

31-

**A SURVEY OF THE DROPOUTS IN THE HUGOTON PUBLIC
SCHOOLS AND INFLUENCES CONTRIBUTING
TO EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING**

**A Thesis
Presented to
Division of Teacher Education
Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education**

**by
Thelma K. Morgan
July, 1965**

Danell E. Wood
Approved for the Major Department

Samuel. Bryan
Approved for the Graduate Council

2

222556

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Few theses are written without the assistance of numerous people. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my indebtedness and express my appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Darrell E. Wood, for his advice and help in this study. Grateful acknowledgement goes to Hugh A. Cowan, Superintendent of Hugoton Public Schools, for help in obtaining school records and granting permission to do this work. Finally, I would like to thank the members of my family whose support and patience were of immeasurable value.

T. K. M.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem	2
Statement of the problem	2
The hypothesis	2
Some questions about the problem	2
Significance of the Study	3
Definition of Terms	4
The dropout	4
The Hugoton Public Schools	4
Curriculum	5
Procedures Followed	5
Summary	6
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	8
Introduction	8
Research By Schools	8
The Dropout Individual	11
Discovering the Dropouts	13
Difficulties of the Dropout	17
Needs of the Dropouts	19
Some New Curriculum Changes	21
Parental Attitudes	27
Summary	29

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA	32
Education and Employment of Parents	33
Characteristics of Dropouts	35
Student's Attitudes Concerning Subjects and Teachers .	46
Changes Desired in School and Community	47
Summary	48
IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS	50
Summary	50
Conclusions	52
Recommendations	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY	56
APPENDIXES	60
APPENDIX A. Letter to Dropout Student	61
APPENDIX B. Questionnaire	62
APPENDIX C. Occupations of Parents of Each Dropout Student . .	66
APPENDIX D. Avocations and Hobbies of the Dropout Students	
in Hugoton Public Schools, 1960-1965	67
APPENDIX E. Responses to Questions Regarding Subjects	
Studied	68
APPENDIX F. Attitudes of Students Toward Teachers	69
APPENDIX G. Changes in the School System Suggested by	
Dropouts	70
APPENDIX H. Changes Suggested in the Community and Ways	
to Implement Them	72

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Distribution of Questionnaires to Dropouts From Hugoton Public Schools, 1960-1965	33
II. Educational Levels of Parents of Dropouts From Hugoton Public Schools, 1960-1965	34
III. Participation of Boys From Hugoton Public Schools In School and Community Organizations, 1960-1965 . . .	36
IV. Participation of Girls From Hugoton Public Schools In School and Community Organizations, 1960-1965 . . .	37
V. Participation of Boys and Girls From Hugoton Public Schools in School and Community Organizations, 1960-1965	39
VI. Comparison of Attitudes and School Records of Dropouts From Hugoton Public Schools with Respect to Achievement in Reading and Arithmetic, 1960-1965	40
VII. Distribution of I.Q.'s of Dropouts in Hugoton Public Schools, 1960-1965	40
VIII. Grade Level When Students in Hugoton Public Schools Discontinued Their Education, 1960-1965	43
IX. Ages of Hugoton Public School Students Leaving School, 1960-1965	44
X. Dropout's Ability, Grade and Age of Leaving School, and Academic Average in Grade and High Schools While In Hugoton Public Schools, 1960-1965	45

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the earliest organization of schools, there have been those who have left school before the completion of their formal education. Since there was no well defined period of formal education in the past, and there was a demand for unskilled labor, no serious problem was presented. Today unskilled jobs are fast disappearing because of automation and technology and, thus, early school leaving has become a serious problem. By the year 1970 unskilled labor jobs will total about five percent of all other types of jobs. By the same year the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare predicts there will be 7,500,000 dropouts. This problem is not just a school problem, but a national one which every school, community, church, and civic organization needs to recognize and probe.

Skilled training in a salable skill or a high school education should be a goal for every individual capable of performing at one or both of these levels. If he is to achieve success in life, a student must be developed to his optimum potential.

Every school should examine its curriculum to see if it has been adequately meeting the needs of its students. Educators must try to discover and eliminate those elements in the school environment which tend to cause withdrawals before graduation.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the needs of the students who drop out of the Hugoton Public Schools; and how the school and community may meet these needs in order to retain more of such students in the schools for a longer period of time.

An accumulation of dropouts can become social dynamite in a community, therefore it should be imperative that communities attempt to change the attitudes of these youth "through meaningful, worthwhile, and successful experiences."¹

The hypothesis. It was the writer's hypothesis that influences contributing to early school leaving have their roots in elementary school experiences and that efforts to reduce the incidence of early school leaving must give attention to contributory factors in elementary schools.

Some questions about the problem. In order to determine the validity of this hypothesis, the writer will seek answers to the following questions: How do students who leave school early regard the experiences which they have had in school? What do these attitudes suggest about the quality of education which has

¹"High School Dropouts of 20th Century Tragedy," U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, (1963).

been theirs? In what ways could school and community act to reduce the incidence of early leaving?

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Educators usually think of early school leavers as being associated with Junior High School or Senior High School youth, but dropping out of school at this level does not suddenly happen. Its causes have been developing for many years; consequently, more and more educators need to become aware of individuals in elementary schools who are on the road to dropping out of school.

We have many young people occupying a seat but, in actuality, they have dropped out. They could more accurately be called 'Drop-ins' because they are in school only because of parental or legal compulsion.²

Students, who walk in to the principal or counselor's office, and say, "I'm quitting school," can rarely be persuaded to stay in school. Therefore, it should be essential that teachers in elementary schools learn to recognize these individuals and proceed with a positive approach to helping these students obtain an education.

Thirty-five percent of this nation's students are dropping out of school before they complete high school. Since there is a decreasing market for unskilled laborers, it becomes increasingly

²J. R. Rombouts, "Reaching the 'Drop-In' Before He Drops Out," Michigan Education Journal, Vol. 41, No. 6 (November, 1963), p. 24.

important that educators study their schools to see what they may do to increase their holding power on these individuals.

