

A STUDY OF THE HOLDING POWER OF THE JUNIOR
AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF
MANHATTAN, KANSAS

by

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INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this study were to (1) determine the number of pupils who failed to graduate from high school after finishing the eighth grade as compared to the number of pupils who did graduate, (2) determine the reasons underlying this failure to graduate and (3) obtain opinions of those who dropped out as to how the school could have better helped them.

In a country which believes in universal secondary education the problem of school holding power is one of national concern. Figures compiled from statistics of the United States Census Bureau show that of the pupils enrolled in the fifth grade in 1938-39 only 41.9 percent graduated in 1946.¹ A study directed by Smith of the Syracuse, New York school system showed that of the students who entered the ninth grade from 1928 through 1946 only 56 percent stayed to graduate.² One encouraging note about this last study is that the percentage of graduates has shown an increasing tendency. The percentage of those who stayed to graduate with the class which entered in 1928 was 49. This percentage has gradually risen through the years so that 64 percent of the class entering in 1946 graduated in 1949.³ While these figures apply to only one school system, it is encouraging to note that holding power can be improved.

The factors underlying the failure of these students to graduate are extremely difficult to determine for often the

1/ "Why Boys and Girls Drop Out of School and What Can We Do About It?", p. 7.

2/ Harry P. Smith, Syracuse Youth Who Did Not Graduate, p. 8.

3/ Loc. cit.

students do not know their real reason. Galen Jones, in speaking before a work conference on life adjustment education in Chicago in 1950, gave some conclusions concerning this problem.¹

First, there is an element of truth in the statement made by both girls and boys as to why they leave school, but there is a question in the minds of the people who make the studies as to whether you can take them absolutely at their face value.

Second, there is evidence that more serious and fundamental conditions are basic -- frequently regardless of the reasons given.

The third generalization is that a large proportion of both sexes, when interviewed, were unable to do more than express a lack of interest in school, or a hatred for it. All of that went into one generalization -- they were just not interested in school, or disliked it.

A fourth observation is that the preponderance of reasons emphasizes dissatisfaction with some aspect of school life. In most cases, those stressing economic difficulties were also victims of retardation and failure. This is not saying that the economic conditions are not present, but there is always the question as to whether they are the major reason.

Despite the above reasons, all that can be done is to get the pupil's reason as he sees it and then look for other indications of more basic causes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The first step in this study was to decide how large a sample to select. On the basis of information given by Allen it was decided to select those students who normally would have graduated

¹/ "Why Do Boys and Girls Drop Out of School, and What Can We Do About It?", p. 17.

with the classes of 1949 and 1950.¹ The book of transcripts of drop-outs, cumulative records, and certain information cards kept in the school system were consulted to get names of school leavers. However, the most reliable source of information proved to be the attendance records. These records were more accurate than the other mentioned sources since the school receives certain tax moneys on the basis of average daily attendance. The record book of transcripts sent to other schools and agencies was consulted to determine which of the school leavers had simply transferred to another school. Verification was obtained from each school receiving such a transcript that the student had entered there. This reduced the list of students who might appear to be drop-outs.

Notations on the cumulative records, information cards and transcripts indicated that certain students had moved to other towns and enabled other names to be stricken from the list. In these cases, it can only be assumed that the student concerned entered some other school. While some of these assumptions may be incorrect, it should be pointed out that it is the policy of Kansas schools to accept at least eighth and ninth graders on the basis of grade cards or other records in the student's possession. It was also found that the record book of transcripts sent was not always complete. The procedure here outlined for these cases is the same as that used in Illinois with its state-wide holding power study.²

1/ Charles M. Allen, How to Conduct the Holding Power Study, p. 9.

2/ Allen, ibid., p. 23.

For the names remaining on the list, facts about them which might indicate reasons underlying their failure to graduate or which might enable one to establish characteristics of the drop-out were compiled from the cumulative records, transcripts, information cards and attendance records.

Finally, contact was made with the drop-outs themselves, if possible. Former pupils living in Manhattan were interviewed. A questionnaire was sent to those outside Manhattan whose addresses were available asking the same questions as were asked during the interviews.

The addresses of the drop-outs were found by consulting the telephone directory and by asking the people found in this way about addresses of others they knew. No other method of finding the drop-outs proved to be effective.

THE INFORMATION FROM SCHOOL RECORDS

Very good cumulative records are kept of the pupils who come up the educational ladder in the Manhattan school system. There was, therefore, some very good information on many of the drop-outs. Of course, many students enter the school system after reaching the upper grades and for these people the information was necessarily very limited. Fourteen of the 69 drop-outs, or 20 percent were in this school system only one year or less and information on these people was scarce.

The Number of Drop-Outs

Table 1 shows how the original list of 152 names was handled to arrive at the final list of 69 drop-outs. Those listed below as "uncertain" are those whose records were missing or inadequate. In each case there was some evidence that they may have moved but there was nothing conclusive one way or the other. In any event, they were considered a drop-out. While the number of transfers may seem large, it should be remembered that these pupils were in school during and immediately following the war years.

Table 1. Reason why pupils left school before graduating.

Reason	Girls	Boys	Total
Transcript sent or student transferred to another school and records show that the student actually enrolled in that school.	21	9	30
Moved residence from attendance area but transcript not sent to school in new place of residence.	26	27	53
Other reasons.	35	23	58
Uncertain.	6	5	11
Total	89	63	152

The Holding Power

The holding power of the Manhattan Junior and Senior High, as commonly computed, is shown in Table 2. Although it shall soon be seen that some pupils complete their formal education at the close of the eighth grade, the holding power is here computed

on the basis of enrollment in the ninth grade since graduates of rural schools entering this school system in the ninth grade distort the figures. In computing these figures it is assumed that the number of pupils transferring to other schools is equaled by the number transferring into this school system. This assumption is probably not correct but it is the most practical. By subtracting the number of graduates of the two classes from the number enrolled in the ninth grade, 68 is obtained. So the method of computing holding power described here would not seem to be far from the actual figure.

Table 2. The percentage of pupils entering the ninth grade who stayed to graduate.

Class	: Registration in succeeding grades :					: Percentage	
	: 8th	9th	10th	11th	12th :	: Graduates:	9th grade
							: graduated
1949	162	183	162	153	149	143	78
1950	163	172	169	162	151	144	83
Total	325	355	331	315	300	287	81

Age-Grade Distribution of Drop-outs

Table 3 shows that the largest single group of pupils left school at age 17 while 54 percent left at either age 16 or 17. The largest single groups left school after completing the eighth and eleventh grades while 32 percent dropped out during or immediately after the eleventh grade. Assuming that a pupil who is 15 years old and in the eighth grade, one who is 16 years

of age and in the ninth grade or less, etc., is retarded, this table shows that 39 or 57 percent of the drop-outs were retarded one or more grades when they left. Using the broken lines of the table to divide the drop-outs into classifications of retardation, normalcy and acceleration, it may also be seen that none was accelerated.

Table 3. Age-grade distribution of drop-outs.

