Title III Project," Theory Into Practice, Vol. 6 (June, 1967), p. 154.

Two programs that are being carried out in Michigan have drawn considerable attention especially to those who are interested in society's problem of the dropout. Flint, Michigan, started what was known as the personalized type curriculum program, and Vicksburg, Michigan, adopted a four year "Practical Training Program" which was designed to better meet the needs of the underachiever and the potential dropout. Emphasis was placed on skill development in each of these programs thereby giving the student a chance to develop a skill that would enable them to obtain and hold a job. This allowed the student to remain in school and still had an opportunity to prepare himself for the future.⁴²

In the Flint, Michigan, program potential dropouts were placed in groups of about fifteen students to one teacher and worked one-half day with this same teacher on basic skills of reading, writing, speech, arithmetic, science and basic social studies. During the half day session they took field trips and engaged in other activities of their special interests and needs. As a part of their half-day program they received tips on good grooming and good manners, and worked on many other aspects of securing a higher degree of personal and social competence. They also received vocational

⁴²Harriet T. Letimer, "Flint Takes First Steps to Combat Its Dropout Problem," Michigan School Board Journal, L (January, 1964), p. 10.

guidance during the half-day session. During the other half-day the pupils scheduled courses which fit their individual needs and interests in which they would have a good chance to succeed. Emphasis in this part of the program was on developing some skills which enabled them to obtain and hold a job.

The program at Vicksburg, Michigan, was built around the philosophy that all students should and do desire to follow the same required courses of study as their classmates, but that the material covered in these courses must be designed to meet each individual's basic needs. The subject matter presented developed pertinent concepts, habits, attitudes, and skills from a remedial standpoint. At the junior year there was a deviation from the curriculum as it applied to other students. A youngster in the "Practical Training Program" had two hours of work experience within the school system at this level. During the senior year the student was scheduled into three hours of work within the community. For each of these experiences credit was received toward graduation. Several observations were made of the youth in this program which seemed important; (1) the potential dropout showed a marked degree of improvement when he was assigned to work with a skillful and understanding teacher whom he felt was interested in his individual problems; (2) with a carefully designed work-study program, the students

did not object to being grouped; (3) potential school leavers must be identified early if they are to be helped.

Another way in which Michigan dealt with the problem was through the Michigan Committee on School Holding Power. The committee saw an urgent need of working with business and industry in an effort to create more jobs for high school graduates. They channeled their efforts through five centers in various parts of the state which enabled them to: (1) compile statewide comparable statistical information on the number of pupils actually dropping out; (2) assist schools in adequately finding out why the young people were leaving school; (3) stressing how to combat the problem with the major emphasis on early identification.

The experiences in Kansas City, Missouri, involved thirteen and fourteen year old boys in the eighth grade who were potential dropouts. Their aim was to hold these pupils in school by means of a specially developed curriculum and to teach good work habits and attitudes by means of a work-experience program. This program proved quite satisfactory as the boys developed good work habits and attitudes while learning certain skills at the same time.⁴³

The Racine, Wisconsin, program was designed to determine whether culturally deprived children could be helped to

⁴³Schreiber, op. cit., p. 11.

overcome some of their problems in preschool years. The children who participated in this project followed a normal kindergarten program for half of each day. They then remained at school for lunch and another half-day session in which the program was planned to broaden their backgrounds and to strengthen their educational weaknesses. All this additional activity and instruction was aimed at building a background of experience and understanding which could later lend meaning to the art of reading.⁴⁴

In Iowa the Cedar Falls and Sioux City Schools have emphasized activities in the elementary schools. Such programs as ungraded classes, elementary guidance staffing, reading programs, remedial classes during summer school, and ability grouping in some instructional areas have been initiated. At the secondary level the use of ability grouping has been widened, an extended program of vocational and technical courses have been offered, and a release time work program has been implemented.⁴⁵

The Ithaca, New York, school system created ten programs to curtail dropouts that proved quite successful in the first three years of operation. This School-to-Employment Program commonly called S T E P included not only regular

⁴⁴Schreiber, op. cit., p. 11

⁴⁵Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Dropouts (Des Moines: The Department, 1964), p. 13.

courses of academic and vocational instruction but also special orientation sessions concerned with the world of work. These sessions dealt with such matters as techniques of getting and holding a job, work habits and attitudes conducive to job advancement, and types of preparation needed for various occupational careers. The Ithaca plans utilized every available resource, including human, government, and economic, to "reach, salvage, teach, and prevent dropouts."⁴⁶

Three interrelated phases of New York's Project A B L E included:⁴⁷ (1) intensive remedial, instructional, and cultural enrichment activities for pupils; (2) an in-service sensitivity training for school personnel to acquaint them with the needs, characteristics, and potentials of culturally deprived children; and (3) expanded guidance and counseling services for both pupils and parents. The distinguishing factor of Project A B L E was a system, positive attempt to concentrate effort, attention, and additional resources on children who had a special kind of educational handicap and who had been comparatively neglected by the school system.