A classroom environment conducive to mastery of the tool skills and its satisfying rewards must be evident to students. It is here that educational stamina of youth is developed, but peer classroom practices fix a child's gaze on the nearest educational exit. "A few changes in our concepts and more of such ingredients as dedication, affectionate help, stimulation, encouragement and determination,"³ are needed by teachers and schools. Applegate believes "dropouts begin their exit in the first four grades."⁴

Many new approaches and programs have been used in various communities to combat this problem, but it will only be through the dedication of educators that a solution may be found to the problem of school dropouts.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The dropout. The dropout is any student who withdraws from school and does not continue his education in another institution.

The Hugoton Public Schools. The Hugoton Public Schools refers to the Hugoton Junior High School and the Hugoton Senior

³Ed. L. Applegate, "A Voice of Experience," Virginia Journal of Education, Vol. LVII, No. 8 (April, 1964), p. 17.

⁴Ibid.

High School. This does not include the Hugoton Grade School as none of these students dropped out of school prior to the end of the sixth grade.

Curriculum. (1) a systematic group of courses or sequences of subjects required for graduation or certification in a major field of study, for example, "social studies curriculum," "physical education curriculum;" (2) a general over-all plan of the content or specific materials of instruction that the school should offer the student by way of qualifying him for graduation or certification or for entrance into a professional or a vocational field; (3) a group of courses and planned experiences which a student has under the guidance of the school or college.⁵

IV. PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

The names of the early school leavers from the Hugoton Public Schools were obtained from school records. Since no formal marking system is used with regard to early school leavers, advice was sought from the principal and the counselor in determining the names. Some of the individuals were known to have transferred to other schools, but some of the others left no records. Only individuals who were definitely known to have terminated their schooling were considered for this study. These individuals either lived in the community or still had some relatives living in the community.

⁵Roy A. Norris, "A Survey of the Dropouts in Class AA Public High Schools in Kansas," An unpublished thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, (April, 1964), p. 2-3.

Only individuals who were twenty-one years old or younger were used for this study. There were forty-seven students in this group. Two of these individuals have their high school diplomas now, one is doing work by correspondence, one is studying through a naval training program and one is taking academic work in a state institution.

Letters of explanation were sent along with the questionnaire and mailed to all forty-seven students. A follow-up letter and questionnaire was sent to those who had not answered, and later personal telephone calls were made. One telephone conversation gave very definite negative attitudes toward the schools and the teachers, but no questionnaire was returned. Seventeen questionnaires were returned.

Junior High School and Senior High School records were used to obtain the age and grade of each student at the time he left school. His academic grade average and the subjects he was failing at the time of leaving school were obtained from the same records.

SUMMARY

Many students enter a school system through the years. Some students stay long enough to complete their educations, but other students either transfer to a different place or drop out of school entirely. More and more students are dropping out of school

each year until the present dropout rate is becoming an alarming problem of national concern.

The purpose of this study has been to attempt to find out why students of the Hagoten Public Schools have discontinued their formal education. A better understanding of dropouts can be gained through critically examining these individuals. If steps can be taken to change some aspects of their educational environments in the direction suggested by analysis of their characteristics, educational programs more appropriate to their development may be achieved.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I. INTRODUCTION

A tragedy of the 20th century is the high school dropout. This is becoming a national problem. Many educators and school systems are experimenting and researching methods and programs to advance education for all students which is a goal of American education. There are far too many students dropping out of school into a disappearing labor market; consequently social problems are beginning to arise from a restless youth. Many studies have been conducted in regard to this dropping out problem in order to have a better understanding. A few of these specific school studies are summarized in the following.

II. RESEARCH BY SCHOOLS

The Quincy Public School's study entitled Motivations Of Youth For Leaving School used data collected prior to the dropout situation with research objectives in view. This was a longitudinal study of data over an eight year period using a control group. "The dropouts were matched with two control groups selected from the stay-in population separately for intelligence and social status."¹

¹Paul H. Bowman and Charles V. Matthews, Motivations of

This project is studying all school dropouts from one age group in a small city community with a wide range of social and occupational levels. It tries to assess the number who leave school, the conditions under which they leave, their motivations and success as adults and their developmental background.²

The Hastings, Nebraska, study found that closer teacher-pupil relationships were very valuable for their schools.³

In a study conducted by the Saint Paul Public Schools numerous reasons for withdrawal from school were found. Some suggestions were made as a result of this study for improving the school's holding power: attempt to discover why more boys are leaving certain schools than girls, place students in classes with others of their own age, direct efforts toward showing students that they will benefit from high school education even though they will probably be employed in an unskilled job, create a more interesting and dynamic program with less rigid adherence to uniform time schedules and traditional courses of study, recognize the need for knowledge about marriage and family problems, improve school attendance, help inmates from institutions to succeed,

Youth For Leaving School, Quincy Youth Development Project, Quincy, Illinois, U. S. Health, Education, and Welfare Project No. 200 (September, 1960), p. 3.

² Ibid., p. 1-2.

³ Wm. T. Jaques, "Hastings High School Work On The Dropout Problem," Personnel and Guidance Journal, September, 1956, pp. 39-40.

provide for needs of low-ability students, develop awareness of civil-services and other jobs needing high school education, and maintain a more systematic check-up of graduates and non-graduates.⁴

A study in Dade County, Florida, was made to determine some implications of the results for administration, instruction, and guidance in the school system. They found that dropouts were not interested in school. Some suggestions for administration were to have flexible scheduling so failing students could be grouped for special or intensive work, permit principals to disregard standard or traditional programming procedures, explore possibilities for issuing certificates for completion of special work, organize special activities for these youngsters, develop a program of home contacts, appoint teachers who were sympathetic to needs of potential dropouts, develop ungraded school organization (elementary through high school) for pupils retarded two or more grades.⁵

In "Horizons Unlimited", Tischler reported that Vassar college students helped tutor students in Poughkeepsie, New York elementary school. This may include anything from cultural enrichment to the three R's. Each college student spends one hour with

⁴R. J. Engbretson and H. A. Falk, Dropout Study, Saint Paul Public Schools, Minnesota (August, 1955), pp. 1-56.