Age	Last semester completed								Total
	8·2	9·1	9·2	10·1	10·2	11·1	11·2	12·1	
14	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
15	5	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	12
16	4	1	5	2	3	2	0	0	17
17	1	1	2	3	4	4	5	0	20
18	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	2	13
Over 18	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total	14	7	9	6	8	9	3	3	69

Sex and Race of the Drop-outs

Forty-one or 59 percent of the pupils who failed to graduate were girls and 28 were boys. Of the 355 ninth grade pupils covered by this study, only 175 or 49 percent were girls. One reason for this greater drop-out rate of girls is that as shown in Table 14 several of the girls left to get married while none of the boys did. It has been suggested by Anderson that another reason for this difference is that athletics also act to hold boys in school by enabling them to achieve social status and a better adjustment.¹

¹ W. B. Anderson, Adjustment Problems of Negro Pupils in the Manhattan Junior High School, p. 33.

Although his study applied only to Negro boys, it seems reasonable that this could apply to all boys.

Ten of the drop-outs were Negroes. There were 14 Negroes enrolled in the ninth grade during the period of this study and 2 entered later but only 6 of them graduated. This shows a holding power of only 37 percent. Anderson feels that one of the big reasons for this is the failure of many of the Negro pupils to adjust themselves.¹ These pupils come from an all-Negro elementary school into the town's one junior high school and find themselves in a distinct minority. This raises great adjustment problems and many are just not able to make the adjustment.

Retardation at the Seventh Grade Level

It has already been seen that 57 percent of the pupils are retarded one or more grade levels when they leave school. A check on their retardation at the seventh grade level is not as revealing as it appears that only 9 or 13 percent were retarded. Some of the thirteen-year olds were also required to repeat some work but the records were not clear as to how many. It is the policy of the local school system to hold pupils over another year only as a last resort. Therefore, many of these pupils became retarded after they reached the upper grades.

¹/ Loc. cit.

Table 4. Age when pupils who later dropped out of school entered seventh grade.

Age	Girls	Boys	Total
12	21	11	32
13	14	14	28
14	6	2	8
15	0	1	1
Total	41	28	69

Family Size and Birth Order of Pupil

An inspection of Table 5 reveals that the families of drop-outs tend to be larger than average. While 18 of the drop-outs came from families with two children or only one child, 31 (57 percent) had three or more siblings. If the average number of children in each family is computed, the mean number of children is 4.0. The national average family size, according to the U. S. census bureau, was 2.7 in 1940.

Of the 36 pupils coming from families with more than two children, 25 or 46 percent were third or greater in the birth order of their respective families. Birth order would seem, then, to be significant. However, before valid conclusions could be drawn here, it would be necessary to investigate all the siblings of these drop-outs to see how many had actually finished school.

Table 5. Family size and birth order of 54 drop-outs.

Number of: children :	Birth order							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Over 6	
1	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
2	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	9
3	0	3	2	-	-	-	-	5
4	2	1	5	2	-	-	-	10
5	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	5
6	0	0	1	3	1	1	-	6
7	1	0	1	3	1	0	2	8
8	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Total	19	8	11	9	3	1	3	54

Occupation of Family's Major Wage Earner

A study of the occupations of the family's major wage earner, usually the father, shows that 81 percent of these people were employed in jobs usually considered less desirable. This is particularly striking when one considers the unique population of Manhattan. Since it is a college town, the proportion of professional people is much higher than in the average community.

Table 6. Occupation of family's major wage earner.

Occupation of family's major wage earner	Girls	Boys	Total
Professional, semi-professional and managerial	2	0	2
Clerical and sales	3	2	5
Service occupations	3	2	5
Crafts and farming	23	14	37
Laborer	8	7	15
No information	2	3	5
Total	41	28	69

Scores Made on Gates Silent Reading Test

The pupils in the class of 1949 were given the Gates Silent Reading Test during their year in the fourth grade; the class of 1950 took the test while in the fifth grade. This fact alone tends to render the data in Table 7 unreliable. In addition to this, the tests were given in five different schools by five different teachers. Finally, the small number of these pupils who were in the Manhattan system at that time makes any conclusions about the entire group hazardous.

The median score for the pupils that took the test at these times was approximately one year and four months ahead of their grade placement when compared to the norms for the test. Twenty or 69 percent of the drop-outs were below this class norm and 14 or 48 percent were below the norms published with the test. For this small group, then, one can say that they were, in general, retarded in their ability to read when compared with their classmates. More information is needed, however before one can generalize enough to include all of the drop-outs.

Table 7. Scores made on the Gates Silent Reading Test by 28 elementary pupils.

Differences between grade-equivalent scores and grade placement	:	Girls	:	Boys	:	Total
Negative 2 yrs. to negative 1 yr. 6 mos.	:	0	:	1	:	1
Negative 1 yr., 6 mos. to negative 1 yr.	:	1	:	2	:	3
Negative 1 yr. to negative 6 mos.	:	3	:	0	:	3
Normal to negative 6 mos.	:	5	:	3	:	8
Normal to positive 6 mos.	:	2	:	3	:	5
Positive 6 mos. to positive 1 yr.	:	0	:	1	:	1
Positive 1 yr. to positive 1 yr., 6 mos.	:	1	:	0	:	1
Positive 1 yr., 6 mos. to positive 2 yrs.	:	3	:	0	:	3
Over positive 2 yrs.	:	2	:	1	:	3
Subtotal	:	17	:	11	:	28
No information	:	24	:	17	:	41

Scores Made on the Stanford Achievement Test

All pupils in the Manhattan Junior high school take the Stanford Achievement Test annually. These tests are all given at the same time by the same examiner and under standard conditions. Thirty-nine or 87 percent of the drop-outs that took the test were achieving below the national grade norms for this test. These results are made more significant when one considers that the median score for all the pupils taking this test was above that considered normal by the makers of the test.

Table 8. Scores made on the Stanford Achievement test by 45 of the drop-outs when in Junior High.

Differences between grade-equivalent scores and grade placement	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Over negative 2 yrs.	8	5	13
Negative 2 yrs. to negative 1 yr., 6 mos.	5	4	9
Negative 1 yr., 6 mos. to negative 1 yr.	2	5	7
Negative 1 yr. to negative 6 mos.	4	2	6
Negative 6 mos. to normal	1	3	4
Normal to positive 6 mos.	2	0	2
Positive 6 mos. to positive 1 yr.	1	0	1
Positive 1 yr. to positive 1 yr., 6 mos.	2	0	2
Over positive 1 yr., 6 mos.	1	0	1
Subtotal	26	19	45
No information	15	9	24

Intelligence Test Scores

General intelligence as measured by any one intelligence test is apt to have limited significance. With this in mind, the information presented in Table 9 may be examined.

Most of the pupils in this study took the Otis Quick-Scoring

Mental Ability test while in Junior High school. Six of the pupils had taken the Henmon-Welson Test of Mental Ability instead and these figures are included in the table. All together, intelligence test scores were available for 51 of the pupils.

No norms were available for comparison with the rest of the student body. If one accepts Terman's average classification as ranging from 91 to 110, it is found that 47 percent of this group were below average. Only 16 percent of this group of 51 were above average.

Table 9. Distribution of intelligence quotients for 51 drop-outs.