The Armed Forces of the United States urged youth to complete high school by giving a bonus of ten points to those who had completed high school when the Armed Forces Qualification

⁴⁶Theodore Bienstock, and William C. Sayres, STEP (New York: State Department of Education, 1964), p. 2.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 34.

Test was given. A program of instruction was also provided to assist the slow learner or dropout to pass the test.

Literature was reviewed concerning the dropout programs in other places including the Roxbury Project at Boston, Project H O P E (Higher Opportunities in Pasadena Education), Pasadena, California, the Great Cities Grey Areas Project, and city programs at Philadelphia, Milwaukee, San Francisco, and Colorado Springs. Programs such as the Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, programs involving Business and Industry in which the work-study approach is used, and many federally funded local projects were all found to be instrumental in assisting youth in the school-to-employment adjustment.⁴⁸

ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

There has been no easy way to solve the dropout problem. The elementary school has two alternatives: it can refuse to recognize the existence of the problem on the grounds that few, if any, students drop out of the elementary school; or, it can recognize that the problem begins in the elementary school and then proceed to do something about it.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Claude C. Lammers, "Automation, Dropouts and Educational Dogma," Education Digest, Vol. 38 (March, 1968), p. 38.

⁴⁹Bert I. Green, "Dropouts and the Elementary School," The National Elementary Principal, Vol. XLII (November, 1962), p. 54.

There is considerable research evidence about the factors that lead to students' dropping out of school. There is also data to help us identify the potential dropouts early in their school life. It is now time to use this evidence and initiate preventive programs for these students. It is at the elementary level that a program to identify the potential dropout can and should be instituted and that a program to prevent dropping out should be begun.⁵⁰

At the elementary school level the approaches made to the prevention of dropouts have been few. However, many elementary schools are now offering more guidance, special classes for the slow learner, non-graded primary programs, classroom activities and cultural enrichment programs to aid children from low socio-economic cultural conditions, and programs for the pre-school child. There has also been more ungraded instruction, more focus on the individual pupil, more time per day with one or two teachers, and more concern for the pupil.⁵¹

Attempts to design an elementary program to meet the needs of pupils who are failing or who are low academically may go along way to counteract the adverse effects of grade failure. Since there is a high association between grade

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 54.

⁵¹Daniel Schreiber, The School Dropout (National Educational Association: Washington, D.C., 1964), p. 196.

failures in the elementary school and later withdrawal from school, one study stressed that elementary schools should depart from the rigid, exclusive standards that have been set up.⁵² The traditional practices of promotion by grades would have to be abandoned in favor of promotion by age, with groups whose social and physical development were somewhat similar. It was suggested that the individual teacher designate these requirements instead of being set by the school.

Programs set up to overcome the dropout problem should not set the potential dropout apart from other children. Rather, the individualized instruction and the attention to special needs should guard against the waste of valuable human resources.⁵³

The high relation between early withdrawal and aloofness from school activities indicates the danger of allowing the meek, submissive, or disinterested pupil to drift through the elementary school. For many pupils, the elementary school may be the only source of a feeling of achievement and personal worth. Pupils who have need of this type of experience most are often the least aggressive in seeking it.

⁵²A. Hugh Livingston, "Key to the Dropout Problem: The Elementary School," Elementary School Journal, Vol. 59 (February, 1959), p. 269.

⁵³Ibid., p. 270.

Merely to provide these experiences without effort to guide each child in finding his place in school will not result in individual involvement for these children.⁵⁴ The school should make every effort to organize the program of activities so that each student is involved in some activity that has interest for him and in which he can be successful.

Russell F. Getson summarized his feelings on the task of the elementary school as follows:

Elementary schools may better serve a large number of those who attend, among whom are the potential drop-outs, by: (1) assisting all students to read and write more effectively; (2) instructing in ways not confined to use of verbal symbolism, but rather in ways that enhance each child's competencies; (3) engaging in local research to find better ways of accomplishing their goals, part of this task should be continuing examination of appropriateness of these goals; and (4) encouraging students to take advantage of an education in which they will have opportunities for success.⁵⁵

Guidance program. The guidance or counseling program has become an important factor in many elementary schools. A good guidance program should develop a systematic plan for the identification of potential dropouts. This plan should be placed in continuing operation; occasional spurts of interest and dramatic gestures will not be adequate. Tests have

⁵⁴Livingston, op. cit., p. 270.