⁵Jonathan Gillingham, A Study of Dropouts Dade County, Florida Public Schools Dade County Public School, (1960-1963), pp. 1-124.

a student. Reading materials were obtained from any source available. The idea was started to aid potential dropouts by Patricia Blumenthal, a junior in Vassar, but today this idea of help through tutoring has grown to include other colleges nearby.⁶

III. THE DROPOUT INDIVIDUAL

Our government and industry has been taking an interest in the dropout problem from an economic point of view; whereas the schools' interest is with the student as an individual and his right to develop to the highest possible level. Since the schools are the steward of this treasure of children, then it must account for its stewardship.⁷

The dropout problem is not new as approximately eighty-five to ninety per cent of high school students dropped out of school before completing it around the 1900's, but in this last half century our dropout rate has been cut to about forty per cent as a result of our educational system's trying to provide an education for all of the children.⁸ During this same period of time our scientific, technological, and educational horizons have widened

⁶Christina Tischler and Grace O'Ilken, "Horizons Unlimited," Christian Science Monitor, (February-March, 1964).

⁷Jacques, loc. cit.

⁸Bowman, op. cit., p. 1.

requiring more skills and education be utilized on the jobs.

"The dropout is a result of many disruptive forces who fails in the school situation and continues this pattern of failure at least initially into adult life and the vocational world."⁹ More than half of the dropouts are boys, who leave after their sixteenth birthdays and in the tenth grade. Many are seriously retarded in reading and arithmetic. Probably failing in one or more subjects, not active in athletics, or extra class activities. Many have an I.Q. which indicates they could graduate and come from families where school achievement and attendance are not considered of much value. Seventy per cent of their mothers and eighty per cent of their fathers never completed high school and twenty-five per cent of their mothers and thirty per cent of their fathers did not go beyond the sixth grade. Parents do physical labor and are often out of work. They have little time together and no appreciation of the good education will do.¹⁰

More than thirty per cent of the students entering high school leave before graduation. Nearly fifty per cent of the students discontinue school in Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, and Kentucky; whereas New Jersey and Massachusetts

⁹Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁰"High School Dropouts a 20th Century Tragedy," U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, (1963).

only lose twenty-six per cent, Minnesota twenty-one per cent, California twenty per cent, and Wisconsin eighteen per cent of their students. One fifth of the dropouts have the mental ability to complete this work. "The American dream of giving everyone a chance to get ahead, . . . or the same opportunity for all does not give everyone an equal opportunity to become educated."¹¹

The people who drop out of school lack goals for life, an interest in school, and are excluded from the social life of the school. When he drops out some find work, but the United States Department of Labor statistics show that one out of every six persons in the sixteen to twenty-one age group is unemployed. Most dropouts will waste their lives because they cannot qualify for jobs in today's demanding world. President John F. Kennedy said, "The future of any country is . . . irreparably damaged whenever any of its children is not educated to the fullest extent of his capacity."¹²

IV. DISCOVERING THE DROPOUTS

"A million boys and girls, young men and women, each year make the wrong decision and drop out of school."¹³ They are the

¹¹Edith G. Meisser, "School Failures and Dropouts," Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 346, (July, 1963), p. 3.

¹²"High School Dropouts a 20th Century Tragedy," loc. cit.

¹³Ibid.

last to be hired, receive the lowest pay and the first to be laid off. Machines can often do their work. 7,500,000 youth will be added to the already staggering number of American citizens who are academically and vocationally unprepared for this changing and challenging age by 1970. One out of every three in the fifth grade now drops out before high school graduation.¹⁴

The school dropout has become a national problem. We have always had dropouts, but never a problem before because they could find work in the unskilled labor ranks. This area is fast disappearing and by 1970 less than five per cent of all available jobs will be of the unskilled variety. Whole categories of jobs are disappearing due to the development of automation and technology. The national unemployment rate for the past five years has not fallen below five per cent. For youths sixteen to twenty-one, the figure is twelve to thirteen per cent, and this includes graduates and dropouts. For dropouts alone the rate rises to twenty-four per cent and even as high as seventy per cent in the depressed slum neighborhoods in the large cities. Dropouts drift to other areas seeking jobs and join other migrants in large industrial cities and then live in almost indescribable conditions where their children are almost immediately dropout candidates. A recent study in one state shows that sixty per cent of dropouts quit school during or

¹⁴Ibid.

before their sixteenth birthday, forty per cent had less than ten years of school, forty-five per cent were reading at the sixth grade level or lower and sixty per cent of them had scores above minimum necessary to complete high school. Fifty-two per cent of their parents were either unemployed or in unskilled jobs and eighty per cent had not finished high school and nearly two-thirds of their parents are indifferent or negative toward education. Dropout rates run two, three, or four times higher among youth of minority groups.¹⁵

The Hastings, Nebraska, High School began a program in the Junior-Senior High to identify dropouts according to ten characteristics. The characteristics used were excessive absence, placement in lowest decile on a mental ability test, broken home, failure in school subjects, minimal family education, low family economic status, male sex, lack of participation in school activities, school retardation, and low score on a standardized reading test. This school tried to discover dropout students by using students with four or more of these critical characteristics. The classes of 1953-56 were studied.

Each pupil was assigned as a special project to one teacher, who had him in the subject that the pupil said he liked best or in which he was doing his best work.¹⁶

¹⁵Daniel Schreiber, "Helping the Potential Dropout," Education Digest, XXIX (January, 1964), pp. 8-10.

¹⁶Jacques, op. cit., p. 39.

This teacher took a special interest in him. Each year the seventh grade class has been investigated and a recheck was made to find pupils who were overlooked or developed more of these characteristics.