I. Q.	Girls	Boys	Total	Percent
Less than 81	6	5	11	21
81-90	6	7	13	26
91-110	14	5	19	37
111-120	4	2	6	12
121-130	1	0	1	2
More than 130	1	0	1	2
Total	32	19	51	

Grade Averages

How the drop-outs rated on a single test of achievement has already been presented. An inspection of their grade records seems even more significant, particularly where the boys are concerned. Eight of the pupils in this study were not in this school system long enough to compile a grade record of any significance. Of the other 61 pupils, 36 girls and 25 boys, we see that 67 percent of the girls and 84 percent of the boys ranked in the lower quarter

of their respective classes. Only six of the girls and none of the boys were in the upper half of their class.

Table 10. Scholastic rank of 61 pupils.

Scholastic rank	Girls	Boys	Total
First quarter	1	0	1
Second quarter	5	0	5
Third quarter	6	4	10
Fourth quarter	24	21	45
Total	36	29	61

Attendance Record of the Drop-outs

To check on the attendance of these drop-outs as compared to the rest of their class, the number of absences for each group was tabulated for two different semesters. First, the last semester of the eighth grade was selected because it was thought that those who intended to quit as soon as they were legally able might indicate this intention by their irregular attendance. In the left half of Table 11 may be seen that the mean number of days missed by the 55 pupils of this group who were in the school system at that time was 6.4. The mean number of days missed by the whole class during that semester was 3.4. Furthermore, 25 percent of the drop-outs missed twelve or more days. This last figure includes one boy whose attendance record was not tabulated because he missed 28 days in a single semester. A few pupils' records of attendance for the first semester of the ninth grade are included in this tabulation because they were not

in the system during the eighth grade.

A second check on attendance was made on the pupils during the first semester of the tenth grade or for their first complete semester in Senior High if they were not enrolled here during the tenth grade. In the right half of Table 11 it may be noted that 35 of these pupils were in Senior High for at least one semester and that the mean number of days missed was 7.1. The mean number of days missed by the entire classes of 1949 and 1950 during their first semester of the tenth grade was 2.4.

Table 11. Number of days drop-outs were absent during two different semesters.

Number of days absent during last semester of 8th grade		:	Number of days absent during first semester of 10th grade	
Days absent	Pupils	:	Days absent	Pupils
0-1	9		0-1	9
2-3	12		2-3	5
4-5	9		4-5	6
6-7	6		6-7	2
8-9	5		8-9	2
10-11	1		10-11	3
12-13	6		12-13	2
14-15	5		14-15	0
16-17	1		16-17	1
18-19	0		18-19	2
20-21	0		20-21	2
22-23	1		22-23	1
Total	55		Total	35
Mean - 6.4			Mean - 7.1	

Subject Failures

A check was made on the number of subjects failed by these pupils during their first complete semester in Junior High and

similarly in the Senior High. Besides indicating low achievement, these failures may also indicate an inability to adjust to a new environment. Without further research, however, it is impossible to determine the relationship between these two factors.

It was found that slightly less than half (47 and 48 percent) of the pupils failed at least one subject during each of these check periods. School records show that only 14.8 percent of all pupils enrolled in the seventh grade received any failing grades during the period of this study. In the tenth grade during this period, only 4.8 percent of the class received any failing grades.

Table 12. Number of subjects failed by drop-outs during first complete semester in Junior High and first complete semester in Senior High.

Number of sub-jects failed in Jr. High			Number of sub-jects failed in Sr. High		
Number of sub-jects failed	Pupils	Percent	Number of sub-jects failed	Pupils	Percent
0	29	53	0	17	52
1	13	24	1	9	26
2	8	14	2	2	3
3	1	2	3	6	17
4	4	7	4	1	2
Total	55			35	

Teachers' Ratings

During their days in elementary school each pupil is annually rated on six items of character and personality, namely, conduct, initiative, cooperation, dependability, industry and emotional stability. A "1" was the top rating. Thirty-three of the pupils

in this study were in the elementary schools in this system long enough to receive at least one rating.

There were no comparative figures available as to the ratings given to other pupils in the class. The ratings are highly subjective although in many cases the ratings tabulated were an average of the ratings of several teachers. Because of these things, the ratings may not be very significant; however, there appears to be certain trends.

First, only seven or 4 percent of the 198 ratings given were ones. Sixty percent of the ratings given were threes and fours. On the trait called initiative we find that 82 percent of the ratings were made in the two lower classifications. So it would seem that there was a tendency for the teachers to rate these pupils in the lower categories.

Table 13. Ratings given 33 drop-outs by their teachers on six traits of character and personality while the pupils were in the elementary schools.

Rating	Character or personality trait					
	Con-duct	Initi-ative	Cooper-ation	Depend-ability	In-dustry	Emotional stability
1	4	0	0	1	0	2
2	18	6	16	12	9	11
3	11	15	13	13	17	17
4	0	12	4	7	7	3

Summary of the Information from School Records

Sixty-nine pupils left the Manhattan school system after completing the eighth grade and before graduation from high school. The percentage of those who enrolled in the ninth grade and stayed to graduate was 81. School records also show that 57 percent of the drop-outs were retarded one or more grades when they left school and that 59 percent were girls while 49 percent of the total class were girls. The drop-outs came from somewhat larger than average families. Forty-six percent of those coming from families with three or more children were third or greater in birth order. Fifty-two percent of the drop-outs came from families whose major wage earner was employed as craftsman, farmer or laborer.

Scores on the Gates Silent Reading Test indicated that 69 percent of the drop-outs were below the mean of their classmates. This figure is probably not reliable since only 29 of the drop-outs had taken the test. Eighty-seven percent of the group were low achievers as measured by the Stanford Achievement test. Forty-seven percent of the group were below average in intelligence as measured by the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability test and the Henmon-Nelson test of Mental Ability. Only 18 percent were above average. Sixty-seven percent of the girls and 84 percent of the boys ranked in the lower fourth of their class scholastically. Forty-seven percent of the pupils failed at least one subject during their first complete semester in Junior High school and 48 percent failed at least once in Senior High. During these same periods

only 14.8 percent of their class in Junior High failed any subject and only 4.8 percent of their Senior High class received any failing grades.

The drop-outs missed an average of 6.4 days of school in one semester in Junior High as compared to a mean of 3.4 days missed by the entire class. In Senior High they missed 7.1 days as compared to 2.4 for their entire class.

Teacher ratings given the drop-outs when they were in elementary school days showed a tendency toward the lower markings. This information may not be significant since only 33 of the drop-outs were in the elementary schools here and no comparison of ratings given to other pupils was possible.

Despite the fact that the cumulative records kept in this school system are considered to be better than common practice the only items of information that were universally available were those regarding sex, age and the point at which the student left school.

THE REACTIONS OF THE DROP-OUTS

The questions asked of the drop-outs were designed to determine their reasons for leaving and their reactions to school life. It was hoped that some of their reactions and recommendations might aid in developing a better school program.

Addresses were obtained for 43 or 62 percent of the drop-outs. Of these, responses were obtained from 31 or 72 percent. These 31 returns represent 45 percent of all those classified as drop-outs. While this leaves much to be desired it compares very

favorably with the Syracuse study for they were able to find only 42 percent of a selected group of drop-outs.¹ Sixteen of the returns were obtained by personal interview with the remainder being returned through the mail.

Twenty or 64 percent of the completed questionnaires were from girls while 59 percent of the total number of drop-outs were girls. It is surprising that these two figures are so close since several of the boys were in the armed services in relatively inaccessible places.