⁵⁵Russell F. Getson, "Drop-Out Study for Elementary School Guidance," Ohio Guidance News and Views, Vol. 10, (January/February, 1964), p. 5.

proved helpful in identifying dropouts, but they should not be relied on completely. Observations and reports by teachers, counselors, school social workers, school psychologists and others in direct contact with the pupils have proved to be more effective.⁵⁶

Counselors should provide in-service training activities for classroom teachers and others involved in working with children. The purpose of such activities would be to inform teachers of the characteristics of the potential dropout, and of problems such pupils face so that teachers will be better prepared to participate in the identification of those needing special help and assistance.

Getson stated that those who have primary responsibility for guidance in the elementary school should be involved in the following things:⁵⁷

1. Identifying those whose school experiences may consist predominantly of failures. This may be begun at a very early age by maintaining records that include such data as the educational attainment and occupational level of the head of the family, the number of siblings, teacher's observations of verbal ability, and estimates of personal and social maturity. Leadership in the development of such records is a primary responsibility of those assigned counseling responsibilities.

⁵⁶Clifford P. Froehlick, Guidance Services in Schools (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1958), p. 264.

⁵⁷Russell F. Getson, "Drop-Out Study for Elementary School Guidance," Ohio Guidance News and Views, Vol. 10 (January/February, 1964), pp. 4-5.

2. Use should be made of such data in determining actions necessary for assisting young people toward a more propitious future. This would involve joint effort by elementary counselors, teachers, administrators, and appropriate resource persons from the central school staff. It should deal with the determination of the needs of individual pupils, as well as groups of pupils, and the mobilization of the school's resources to meet those needs through the instructional and guidance functions of the school.

3. There is a great need for systematic evaluation of the school program. Without such evaluation, educational programs could develop based upon whim and fancy with little concern for their effects.

4. The elementary counselor needs to work with all students to assist them to increase in their understanding and appreciation of themselves. Part of this task requires that elementary students grow in their knowledge of the importance of education in their life.

5. Elementary counselors should be actively engaged in the follow-up of students, not only within the school, but in the next schools they enter, either by transfer or promotion. The implications of such follow-up should be available to teachers, administrators, and the community in order that as a result of information, education may improve.

The Elementary Teacher. The elementary teacher can play an important role in the solution of the dropout problem by identifying potential dropouts in her classroom. The teacher should recognize such incipient maladjustments as low reading achievement, lack of interest in school, frequent tardiness or absenteeism, failure in academic subjects and non-participation in extra curricular activities before they have a chance to become chronic or serious. The teacher's observations, if well made, can make a valuable contribution toward a program to assist youth found to have those

noticeable characteristics of the potential dropout.⁵⁸

One of the most important things that the elementary teacher can do to prevent the development of potential dropouts is to develop a climate within their classroom that will provide for the differing needs and abilities of the active boys and girls. Also teachers must be supportive of their students and develop kinds of relationships that will allow them to criticize, help, and direct pupils without conveying a feeling of the rejection.

Perhaps the best approach that the elementary teacher can take in helping a potential dropout is a developmental one, that is, to help the student understand himself and the opportunities for him that exist within his environment. He must be helped to make choices and decisions that are in concert with his environment and to accept responsibility for these decisions. The teacher can help him think through his feelings and attitudes toward school work and school personnel.⁵⁹

The elementary teacher must recognize that she can operate as only one of the many environmental forces in a student's life. She must recognize that she cannot control

⁵⁸Bert I. Green, "Dropouts and the Elementary School," The National Elementary Principal, Vol. XLII (November, 1962), p. 53.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 54.

all the forces affecting her students, but must work with those forces over which she does have control. She must see herself and her relationships with her students in a realistic way. Above all, she cannot be pessimistic. She must believe that dropping out of school is not inevitable for any youngster.

The teacher must devote some of her energies to providing educational experiences that are designed to meet the needs of the potential dropout. The old cries, "Take the child where he is" and "Take him as far as he is able to go," are good advice to teachers who have potential dropouts in their classrooms. It is impossible for one teacher to be all things to all students. However, she can try to be sensitive to the needs of her students and try to modify the educational program to meet these needs.⁶⁰

Froehlich noted several ways in which the elementary teacher could contribute to a program to curtail future dropouts:

1. Demonstrate a genuine interest in each pupil as an individual by attempting to create an environment which is in harmony with the nature and needs of each pupil.
2. Utilize opportunities presented by classroom activities, co-curricular activities, clubs, and other group and individual contacts to achieve guidance objectives.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 54.

3. Provide group activities which will contribute to pupil growth in areas of personal adjustment and wholesome social relationships.

4. Contribute to pupil cumulative records, assist in keeping them up to date, and utilize pupil data to obtain a thorough knowledge of every pupil as an aid in teaching, in conferring with parents, and in assisting individual pupils.