On the basis of scholastic ability eighty to eighty-five per cent probably had the ability to profit from a high school education if they were able to put forth the effort. Some of the dropout groups missed were those forced out by illness, girls who married or those who enter school for the first time and leave before they had been integrated into the school program. The guidance committee in Hastings High School felt that progress was being made in identifying likely dropout pupils and the method devised was a step in the right direction for their school.¹⁷

The number of dropouts between states, cities, and schools within a city were different. This study also discovered the usual dropout characteristics along with frequent absence from school, rural or urban residence, size of school attended, snubbed due to dress, left out, and few teachers seemed to care about the students. Subjects offered were less useful; dissatisfaction was found with teaching methods; they were not allowed in subjects they desired; and they were not eligible for extra curricular activities for various reasons.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 40.

V. DIFFICULTIES OF THE DROPOUT

Dropping out of school is "a symptom or a symbol of a problem which has been building up over a long period, and it usually creates more difficulties than it solves."¹⁸ Most early leavers were almost always working below capacity, failing in their studies, and taking no part in school activities. They had few friends in school. Relatively stable youngsters continue in school and the relatively unstable, whose scholastic attainments tend to be poor, quit school. The way to dropping out was paved with failures. To not master one of the tool subjects such as reading in early grades may lead to utter discouragement in high school. Three times more poor readers as good ones drop out. Empty spaces in skills and knowledge lead to an academic impasse. Many family transfers develop an unstable situation and often lead to quitting school. The greatest dropouts were in shifting populations of slums where seventy-five per cent to eighty per cent of high school youth were disadvantaged Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, or southern Mountain White people. "These are the youngsters whom Dr. Conant has called social dynamite."¹⁹ Many schools in slum areas had over-crowded classrooms, and inferior teaching so changing the

¹⁸Neisser, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 5.

curriculum would not change the quality of the youngsters performance in school.

Dropouts were unprepared for adult responsibility. They lacked training and education required for many jobs and lacked sufficient knowledge of their own abilities of jobs to make wise choices. More employers demand high school graduates. Job fields were expanding to require more education.

The enforcement of compulsory school attendance laws in the community affects the time at which students withdraw from school, but . . . enforced attendance does not make school more meaningful to the student, nor does it reduce his sense of failure or make him feel he is a valued member of a group of his classmates.²⁰

Only a little over half of the nation's youth stay in school long enough to graduate. Juvenile delinquents tend to come from this group, Allen reports.

Dropouts drift unhappily from job to job and competing with adults for low paying jobs. Assume little responsibility for improving their community or nation.²¹

In a California study fifty-seven per cent of the dropouts were dissatisfied with school. They felt that the teachers were unfair, the other kids were all snobs, nobody cared about them, and teachers did not explain enough. Many of these cases are needing treatment for emotional difficulties. A belligerent youngster who

²⁰Charles M. Allen, Combating the Dropout Problem (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1956), p. 5.

²¹Ibid., p. 3.

felt that everyone and everything was against him was in turn against them and felt like an outsider.

VI. NEEDS OF DROPOUTS

Albert J. Riendeau reports that youth were swelling the unemployment ranks at a time when our nation was accelerating its demands for skilled workers. Dropouts revealed they had four areas of needs:

1. poor social relationships at school, 2. lack of personal interest at home or at school, 3. inability to see value in school subjects, 4. limited participation in extracurricular activities.²²

To a lesser degree, early marriage, financial reasons, and enlistment in the armed forces also contribute to the high dropout.

Contributing to the broad categories above are problems of behavior, non-conforming attitudes, poor work habits, truancy, and aggressiveness.²³

They often come from homes of families with unstable relationships characterized by neglect, abuse, and rejection.

Our high school population needs are not being met. Persons lacking a high school diploma are the first to feel the results of a diminished demand for unskilled labor. Juvenile delinquency is ten times more frequent among dropouts than among high school graduates.²⁴

²²Albert J. Riendeau, "Facing Up To The Dropout Problems," Clearing House, May, 1962, p. 523.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 524.

Syracuse, New York, tried to discover why many high school students failed to graduate. They studied the dropouts of grades seven through twelve during the fall of 1945-46. One hundred ninety-four students were interviewed by counselors, school administrators, and visiting teachers. Some of their findings were: sixty-one per cent of the reasons related to school directly and thirty-nine percent were personal. In descending order of frequency the school reasons were: dissatisfaction with school, inability to see relationships between school subjects and future occupations, overage for the grade, unable to get along with teachers, inability to learn, failure of school to offer suitable subjects, lack of sufficient credits for graduation, along with a variety of other reasons. Personal reasons in order of frequency were: lack of personal funds, lure of a job, family support, illness, and the feeling of being too poor in comparison with others in the class.²⁵

This report indicates that curricular and teaching adjustments to individual differences are necessary to fit in with a changing social and educational demand for school populations from all social and economic levels.²⁶

²⁵"Another Study of Dropouts," The School Review, September, 1950, p. 319.

²⁶Ibid.

Dropouts appraise themselves much as their schools did. To keep the dropouts in school longer, he needs to succeed in school, better relationships with age mates, participate in extracurricular activities, improve teacher-pupil relationships and have some family influence.²⁷

VII. SOME NEW CURRICULUM CHANGES

To save the dropout it will take close cooperation of parents, schools, and the individuals and organizations of the community, employers, civic groups, service clubs, labor unions, and social agencies. Communities will have to plan job upgrading programs by which schools and local employers cooperate in basic academic vocational classes and on the job training. Work for wages part time and stay in school the rest of the time, improve social outlook of underprivileged groups, and provide situations to interest young people in work which restores self-respect and reveals value of the schools. Oregon has a full-time employment on forestry projects in summer camps which has dramatically revitalized the interest in school for scores of potential dropouts.²⁸

A more meaningful curriculum, enlightened guidance efforts, and a program of financial aids is needed. "American public schools

²⁷Allen, op. cit., p. 14.