The Drop-outs' Reasons for Leaving School

As has been previously pointed out, reasons given by pupils for their leaving school are very unreliable because they usually are simply excuses or mere incidents in a long chain of unfortunate circumstances. The reasons given by these people were no exception to this idea. One boy said that he left school because he had joined the army. This could not have been true because he was only 15 years of age at the time he quit. Four people were only able to say that they lacked interest. This does not really indicate anything for it would be more pertinent to know why they lacked interest. Seven girls left to get married but why did they prefer marriage to school when the later is much more common? Seven pupils said they had to work or were needed at home. If this be true, it is unfortunate but there is not too much the school can do about it besides keeping fees, rentals, etc. to a

1/ Harry P. Smith, Syracuse Youth Who Did Not Graduate, p. 12.

minimum. Two of the three who felt they lacked ability or that the work was too heavy had intelligence quotients of 99 and 107. It is unfortunate that relations with teachers should cause a pupil to leave. In this the school may be able to help although it is difficult to avoid some personality clashes when so many contacts are made.

Two girls gave no reasons for leaving and four people gave two so that 33 answers are tabulated in Table 14. Those people whose answers are tabulated as miscellaneous said "I wasn't getting anyplace in school.", "Not enough clothing to dress properly and accusation of stealing" and "I wasn't satisfied".

Table 14. Reasons given by 29 drop-outs for leaving school before graduation.

Reason	: Girls	: Boys	: Totals	: Percent
Marriage	7	0	7	21
Had to work	3	2	5	16
Lack of interest	2	2	4	12
Relations with teacher(s)	1	2	3	9
Low ability or work too hard	2	1	3	9
Not enough credits to graduate with my class	1	2	3	9
Needed at home	1	1	2	6
Poor health	1	0	1	3
Armed service	0	1	1	3
Miscellaneous	2	2	4	12
Total	20	13	33	

Influence of Required Courses. Also included in the questionnaire was a question which read "Did the requiring of your taking any particular course or courses influence your decision to leave school? If so, what were they," In response to this five or 16 percent of the drop-outs said "yes". Uncovered here, then, is a factor that was not previously mentioned by the drop-outs. With it comes certain implications for the school. The various courses must be made vital and interesting to all the pupils and not just the majority. While it is true that no measure of the amount of influence exercised by any particular course is available, it is unfortunate that there should be any such influence.

These five former pupils mentioned four courses a total of six times as influential in their decision to leave school. It should be noted that biology as such is not required although each pupil must take one laboratory science course to graduate.

Table 15. Required courses which influenced five pupils' decision to leave school before graduation.

Course	: Pupils	: Percent
English	3	50
Constitution	1	17
Mathematics	1	17
Biology	1	17

Parental Influence in Decision to Leave School. The drop-outs were asked "Did your parents encourage or discourage your leaving school?". In answer to this none said that their parents encouraged them to leave; however, eight or 26 percent of them said

that their parents neither discouraged or encouraged them. This apparent lack of feeling by the parents as expressed by the children should probably be included as a factor in the failure of the eight to graduate since a more positive stand by the parents might have influenced the decision of the pupil.

Retardation as a Factor in Early School Leaving. It has already been seen on page 6 that 57 percent of the drop-outs were retarded when they left school. A check was made on the questionnaire whether or not the retardation occurred in the elementary grades. It was found that ten or 33 percent of those answering the questionnaire had failed at least one grade. One of the ten had failed three times. While there are not as many cases involved in the later figure it at least gives an indication of how many were retarded after reaching Junior High.

Table 16. Failures in the elementary schools by 10 drop-outs.

Grade	:	Pupils	:	Percent
First	:	5	:	42
Second	:	2	:	17
Third	:	3	:	25
Fourth	:	0	:	00
Fifth	:	1	:	8
Sixth	:	1	:	8

The Pupil who had to Work while in School. Table 13 showed that five of the pupils indicated that they left school to go to work. In another item of the questionnaire seven more indicated that they had to work while going to school. This means that

39 percent of the 31 drop-outs contacted were in this group. It surely had something to do with their decision to leave school. Few high school pupils can maintain their studies properly, participate in activities as a normal youth should and do much work.

Summary of Reasons Underlying the Various Pupils' Decisions to Leave School. It is seen then, that besides the reasons given by the pupils certain other factors are operating. These include dissatisfaction with certain courses taken, indifference of parents, retardation and the fact that some had to work. In the next section will be shown the last group of factors studied - that of teacher-pupil relations. There are undoubtedly other more subtle factors that are not so readily discernible.

Teacher-pupil Relations

It has already been seen that three drop-outs gave poor teacher-pupil relations as their reason for leaving school. Another question in the blank read "Did the dislike for a certain teacher influence your decision to leave school?". Eight or 26 percent of the drop-outs checked "yes" in answer to this question so there were five more people who put at least part of the blame for their leaving on the teachers.

A second question concerning this matter read "Did you have any difficulties with any particular teacher?". Ten or 32 percent of the drop-outs checked the "yes" response here. So there were two more of the drop-outs whose teacher-pupil relationships were not good although these two did not indicate that this poor

relationship affected their decision to leave school early.

In Table 16 is tabulated the number of those answering "no" to three other questions about this problem. It should be noted that only five or 16 percent of the people felt that they had received any help with their personal problems. Thus it was found that teacher-pupil relations were not all they should be in 26 or 84 percent of the cases of this study. While these people felt that they had received no help, there was, on the other hand, only 35 percent of the drop-outs who felt that their teachers did not understand nor at least try to help them.

Thus it has been shown in the preceding paragraphs that problems in the area of teacher-pupil relations have ranged from an absence of help with personal problems to actually being the reason expressed by the pupil for leaving school.

Table 17. Responses given by 31 drop-outs to questions concerning teacher-pupil relations.

Question	: "No" answers	
	: No.	: Percent
Did you receive help from anyone in the school concerning your personal problems?	26	84
Did any of your teachers seem to understand your problems?	11	35
Did any of your teachers try to help you with your problems?	11	35

Present Reaction of the Drop-outs
to their School Life

Things Liked Best About School by the Drop-outs. Thirty-two responses were received to the question "What things did you like best about school?". Twelve things were mentioned while four said that they liked no part of it and eight gave no answers. There was not much of a trend toward any particular phase of school life as only gym, assemblies and music were mentioned more than twice. Unfortunately no accurate records were kept by the school concerning the activities of the pupils. The responses to this question would seem to indicate that if these pupils did participate in these things they did not leave a very favorable impression.

Table 18. Things mentioned by 23 drop-outs as being liked best about school.

Thing mentioned	:	Girls	:	Boys	:	Total
Gym	4		2		6	
Music	4		0		4	
Assembly	3		0		3	
Social life	1		1		2	
Activities	2		0		2	
Art	1		1		2	
Athletics	0		2		2	
Plays	1		0		1	
Study hall	0		1		1	
F.F.A.	0		1		1	
Meeting new faces	1		0		1	
Nothing	2		2		4	
Miscellaneous	2		1		3	
Total		21		11		32

Things Liked Least About School by the Drop-outs. While not many responses were received when asked what they liked the best, even less were received when asked what they disliked. Only twelve people could think of anything they did not like. One person mentioned two things. Here for the first time was mentioned the cliques known to exist in the school. Three persons mentioned cliques and 2 others mentioned "some students" as being disliked. Thus 5 or 16 percent of the drop-outs mentioned poor pupil-pupil relationships on their own initiative. No other phase received mention more than twice. So it is seen that while these things did not apparently leave much of a positive impression they left even less of a negative one.