5. Within the limits of the teacher's qualifications, counsel individual pupils, or refer them to the counselor if such problems are complex or require time beyond that which the teacher has available.

6. Confer with the counselor concerning pupils who give evidence of having special problems.

7. Work closely with the counselor in providing pupils with opportunities for success experiences or other activities which may be important to individual adjustment.⁶¹

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The school dropout problem is not new to the educational scene; historically it dates back to the beginning of education. In recent years, the concern for the American youths who fail to complete high school has increased significantly. Although this concern has prompted much effort to be made in search for a satisfactory solution, the problem of the early school-leaver is still a major one in our nation.

The first purpose of this study was to review some of the available literature and statistics on some of the

⁶¹Clifford P. Froehlich, Guidance Services in Schools (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 264-65.

dropout studies that have been made.

Most studies revealed an abundance of literature and all seemed to stress the ever-increasing need for more education in today's world. While the goal of public education in the United States today appears to be a free education through high school for all able youths, figures showed that about 29 per cent of the nation's potential high school graduates withdraw before graduating. These youth cannot comprehend the relationship between more education now and greater chances for success and happiness at a later date. Since the objectives of public education are to help pupils find their most productive roles in life and to give them the necessary preparation for adequately fulfilling these roles, it is difficult, if not impossible to meet these objectives if our youth do not complete at least a high school education.

Many varied and complex reasons were given as to why students drop out. Some of these included work, truancy, disinterest, academic failure, financial need, marriage, pregnancy, parental-indifference, non-interest in extra-curricular activities, and poor reading ability. Financial need and dislike for school seemed to be other reasons most often mentioned.

In answering the question: "Who is the Dropout?", a standard definition has been formulated by various national organizations cooperating together on the dropout problem.

The definition of a dropout is a pupil who left school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school. Voluntary dropouts are those over which school administrators can exercise a certain amount of control, while involuntary dropouts are those over which school administrators have no control, including such reasons as physical disability, deceased, drafted, etc.

There is widespread recognition of the role played by the elementary school in the early identification of the potential dropout. This early identification has been one of the least considered facets in education, but many researchers believed it to have the most potential in combating the early-school leaving problem. Most of the studies show that varying combinations of a number of identifiable characteristics appeared to be related to dropping out of school.

Literature describing what has been done to alleviate the problem was also examined. At the elementary school level such programs as ungraded classes, elementary guidance, remedial reading programs, and ability grouping have been initiated; while at the secondary level the use of vocational and technical courses and release time work programs have been implemented. Through assistance from Federal Funds such programs as STEP, Project ABLE, Higher Horizons, Practical

Training Program, Great Cities Grey Areas Project, Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps and many other like projects have been inaugurated to motivate youth to remain in school and continue their education.

The final portion of this study was a look at the relationship of the dropout problem to the elementary school, and the ways in which the elementary school might assist in combating the problem.

Most research showed that the major contribution of the elementary school to be that of early identification of the potential dropout. It is at the elementary level that a program to identify the potential dropout should be instituted and that a program to prevent dropping out should be begun. Practically every study concludes that the classroom teacher is very instrumental in assisting youth to attain success in school, and that elementary guidance programs are essential to the program.

In conclusion it can be said that the first steps have been taken to demonstrate ways through which the problems of and problems involving dropouts can be utilized. Perhaps this can best be accomplished through preventive programs involving improved curriculum and more guidance. Schools and communities must recognize their responsibilities and, by working together, find ways to keep the potential dropout in the classroom.

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THE DROPOUT PROBLEM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP
TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

CHARLES SETTERQUIST

B. S., Kansas State University, 1963

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It was the purpose of this study: (1) to review literature and studies concerning the dropout problem, (2) to survey what has been done to help alleviate the dropout situation, and (3) to determine what may be done by the schools to encourage boys and girls to continue their education.

Research included a review of all available books, pamphlets, and periodicals dealing with this problem.

Most studies revealed an abundance of literature on the subject of early school withdrawal, its causes and its consequences. Research shows that rather than a single cause, there is usually a cluster of factors associated with school withdrawal or characteristic of the school dropout.

Programs for school dropouts are becoming common and include a wide range of preventive and remedial activities. Elementary schools have initiated such programs as ungraded classes, elementary guidance, remedial reading, and ability grouping, while at the secondary level the use of vocational and technical courses and release time work programs have been implemented. Community wide programs of various types as well as federal funded projects are assisting youth to continue their education.

Most research showed that the major contribution of the elementary school to be that of early identification of the potential dropout. The elementary teachers can play an important role in helping to combat the dropout problem by

identifying youth having dropout characteristics.

The dropout problem is not a problem for the schools alone. It will take concentrated effort on the part of schools, cities, communities, organizations, our government, and others to find a solution to the dropout problem.