²⁸"High School Dropouts a 20th Century Tragedy," loc. cit.

are committed to provide for the academic, physical, moral, emotional, and social growth of all youth."²⁹

Subject offerings must become more closely related to the abilities and interests of these potential dropouts in order to increase the school holding power in the high school. The elementary schools need to consider their counseling, guidance, curriculum and teaching methods to see if they are meeting the demands of our rapidly changing society. One item, taxable income from potential wages earned from the skill of dropouts would appear to be justification for an all out effort to develop youth to maximum potential. The number of jobs available to unskilled persons is decreasing each year while the number of people to fill them increases. This leads to a dilemma of joblessness and mass unemployment. A strain is then placed on welfare and relief, unemployment agencies, and juvenile courts. Allison David strikes a blow for action when he writes:

Academic culture is one of the most conservative and ritualized aspects of human culture. Its formalization, its lack of functional connection with daily problems of life, has given a bloodless, fossilized character to the classroom which all of us recognize.³⁰

Twenty-five years ago American education was around 8.4 grade; whereas today we are a nation of high school juniors. We

²⁹Riendeau, op. cit., p. 514.

³⁰Ibid., p. 525.

need to develop more work-experience programs, broaden individual and vocational counseling to reach beyond the in-school pupils, expand availability of vocational, technical, and commercial training programs to out-of-school youth, widen the employment opportunities for youth in summer forest camps or similar camps, develop community or public works programs for the employment of youth in urban renewal work. Successful plans dealing with high school dropouts will hinge upon cooperation of school officials, teachers, and community agencies.³¹

Some programs needed to combat the dropout problem are those that get parents involved, starting educational experience programs in nursery and kindergarten areas for disadvantaged children because the tools, experiences, or security of middle class children is lacking. Educational programs are needed for elementary and high school students where they can improve reading and English speaking skills during the summer. Some states are organizing after school study centers with volunteer help from colleges and other adults. Cultural enrichment and special attention from guidance counselors are being used in some areas. Other places are using a work-study program with satisfying results.

In the instructional area organize reading programs, levels of fundamental skills and understanding, provide tutoring and

³¹Ibid., p. 526.

special study program, offer subjects with possibilities for developing salable skills, use a block of program in a guidance setting, and double periods for the same subject in some cases and provide in-service training for teachers to help them understand the limitations of disadvantaged pupils indicated by test results.³²

"Our hopes for universal secondary education will not be reached merely by persuading or compelling youth to enter high school."³³ There remains the problem of keeping them until they graduate. At the Rural Education Association Convention in Detroit, representatives of rural and big city schools met to consider ways to reduce educational problems of rural migrants in the big cities. Perley E. Ayer asked that emphasis on job training be shifted to prepare individuals to be competent and contributing citizens in the city if they migrate and in the country if they do not. "Education has prostituted itself as job opportunity," Ayer said. "What can we tell a student when he knows that many dropouts do pretty well financially and when we know he can graduate from high school and still not find a job."³⁴ Ayer feels that a spirit of adventure and a sense of aspiration should be added to education. Most people wish "to climb further or investigate deeper than his

³²Gillingham, op. cit., p. 39-44.

³³"Another Study of Dropouts," op. cit., p. 318.

³⁴"Rural Kids In Big Cities," Scholastic Teacher, November 15, 1963.

parents want him to. The aspiration to do what has not been done before and to do better than before is inherent."³⁵

American schools retain youngsters, but never give them a chance to make up any of the lost time. Years later a discouraged youth drops out of school. An experiment with thirty-four older children was carried on in California where the overage youngsters of normal ability were given a chance to skip a grade. These youngsters averaged one and one-half years older than the rest of the seventh graders with mental age above the school mean, but their school scores lagged behind their classmates. Their weak self-images revealed low self-esteem and marginal school adjustment. They were also denying the value of school by using overly-aggressive or overly-withdrawn behavior patterns.³⁶

In January of 1960, the school advanced a new idea to these students. Since each of them had lost one or more years of schooling for various reasons would they be willing to work as hard as they could to earn back that year? Each student was very glad to be given this chance. Conditions they had to meet were: get parental consent, work up to his ability, and be a satisfactory citizen. This group was called Core Eighty-seven for work was

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Gordon L. Chamberlin and Calvin D. Catterall, "Acceleration for the Over-age Potential Dropout," Education Digest, XXIX (January, 1964), pp. 11-13.

being done in both grades with mostly eighth-grade work being presented in as much of an individualized method as possible.³⁷

In February, they were tested with a complete Metropolitan Achievement Test Battery and then tested again in June with results indicating a median growth ranging from 100-524% of the usual expected growth. Twenty-five out of thirty-four students stayed in the program during that period. Two moved away, two asked to return to their old classes, and five were dropped for failure to work or to behave. Twenty of these students were traceable two and a half years later. As high school juniors, eighteen were still in school and fifteen of these were rated as having a satisfactory, good, or very good adjustment. Two dropped out and three were rated as being poorly adjusted.³⁸

In looking back through the test records of these five students it shows they probably could not have successfully completed the work of the advanced grade.

The overage students who received and responded to the encouraging attention and the chance to gain acceleration did as well or better than typical high school students.³⁹

This experiment supports the conclusion that adjustment to school and achievement are likely to improve if students are placed

³⁷ibid.

³⁸ibid.

³⁹ibid., p. 13.

in their own age groups. Average underachievers can gain a great deal if they are properly motivated, and skipping a grade seemed to have a high motivating factor.⁴⁰

The implications of the Quincy Youth Development Project counseling over a longer period of time is needed which involves the student as well as the parents. Flexible and versatile school scheduling of subjects, and a community that understands and recognizes the need of its help in respect to the elementary and high school students and especially the disadvantaged students who tend to become the largest dropout group is needed.⁴¹

VIII. PARENTAL ATTITUDES

Neisser says, "Schools are the channels through which our way of living is handed on and responsible citizenship fostered."⁴² The education provided and insisted upon to age sixteen in most states, is invaluable to boys and girls, and indirectly to their parents. Here living demands the ability to deal with many complicated processes and relationships.

"Educational climate has an influence."⁴³ The attitude of

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Bowman and Matthews, op. cit., p. 85-106.