Table 19. Things mentioned by 30 drop-outs as being disliked about school.

Thing mentioned	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Cliques	3	0	3
Gym	2	0	2
Some teachers	1	1	2
Some students	2	0	2
School politics	0	1	1
Studies	0	1	1
Art	0	1	1
No part	0	1	1
Total	8	5	13

Subject Liked Best by the Drop-outs. In answer to the question concerning the subjects they liked best 28 of them mentioned 17 subjects or subject-areas. Sixteen or 59 percent of the courses mentioned by the girls were in the fields of commerce

and home economics. The courses most frequently mentioned by the boys were in the fields of English and industrial arts. Thirty or 75 percent of the total responses were in the fields of commerce, English, mathematics and home economics.

Table 20. Subjects liked best by 28 drop-outs.

Subject or subject-area	: Girls	: Boys	: Sub- total	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Commerce				9	0	9
Typing	5	0	5			
Bookkeeping	2	0	2			
Office practice	1	0	1			
Shorthand	1	0	1			
English				4	4	8
Mathematics	2	3	5	3	3	6
Algebra	1	0	1			
Industrial Arts	0	1	1	0	4	4
Printing	0	1	1			
Shop	0	1	1			
Woodworking	0	1	1			
Home Economics	4	0	4	7	0	7
Clothing	2	0	2			
Home living	1	0	1			
Science	1	0	1	2	0	2
Biology	1	0	1			
Agriculture				0	2	2
Social studies	1	0	1	2	0	2
History	1	0	1			
Total				27	13	40

Subjects Liked the Least by the Drop-outs. Two of the drop-outs had no subject that they disliked and four gave no answer. The other 25 mentioned 13 subjects or subject-areas as being the ones that they liked the least. Twenty-six or 81 percent of the subjects mentioned were in the fields of social science, English and mathematics.

Table 21. Subjects liked the least by 25 drop-outs.

Subject or subject-area	: Girls	: Boys	: Sub- total	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Social Science	1	1	2	6	2	8
American history	2	0	2			
History	3	1	4			
English	3	4	7	3	6	9
Speech	0	1	1			
Spelling	0	1	1			
Mathematics	5	3	8	6	3	9
Geometry	1	0	1			
Industrial arts				0	1	1
Woodwork	0	1	1			
Home Economics	1	0	1	3	0	3
Clothing	1	0	1			
Home living	1	0	1			
Science				1	1	2
Biology	1	1	2			
Total				19	13	32

Comparison Between Subjects Liked Best and Subjects Liked Least. Comparison between subject-areas rather than subjects is made here because many of the drop-outs had had no chance to take some of the more specialized courses. This comparison reveals some interesting facts. Twenty-three percent of the courses mentioned as being liked were in commerce while no dislike was expressed for these. On the other hand, only 5 percent of the courses mentioned as being liked were in the social studies field and 26 percent of those mentioned as disliked were in this category. English and mathematics seemed to elicit strong feelings as 15 percent, respectively, were for these two while each of these were mentioned as being disliked in 28 percent of the cases. The opposite was true of the science courses as they were mentioned as liked in 5 percent of the cases and disliked in 6 percent.

The other three fields are each offered to only one sex so the number of cases found is probably too small to be of any significance.

Table 22. Comparison between the subject-areas liked best and those liked least by the drop-outs.

Subject-area	: Subject-area liked:		: Subject-area disliked:	
	: Pupils	: Percent	: Pupils	: Percent
Social science	2	5	8	26
Commerce	9	23	0	0
English	8	20	9	28
Mathematics	6	15	9	28
Home Economics	7	17	3	9
Agriculture	2	5	0	0
Industrial arts	4	10	1	3
Science	2	5	2	6

Attitudes of the Drop-outs Concerning the Schools and Education

A knowledge of the attitudes of these drop-outs can be important for at least two reasons. First, they may provide some insight as to the real reasons why the pupil left school before graduation. Secondly, it is important that the country's citizenry have the proper attitudes for they are the ones who support education.

Were the Drop-outs Sorry They Left School Early? In response to the question concerning whether or not they were sorry they left school, 23 or 74 percent of the drop-outs said that they were sorry. Assuming that they were glad to leave in the first place, these results would indicate that there had been a change in their attitudes. However, their answers to the question "Since leaving

school, has your feelings toward school changed in any way?" does not bear this out. Here only 15 or 48 percent of the drop-outs checked the "yes" reply. In explaining how their feelings had changed six said that they wished they had finished. Two said they would still like to finish. Two did not explain their answer and the rest gave answers of a miscellaneous nature.

Table 23. Replies of 15 drop-outs in explaining how their feelings about school had changed since leaving.

Explanation	:	:	:
	:	:	:
	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
I wish I'd finished	4	2	6
I would like to finish	2	0	2
I can see the value of it now	1	0	1
The best place for a growing boy is in school	0	1	1
I couldn't sit still that long	0	1	1
They should change their tactics to those like the army	0	1	1
I think I took too much to heart any bawling out	1	0	1
No answer	1	1	2

It can be seen that the last three answers in Table 23 do not explain any changed attitudes. The first and last of these three are reasons or excuses for leaving school and the second is a recommendation on how the school should be run.

Other Education Since Leaving School. Only four girls and 5 boys had received any formal education of any kind since leaving school. Four of the boys had gone through trade schools in the armed forces so this leaves only five of the drop-outs that had taken the initiative to get more schooling. Three of these had enrolled in correspondence school, one had gone to a trade school

and one to night school. So while 74 percent felt that they were sorry they left school, only 16 percent had done anything about it.

Of course it is possible that circumstances might prevent some from enrolling in school work of any type. So they were asked if they were interested in night classes. Sixteen or 52 percent said that they were interested in night school classes. How many of these would actually enroll in night classes, if available, is, of course, problematical.

Opinions of the Drop-outs as to the Value of an Education.

Thirteen or 42 percent of the drop-outs felt that their education had not helped them secure employment in the past. Either the education they had received had not helped them in securing employment or if it had they did not recognize that it had value to them for employment.

Twenty-eight or 87 percent thought that "In thinking about your future, - ", a high school education would help. These replies reflect a healthy attitude toward education. These figures seem more significant in view of the fact that only 74 percent were sorry they left and that only 52 percent were interested in night classes.

The question "Do you feel that your present job is a good one?" did not apply to many of the girls since they were married. Of the 18 answering this question, 72 percent checked the yes response. Despite this fact, 80 percent of these people thought that a high school education would help them get a better job. Although the latter figure involves a smaller number of cases,

it compares favorably with the number who said that a high school education would help them in the future.

Recommendations of the Drop-outs to the School

Hobbies of the Drop-outs. Sixteen or 52 percent of the drop-outs said that they had no hobbies. The 15 people with hobbies mentioned 18 different ones. The only ones mentioned more than once were reading and racing stock cars. Here we have an implied recommendation for the school. The school must provide better training for the pupils on worthy use of leisure time.

Table 24. Hobbies of 15 drop-outs.

Hobby	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Racing stock cars	0	5	5
Reading	3	0	3
Stamp collecting	1	0	1
Hunting	0	1	1
Marines	0	1	1
Songwriting	1	0	1
Cooking	1	0	1
Painting	1	0	1
Sewing	1	0	1
Upholstery	1	0	1
Gardening	1	0	1
Typing	1	0	1
Total	11	7	18

Night Classes the Drop-outs would Like to Take. The 16 people who said they were interested in night classes mentioned 21 subjects or subject-areas in which they would like work if possible. One boy did not mention any specific subjects and a girl said she would take anything to get enough credits to graduate

from high school. The girls all wanted work in commerce and home economics and the boys in mathematics and metal shop.

Table 25. Subjects and subject-areas the drop-outs wanted work in during night classes.

Subject or subject-area	: Girls	: Boys	: Sub- total	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Commerce	2	0	2	10	0	10
Shorthand	3	0	3			
Typing	4	0	4			
Business	1	0	1			
Mathematics				0	3	3
English				0	1	1
Home Economics				5	0	5
Nursing	2	0	2			
Interior decoration	1	0	1			
Clothing	2	0	2			
Industrial Arts				0	2	2
Metal shop	0	2	2			
Total				15	6	21

Courses which the Drop-outs Feel have Helped Them. Six of the drop-outs said that none of their courses had helped them, two did not answer the question and one did not know what had helped. The remaining 22 or 79 percent of the drop-outs answering the question listed 36 subjects or subject-areas as being helpful. This is a contrast to the 58 percent who felt that their education had helped them secure employment as reported on page 32 of this report. The most useful subject-areas for the girls were thought to be commerce, home economics and English. The boys thought mathematics and industrial arts had been the most useful. These findings indicate that the school should emphasize these useful

areas but certain recommendations are implied which will be discussed in the last section of this report.

Table 26. Subjects and subject-areas which were the most useful to 22 drop-outs after leaving school.

Subject or subject-area	: Girls	: Boys	: Sub- total	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Commerce				4	0	4
Typing	3	0	3			
Bookkeeping	1	0	1			
Home Economics	8	0	8	12	0	12
Cooking	2	0	2			
Clothing	1	0	1			
Home Living	1	0	1			
Science				1	0	1
Biology	1	0	1			
English				5	1	6
Mathematics				2	5	7
Industrial Arts	0	1	1	0	4	4
Shop	0	2	2			
Woodwork	0	1	1			
Agriculture				0	1	1
Social Science				1	0	1
History	1	0	1			
Total				25	11	36

The Drop-outs' Suggestions as to how the School Might Better Have Helped Them. Only 14 of the drop-outs had any suggestions as to how the school might better have helped. Two others wrote that the school had done everything that it could and the rest left the item blank or had no answer for the interviewer. It is seen that 8 or 57 percent of the suggestions advanced had to do with guidance and pleas for better help and understanding on the part of the teachers.

Table 27. Suggestions advanced by 14 drop-outs on how the school could have better helped them.

Suggestion	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Have better guidance	2	0	2
More understanding teachers	2	2	4
Better help with problems	1	1	2
Better help in math	0	1	1
Offer a better variety of subjects	0	1	1
Better teachers	1	0	1
By demanding a little more	1	0	1
Some teachers that don't have that "do or die"	0	1	1
The principal should have talked to my parents	1	0	1

The Drop-outs' Suggestions as to how the Schools Might be Made More Useful and Interesting. Seventeen of the drop-outs made some response to the request for suggestions as to "how the schools might be made so useful and interesting that no one would want to leave school - ". Some of the replies were not suggestions and some of the suggestions did not appear to be well thought out. Table 28 shows an attempt to tabulate some of the answers. The suggestion most frequently made was to have better and/or more understanding teachers.

Table 28. Suggestions made by 13 drop-outs as to how to make the schools more useful and interesting.

Suggestion	: Girls	: Boys	: Total
Better teachers	4	1	5
More understanding teachers	2	1	3
Eliminate the cliques	2	0	2
Better guidance program	0	1	1
Smaller classes	0	1	1
More men teachers	0	1	1
More interest from parents	0	1	1

The summary given in Table 28 of the responses to this question is inadequate. Consequently, the answer of each drop-out is presented in its entirety as it was received. The spelling has been corrected in these quotations, but not the English usage and punctuation.

Change the seats so they would be comfortable. More parents take interest in the schooling, give more help with child's homework.

Keep the school kids busy so they won't lose interest.

The students be more nicer, the teachers more understanding.

Better teachers, ones that really care if you do or don't learn the subject. I only had two in both Jr. and Sr. high that did.

Smaller classes. More men teachers.

Better teachers.

I think the Manhattan Schools are just fine the way they are.

Subjects seem boring. Better teachers might help.

In my case there were too many cliques. By this I mean that most of the girls belonged to a certain group and if you were not rich they shunned you. I was not poor but I was not rich either and I didn't have many close relations with my fellow school friends. Mostly I turned to other friends not in school and therefore I lost all interest in school.

I think if a student were thoroughly interviewed and his abilities taken into consideration and his schedule set up so that he may take the subjects in which he might at least be interested. I have talked to a lot of students in high school and college who don't have the slightest idea about what they're going to do when they get out, but maybe you make a better ditch digger if you've got a high school diploma.

I think that it is up to the person of what he or she makes of it and the parents.

Teachers shouldn't show partiality.

More understanding of teachers toward the students as an individual. Have a counselor for the students to talk to and one who will understand their problems and help those who need it.

Make the underprivileged feel that they belong by letting them be part of the class councils and meetings not just a bystander. Have a class for studying human society and I think you'll have a lot better school and more pupils attending.

Better understanding. I had to work and I had to miss school. The authorities thought I should attend more.

Check your teachers. You can see that I am not for the teachers. Some teachers are O.K. but others do not act like they are there to teach, but to make you dislike school. I know that I am not always right, but I guess this is what you want.

Eliminate the cliques.

I believe it is up to the individual in the first place. If they don't like it, they won't complete it. It's the same as if a person started a job, or is doing something for himself, if he doesn't like it, he won't finish it.

Summary of the Reactions of the Drop-outs

Marriage, had to work and lack of interest accounted for 49 percent of the reasons given by the drop-outs as to why they left school. Responses to other questions indicate that certain courses, parental indifference, retardation, working while in school, poor pupil-pupil relationships, and poor pupil-teacher relationships also had some effect on the pupils failure to graduate. It was found that 84 percent of the drop-outs felt that they had received no help from the teachers with personal problems and that 26 percent said that a dislike for some teacher was actually a factor in their decision to leave school.

The phases of school life which exclude the full credit courses

did not seem to make much of an impression on the drop-outs as nothing was universally liked or disliked.

Courses in the commercial field were popular with 23 percent of those replying and disliked by none. The reverse of this situation tended to be true in the field of social science while the fields of English and mathematics were mentioned by nearly half of the drop-outs as either being liked or disliked. Science courses were not often mentioned one way or the other.

Seventy-four percent of the drop-outs said they were sorry that they had quit and 87 percent thought that a high school education would help them in the future. Yet only 16 percent had received any further education and only 52 percent indicated that they were even interested in attending night school classes.

Home economics, English and mathematics courses were thought to have been the most useful to the drop-outs since they left school. They indicated that they would like to take work in commerce and home economics if they could attend night school.