⁴²Neisser, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴³Ibid., p. 9.

people toward education does affect its ultimate objectives. Many people are anti-intellectual or at best non-intellectual. We are more interested in getting to the moon rather than in trying to understand the forces that control the universe.

Prevention of dropouts begins at home through developing self-confidence and self-respect. It takes courage and persistence to follow some things through and this is where the home can give much help.

Parents must help build a respect for learnings. Parental attitudes greatly influence a child's conscientiousness toward school. They can help the child to realize that what one learns in school brings satisfaction, contributes to a fuller, more interesting life long after school is over. Parents who try to encourage their child, rather than blame the school when things are amiss, help the child to seek a new approach to his problem.

Today many companies are demanding that their employees have a high school diploma. They try to select applicants who can make the routine advancements. Many employers feel that if a person does not finish high school, something must be wrong so why take on this fellow's problems. Not to finish high school indicates one is a quitter and most employers cannot afford to train someone who may soon quit.

Dropping out is socially inherited if one's parents have little education and live in a neighborhood of low socio-economic

level. A survey in Iowa indicates that seventy-nine per cent of the dropouts had fathers who did not finish high school, and in a community where eighty per cent of high school graduates went on to college and adults had a high regard for education the dropout rate is less than one per cent.

Schreiber says that,

Contrary to the studies indicating that parents of dropouts generally see little value in education, I contend, from my experience, that most of these parents, hope, far more than they can say, for their child's success in school. By and large, schools haven't begun to take advantage of the desire and hope of parents to see their children get ahead."⁴⁴

Schreiber feels that the P.T.A. needs to help resolve this problem as it is not just a school problem.

IX. SUMMARY

The dropout problem must become the problem of every individual within the community, but educators need to take the lead in helping community and civic organizations, homes, churches, and schools to see each child as an individual with individual rights. One of the basic tenets of American democracy is the supreme worth and dignity of the individual, yet we tend not to treat children as individuals. It is only human nature to want to feel worth while. Every boy and girl needs a goal and a challenge to become successful. He can never feel successful if he has an

⁴⁴Schreiber, op. cit., p. 10.

I.Q. of eighty-five and has to be graded against a student with an I.Q. of one hundred twenty. Yet, we continue to teach as though the two had equal opportunity to succeed at any task.

Many improvements have been made in the schools today in regard to extensive curriculum offerings, expanded pupil personnel services, better facilities, equipment and teaching materials. Many remedial and special programs of instruction have been added along with better prepared and qualified teachers, but this has not always resulted in better programs for the individual who is a potential dropout.⁴⁵

Our classrooms are including greater numbers of the physically, emotionally, and mentally handicapped. Many young people of this nature, once confined to institutions or their homes are now found in classrooms where they hope to become self-sustaining members of society.⁴⁶ "Theoretically, the teacher agrees that our schools are for all children and that we should take them as they are and help them develop into what society thinks they should become."⁴⁷

⁴⁵Reynold Erickson, "The Dropout - Whose Failure?" Minnesota Journal of Education, Vol. 45, No. 1 (September, 1964), p. 41.

⁴⁶Benjamin J. Novak and Mina E. Sundheim, "Careers for Potential Dropouts," Education, Vol. 85, No. 4 (December, 1964), p. 199.

⁴⁷Erickson, op. cit., p. 41.

With regard to the Job Corps organization, R. Sargent Shriver told Congress it

must do more than provide basic education, skill training and work experience. It must also change indifference to interest, ignorance to awareness, resignation to ambition, and an attitude of withdrawal to one of participation.⁴⁸

The above could be considered tremendous charges against the methodology of educators. Nevertheless, we as educators must assume part of this responsibility in developing youth with such characteristics and begin recreating a sense of ambition, incentive and competition within each individual. A teacher needs to improve the learning environment in his own classroom and serve as a Mark Hopkins to his students. Teachers must show warmth, affection, and confidence in their students.⁴⁹ "Good human relations and good teaching are two effective approaches"⁵⁰ for helping each student, whether he is the underachiever, the overachiever, or the one who is just drifting along.

⁴⁸Vernon R. Alden and John A. Hodges, "When Classrooms Fail," Teachers College Record (New York: Columbia University, January, 1965), p. 307.

⁴⁹Rombouts, op. cit., p. 24.

⁵⁰Erickson, op. cit., p. 41.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

In this study relating to the dropouts in the Hugoton Public Schools, attempts were made to discover the needs of students who discontinued formal education before graduation. The writer believes that a better understanding of these students was needed in order to help them pursue education throughout the school years.

The writer was interested in finding out the capabilities of each student, his general school progress, and his reading and arithmetic ability as recorded on the school records. Through the questionnaire an attempt has been made to ascertain the attitudes of these students concerning their likes and dislikes regarding school subjects, their likes and dislikes concerning their teachers, and changes they would like to make in the schools and the community. Additional information was collected with respect to their employment and the employment and general education of their parents.

Because of the small sample involved in this study, statistical analysis was necessarily limited. Although the dropouts were scattered throughout the United States, the questionnaires returned tended to be from those students who still lived in the community or those with relatives living there. As shown in Table I only seventeen of the forty-seven questionnaires mailed were returned. Nine were from boys and eight from girls. Among the boys were two

with unique situations, one who was in the Boys Industrial School, the other one who had dropped from school for several years and had just returned. According to the psychologist at the Boys Industrial School, the former had decided to continue with study at that institution. Since the latter had actually left school earlier, his reasons for doing so were desired.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES TO DROPOUTS
FROM HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1960-1965

	QUESTIONNAIRES		PERCENTAGE Returned
	Mailed	Returned	
BOYS	25	9	36.00
GIRLS	22	8	36.36
TOTALS	47	17	36.17

I. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF PARENTS

The education of the parents in Table II indicates the education of most of the father's was terminated during the elementary years or at the end of the eighth grade. Only four fathers had a high school education or above. Since five of the mothers are high school graduates and one high school dropout went to business college, education of the mothers was somewhat higher than that of the fathers.