Only 14 drop-outs had any suggestions as to how the school could have better helped them and they felt that a better guidance program with more understanding teachers would have been the most helpful. Thirteen of the drop-outs suggested better and more understanding teachers, among other things, when asked how the school might be made more useful and interesting.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The 81 percent holding power of the Manhattan Junior and Senior High was much higher than that found in other studies. Some of this difference was to be expected due to the high percentage of professional people in the community and to the unusual environment provided by the college.

In general, the drop-outs came from large families and from families low on the socio-economic scale. They tended to be below average in intelligence and low achievers. Their school attendance was irregular. Practically all of them were in the lowest quarter of their class scholastically.

As has been found in other studies, the drop-outs were unable or unwilling to give the real reasons for their leaving school. Marriage, had to work, and lack of interest were the reasons most frequently given for leaving school. It was also determined that poor teacher-pupil relationships, parental indifference, retardation, poor pupil-pupil relationships, and working while in school had some effect on the drop-outs failure to graduate.

Courses in the commerce field were popular while the reverse was true of work in social science. The drop-outs thought that home economics, English and mathematics courses had been the most useful since they left home.

A few good suggestions for making the school more interesting were advanced by the drop-outs. These had to do with teachers, teacher-pupil relations and pupil-pupil relations.

THE FINDINGS OF OTHER STUDIES

Researchers have been trying to find for some time the reason underlying the failure of so many people to graduate from high school. Most studies have asked the drop-out why he left but it has been found that these people do not usually know why they left. The number of reasons given is large and varied. Dillon divided the replies of 957 youth into three categories, reasons relating to school, financial reasons and personal reasons.¹ Smith, in conducting the Syracuse study, categorized the replies of 464 drop-outs into 14 areas with "dissatisfaction with school" being the reason most frequently mentioned.² Johnson and Legg grouped the replies received in their study into five categories, namely, dissatisfaction with school, economic need, lure of job, marriage, and others.³

Since the drop-outs do not know their reasons for leaving it is necessary to look elsewhere. In doing this the family background and the school record of the individual have come under close scrutiny. In regard to family background, Dillon found that "To the extent that the presence of both parents in the home contributes to the stability of that home, it may be assumed that the majority of school leavers studied lived in a home atmosphere where this stability factor was present."⁴

1/ Harold J. Dillon, Early School Leavers, p. 50.

2/ Smith, op. cit., p. 23.

3/ Elizabeth S. Johnson and Caroline Legg, "Why Young People Leave School", p. 16.

4/ Dillon, op. cit., p. 22.

He further found that there was "no evidence of any relationship between size of family and percentage of school leavers" and that the parents were employed in jobs typical of the "average wage earner".

Smith found drop-outs to be healthy, and to have parents whose employment was in the field of skilled-labor and whose educational status was low.¹

From school records Dillon found that the school leavers transferred frequently from one school to another.² He also found that the drop-outs tended to have poor attendance records, only slightly below average I.Q., failure of subjects and repetition of grades and regression in scholarship as the youth moved up through the school.

Many other studies have shown similar results but some educators tend to blame one factor as the most important. George Smith of the Hollywood, California school system believes that the basic reason behind the failure of many to graduate is "the unsympathetic teacher or the rigid curricular requirement".³ Varner believes that the main reason for drop-outs is our marking systems, percentage of failure, set subject matter with set standards while the bright are accepted and the dull rejected.⁴ He says that as long as these practices are maintained "we cannot expect to

1/ Smith, loc. cit., p. 21-22.

2/ Dillon, loc. cit., p. 45-47.

3/ "Why Do Boys and Girls Drop Out of School and What Can We Do About It?", p. 20.

4/ Glenn F. Varner, "Do Our Marking and Promotion Policies and Practices Need Re-evaluation?", p. 302.

materially increase the holding power of the high schools by means of curriculum revision, core curriculum, integration, suitable course offerings, etc."

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE HOLDING POWER OF THE SENIOR HIGH

Many recommendations have been given and many plans tried for improving school holding power. A committee of large school administrators and counselors met as a part of a work conference on Life Adjustment Education in Chicago in 1950. They thought that to improve school holding power a school should offer certain basic services including the following:¹

" - group guidance activities; individual counseling - educational, vocational, personal and social; attendance; health; psychiatric; psychological; special adjustment facilities; testing and appraisal; job placement and followup; adjustment services for average school youth."

This same committee presented a list of symptoms by which potential drop-outs might be identified. They felt that whenever these symptoms appeared the pupil should be referred to one of the specialized services. The list of symptoms, while not exhaustive, seemed significant and is here reproduced.

(1) Personal data on cumulative record cards indicative of potential maladjustment; (2) intermittent and irregular absence and excessive tardiness; (3) poor reading ability; (4) physical and health problems; (5) repeated tendency toward failure in formal school experiences; (6) lack of active participation in school activities; (7) parental indifference; (8) significant data relating to family tensions; (9) lack of a personal sense of belonging; (10) financial problems; (11) inability to get along with school associates; (12) dislike for certain subjects; (13) excessive

¹/ Why Do Boys and Girls Drop Out of School, and What Can We Do About It? p. 45.

interest in gainful work outside of school; (14) unusual behavior patterns; e.g. extreme introvert or extrovert tendencies; (15) lack of proper teacher-pupil relationship; (16) emotional instability; (17) boredom and restlessness.¹

One of the recommendations coming out of this conference in Chicago seems particularly pertinent. It read as follows:

The improvement of the holding power of our schools is essentially a local problem, to be met by the wisdom and resourcefulness of teachers, administrators, and board members in each school system. The needs of pupils in sections of cities differ, and the focal point for reducing drop-outs is, therefore, the individual school. Progress can come only by mobilizing each faculty for action.²

The Manhattan Senior High has been active in the Life Adjustment program in Kansas and has been continually striving to improve their program. If, however, the philosophy of universal secondary education is accepted, the school has a problem. This study had shown that during one particular period 19 percent of those who enrolled in the ninth grade failed to graduate. While this is far better than the national average, it is not universal secondary education. The results of this study have pointed to certain factors which seem to have a negative influence on the school's holding power. With these findings in mind a few suggestions are made as to ways and means of bringing about some improvement in this holding power.

First of all, the faculty might wish to acquaint themselves further with the problem by study and research. Attempts could be made to find factors which might indicate potential drop-outs. If these could be discovered, then these potential drop-outs might

1/ Loc. cit.

2/ Ibid., p. 69

be helped before it was too late.

This study has shown that one of these factors was poor teacher-pupil relationships. This is a difficult problem that has been encountered many times before; however, through group study and discussion the faculty might well find ways and means of improving this relationship. It might be found that it would be advisable to do more teaching from the personnel point of view.

Another area of difficulty is in the pupil-pupil relations. These relations are usually affected by the socio-economic status of the various pupils' families. The faculty might find it wise to create ways and means for those from families of lower economic and social status to take a more active part in school affairs. This study has indicated that these school affairs made little impression on the drop-outs which implies that they were not active in them. A study of participation in school affairs to find who is not being reached and why should furnish valuable information as to how to bring these people into active participation and, hence, help pupil-pupil relations.