TABLE II

**EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF PARENTS OF DROPOUTS
FROM HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1960-1965**

EDUCATION	GIRL'S PARENTS		BOY'S PARENTS		TOTALS
	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	
Elementary	3	4	1	1	9
Eighth grade	2	1	4	3	10
High School (dropout)	1		1	2*	4
High School Graduate	1	2	2	3	8
College (four years)			1		1
Do not know	1	1			2

*One mother entered business college for some time.

Study of the educational level of these parents reveals an eighth-grade education or less for nineteen with only eight high school graduates and one college graduate among the parents.

The employment of most of the parents was to be found in the unskilled and semi-skilled labor class for the fathers and the few mothers who worked outside of their homes. This was to be expected when the educational levels of these parents were studied, this was a reasonable finding. The occupation of the parents can be found in Appendix C.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF DROPOUTS

The characteristics of the Hugoton Dropouts were studied in regard to their present employment, participation in school and community activities, and general school progress. Their attitudes toward reading, arithmetic, school practices, vocational emphases, their teachers, and community responsibilities were evaluated. Checking the present employment of these youth, showed the boys were engaged as follows: apprentice butcher, furniture upholsterer, in the Navy, truck driver, student and farmer, inmate of jail, unemployed, and two in the Boys Industrial School. The girls were engaged as follows: three as housewives and mothers, three unemployed, one as a regular baby sitter, and one as a housemaid.

An attempt was made to see how active these students were in school and community organizations. Three boys did not participate in any organization for boys and only one boy participated in as many as four of these programs. It can be seen in Table III that Boy Scouts and Future Farmers of America seem to be the best liked of these programs. No interest was demonstrated in the 4-H program.

A study of Table IV shows the girls were no more active than the boys in organizations for youth. Three girls belonged to no youth group and only one girl belonged to four groups. Girl Scouts seem to be the most popular organization among the girls.

TABLE III

PARTICIPATION OF BOYS FROM HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, 1960-1965

BOYS	Cub Scouts	Boy Scouts	Baseball Teams	F.F.A.	4-H	DeMolay	Church Youth Groups	No. of Organiza- tions
1		X	X			X		3
2								0
3				X			X	2
4								0
5	X	X	X					3
6		X	X	X			X	4
7				X			X	2
8		X		X				2
9								0
TOTALS	1	4	3	4		1	3	16

TABLE IV

PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS FROM HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, 1960-1965

GIRLS	Brownie Scouts	Girl Scouts	Kayettes	L-H	Rainbows	Church Youth Groups	Number of Organizations
1						X	1
2							0
3	X	X					2
4							0
5		X	X		X	X	4
6	X	X					2
7							0
8		X	X			X	3
TOTAL	2	4	2	0	1	3	12

In summarizing activities in which youth participated in Table V, page 39, one discovers that six students participated in various church youth groups, the largest area of participation. Boy and Girl Scout organizations also attracted some of the dropout students. The only school organization which was selected by several students was the Future Farmers of America. It is interesting to note that no student had belonged to the 4-H organization which has a varied program of projects, activities, camps, and fairs. This leads one to believe that the dropouts did not feel adequate to participate successfully in 4-H activities; therefore they pass over this organization rather than meet the possibility of additional failures.

Another aspect of student characteristics which seems of significance is the way they view their effectiveness in study. In comparing attitudes of dropouts toward reading and arithmetic with their actual school achievement records, one finds they assess themselves rather accurately in reading but tend to underrate themselves in arithmetic, as shown in Table VI, page 40.

The abilities of these students were checked against their I.Q.'s as given by the Otis Intelligence Test which was administered during the fifth and seventh grades. The intelligence quotients used are those reported for the fifth grade except that when these were missing, scores from the seventh grade were used. As indicated in Table VII, nine of these students were found to be in the ninety

TABLE V

PARTICIPATION OF BOYS AND GIRLS FROM HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, 1960-1965

STUDENTS	Cub Scouts	Boy Scouts	Brownie Scouts	Girl Scouts	Base Ball Team	Kay- ettes	F.F.A.	4-H	Demolay	Rain- bows	Church Youth Groups	No. of Organiz- ations
BOYS	1	4			3		4	0	1		3	16
GIRLS			2	4		2		0		1	3	12
TOTALS	1	4	2	4	3	2	4	0	1	1	6	28

TABLE VI

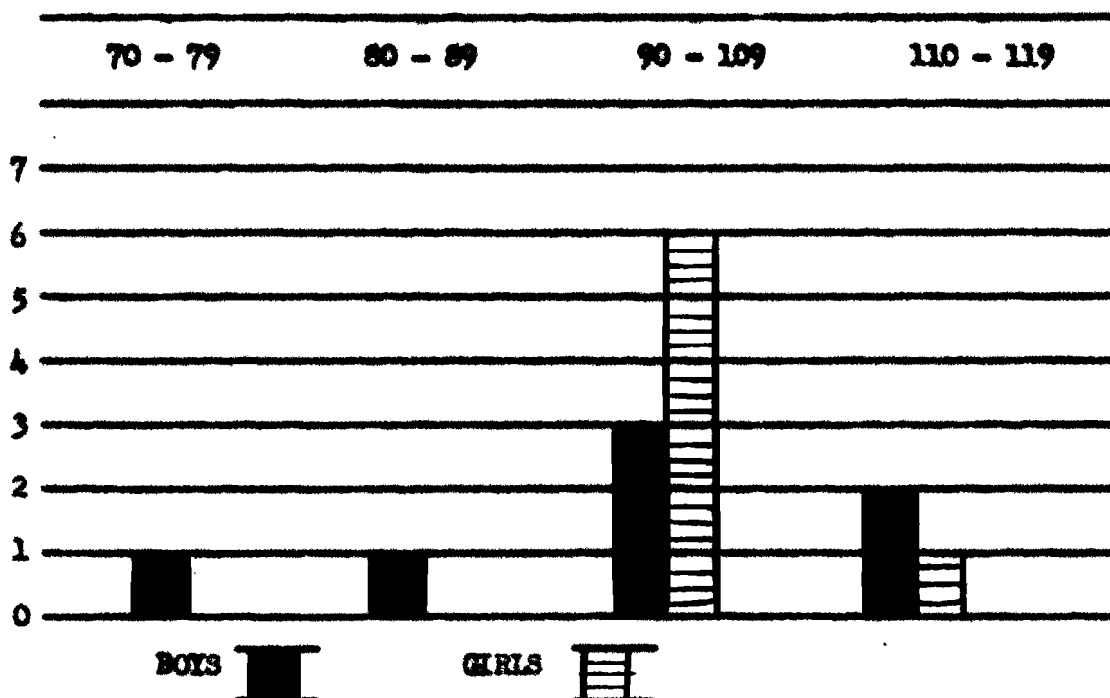
COMPARISON OF ATTITUDES AND SCHOOL RECORDS OF DROPOUTS
FROM HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH RESPECT TO ACHIEVEMENT
IN READING AND ARITHMETIC, 1960-1965