Finally, the relatively low intelligence of these people and their expressed interest in the practical phases of school work raises some doubts as to their ability to profit from the verbalistic, abstract phases of the curriculum. The faculty might find it wise to adopt the curriculum to meet these pupils' needs by giving them work of a more practical nature and emphasizing the social and concrete phases of the curriculum.

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APPENDIX

Manhattan, Kansas
(Date)

Dear

Although you have never met me, I am writing you to ask a great favor. In looking over the records of Manhattan Senior High, I find that you did not complete your high school course. The favor that I ask is that you answer, as best you can, the questions on the other side of this letter. I will compare your answers with those of classmates who also left school before graduating. In so doing, I hope to improve your school so that no one will want to leave before graduation.

You will notice that most of the questions may be answered by a simple yes or no. To answer these, simply draw a circle around the answer you wish to give. The other questions ask for your opinions or ideas. Write as much in answer to these questions as you care to. Please remember that your answers are strictly confidential and no one will read them except myself.

If our records are incorrect and you have actually graduated from high school, simply indicate which school and when you graduated.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to fill the blank as we feel that this blank can be of great help in improving our school.

I am anxiously awaiting your answer.

Yours truly,

Name _____ Address _____

1. What was the principal reason behind your decision to leave school? _____
2. Did you receive help from any one in the school concerning your personal problems? 2. Yes No
3. Did you have any difficulties with any particular teacher? 3. Yes No
4. Did any of your teachers seem to understand your problems? 4. Yes No
5. Did any of your teachers try to help you with your problems? 5. Yes No
6. What is your main hobby? _____
7. Have you received any further education since leaving school? 7. Yes No
8. If so, tell how long and what course or courses were taken in following?
 - Trade school _____
 - Night school _____
 - Correspondence school _____
 - Other _____
9. Has your education helped you secure employment in the past? 9. Yes No
10. In thinking about your future, do you feel that a high school education would help? 10. Yes No
11. Have you ever been sorry that you quit school? 11. Yes No
12. Did your parents encourage or discourage your leaving school?
13. What things did you like best about school? _____
14. What things did you like least? _____
15. What school subjects did you like best? _____
16. What school subjects did you like least? _____
17. Did the requiring of you taking any particular course or courses influence your decision to leave school? 17. Yes No
18. Did the dislike for a certain teacher influence your decision to leave school? 18. Yes No
19. Did you fail any elementary grade? 19. Yes No
 - If so, which one? _____
20. Since leaving school, has your feelings toward school changed in any way? 20. Yes No
 - If so, in what way? _____
21. In what ways do you think the school might have better helped you? _____
22. Did you have to work while in school? 22. Yes No
 - If so, how much? _____
23. What course or courses that you took in school have helped you since leaving school? _____
24. Are you interested in night school classes? 24. Yes No
 - If so, what classes would you like to take? _____
25. Do you feel that your present job is a good one? 25. Yes No
26. Do you feel that a high school education could help you get a better one? 26. Yes No
27. What suggestions do you have as to how the schools might be made so useful and interesting that no one would want to leave school? _____

Name of Student _____ Address _____

1. Did this student
 - ___ a. graduate or remain in school more than one semester past graduation time for this class?
 - ___ b. complete grade school but fail to enter high school?
 - ___ c. enter school but withdraw before one semester past graduation?
2. ___ During which year of school did this student withdraw?
3. ___ If this student withdrew before graduation check below the reason.
 - ___ a. Transcript sent or student transferred to another high school but do not know whether student enrolled in that school.
 - ___ b. Transcript sent or student transferred to another school and records show that the student actually enrolled in that school.
 - ___ c. Moved residence from the attendance area but transcript not sent to school in new place of residence.
 - ___ d. Death of student or student institutionalized.
 - ___ e. Other reason. _____
4. ___ Sex of this student.
5. ___ Race
6. ___ Age at time student entered or would have entered the seventh grade, including birth date. _____
7. ___ Age at time student withdrew.
8. ___ How many brothers and sisters did this student have when entering?
9. ___ Occupation of major wage earning parent. _____
10. ___ Occupation this student hoped to enter. _____
11. ___ What was this student's I.Q. What test? _____
12. ___ What were the results of reading tests given this student?
13. ___ What were the results of the Stanford Achievement tests?
14. ___ In which quarter of the graduation class would this student's average grades place him?
15. ___ How many days was this student absent during his last semester in the eighth grade?
16. ___ How many days was this student absent during his first full semester in Sr. High school?
17. ___ How many subjects did this student fail during the first full semester in Jr. High?
18. ___ How many subjects did this student fail during the first full semester in Sr. High.
19. ___ What were the teachers ratings given the pupils during elementary school?
 - ___ a. Conduct
 - ___ b. Initiative
 - ___ c. Cooperation
 - ___ d. Dependability
 - ___ e. Industry
 - ___ f. Emotional stability

A STUDY OF THE HOLDING POWER OF THE JUNIOR
AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF
MANHATTAN, KANSAS

by

BENJAMIN PHILLIP BOWMAN, JR.

B. S., Kansas State College
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1948

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1952

PURPOSE

The purposes of this study were to (1) determine the number of pupils who failed to graduate from high school after finishing the eighth grade as compared to the number of pupils who did graduate, (2) determine the reasons underlying this failure to graduate and (3) obtain opinions of those who dropped out as to how the school could have better helped them.

PROCEDURE

The school records were consulted to find the number of pupils who finished the eighth grade and went on to finish high school and the number of those who did not finish. All available and usable data were compiled from the school records for each drop-out. The drop-outs were contacted for interviews if possible and questionnaires were sent to those not interviewed. The drop-outs so contacted were asked questions concerning their reasons for quitting school, their opinions of school and school life, and suggestions they might have for the good of the school.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

The holding power of the Manhattan Junior and Senior High School during the period of this study was 81 percent. Of the total of 69 drop-outs, 59 percent were girls while only 49 percent of the total enrollment were girls. It was also shown that 57 percent of the drop-outs were retarded one or more grades when they left school. Slightly over half of the drop-outs came from families

whose major wage earner was employed as a craftsman, farmer, or laborer.

Test scores indicated that 87 percent of the drop-outs were low achievers and that 47 percent were below the average group in intelligence, that is, below 90 in I.Q. Scholastically, 67 percent of the girls and 84 percent of the boys ranked in the lower quarter of their respective classes. Nearly one-half of the drop-outs had failed at least one subject in their first complete semester in Junior High and in Senior High. They missed more than twice as many days of school during a single semester than their classmates.

Marriage, had to work, and lack of interest accounted for 49 percent of the reasons given by the drop-outs as to why they left school. Responses to other questions indicate that certain courses, parental indifference, retardation, working while in school, poor pupil-pupil relationships, and poor pupil-teacher relationships also had some effect on the drop-outs' failure to graduate. It was found that 84 percent of this group felt that they had received no help from the teachers with personal problems and that 26 percent indicated that poor pupil-teacher relations was a major factor in their decision to leave school. Undesirable pupil-pupil relations were mentioned by 5 or 16 percent of the drop-outs.

Courses in the commerce field were popular with the drop-outs while the reverse was true with the social science field. Home economics, English, and mathematics courses were listed as being the most helpful since leaving school. Three-fourths of the drop-outs said that they were sorry that they had quit school and

87 percent thought a high school education would be helpful to them. Yet only 16 percent had received any further education and only 52 percent expressed any interest in night school classes.