	READING		ARITHMETIC	
	Number Students Average & Above	Below Average	Number Students Average & Above	Below Average
Questionnaire	10	6	4	12
School records	8	7	9	5

NOTE: The questionnaire was not answered by one student for reading and arithmetic. Reading records were not available for two boys, and arithmetic records were not available for two boys and one girl.

TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION OF I.Q.'s OF DROPOUTS IN
HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1960-1965



to one-hundred nine I.Q. range, three in the one-hundred ten to one-hundred nineteen range, with only two scores falling below ninety.

According to school records, these students seem to have ability to do school work effectively but they have lost all desire to pursue tasks to the finish. When asked if they were interested in trying to improve their skills in order to get jobs or better jobs, fifteen were willing to try to improve their skills, but only eleven were willing to enter a vocational school if one should become available.

The school records were checked at the Junior and Senior High Schools concerning each of the dropout students to obtain information in regard to his academic ability, age and grade level at the time he discontinued school. The number of subjects he was failing at the time of leaving school was noted.

The academic grade average for these students in the Junior and Senior High Schools revealed eleven students with an average of a D; whereas, the elementary school showed only five students with an average grade of D. The high school records show four students with a B or C average, but the grade school had nine students with a B or C average. A distribution of the grades is shown in these results:

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Junior or Senior</u>
B	4	1
C	5	3
D	5	11
F	0	1
Unknown	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Total students	17	17

The attitudes toward education developed by the student while in the elementary school change as he moves into the departmental atmosphere of a Junior High School; as indifference to school increases, his grades gradually decline. Only one student with a B average still retained this grade average when formal education was terminated. With the exception of five students who continued to receive D's, grades of other students had declined by the time they discontinued school. Eight of these students were failing no subject, and only one student was failing every subject. Seven students were failing one or more subjects. No record was available for one student.

Study of grade levels at which students drop out of school revealed more students were leaving at the ninth and eleventh grade. Six students dropped out during the eleventh grade, and five during the ninth grade. A detailed report in Table VIII shows the number of students who dropped out of school during the different grades.

TABLE VIII
GRADE LEVEL WHEN STUDENTS IN HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DISCONTINUED THEIR EDUCATION, 1960-1965

Grade Level	Number of Students
7	1
8	1
9	5
10	2
11	6
12	1
Unknown	<u>1</u>
Total	17

The most common age for dropping out of school was seventeen with seven students in this group. Three students dropped out at age fifteen and three at age sixteen. Additional information in regard to ages of the early school leavers is given in Table IX, page 44.

The capabilities of these students were considered with respect to I.Q.'s, academic averages at high school and elementary school, subject matter, age, and grade in Table X. The five students with D's at both the elementary and high school levels were probably working at their maximum ability. Nine students with

TABLE IX
AGES OF HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS
LEAVING SCHOOL, 1960-1965

Dropout Age	Number of Students
14	2
15	3
16	3
17	7
18	1
Unknown	<u>1</u>
Total	17

grade averages of C or B in elementary school appeared to have potential for gaining an education. The I.Q. ranges for these students run from a low of ninety-seven to a high of one hundred nineteen. It is with such students that a program of prevention of dropouts should have major concern, not only for the welfare of the students but of society as a whole.

When the students are looked at individually, one discovers that one student returned several years later to finish high school. Another student has taken Cosmetology training, but has not passed the Cosmetology State Board Examinations. One student entered the Navy, two are in the Boys Industrial School, and the others are

TABLE X

DROPOUT'S ABILITY, GRADE AND AGE OF LEAVING SCHOOL, AND
ACADEMIC AVERAGE IN GRADE AND HIGH SCHOOLS WHILE
IN HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1960-1965

Student Number	I.Q.	Subjects Failing	Age	Grade Leaving	Academic High Sch.	Average Elem. Sch.
1	111	0	17	11	B	B+
2	99	All	15	9	F	C-
3		0	17	11	C-	
4	103	0	16	11	D	C+
5	92	5	16	8	D-	D-
6	94	3	15	9	D-	D
7	100	3	14	7	D-	D-
8	104	0	17	11	D	C+
9	119	0	18	12	D+	B-
10		0	17	11	D	
11*						
12	106	0	15	9	D	C-
13	114	3	17	11	C-	B+
14	74	2	17	9	D-	D
15	83	1	16	10	D-	D
16	104	1	17	10	C-	B-
17	97	0	14	9	D-	C-

*This student's records seem to be misplaced or else he is listed under another name.

either unemployed or working at unskilled jobs. If an individualized curriculum and guidance program had been established for these students, possibly they would have finished their high school educations at an earlier time.

III. STUDENTS' ATTITUDES CONCERNING SUBJECTS AND TEACHERS

An endeavor was made to see if any specific subject seemed to have given the students trouble, or if any certain subject seemed to be the easiest for them, but in each case no definite subject was the hardest or the easiest for them. Nearly every subject was named as the best liked by some and nearly every subject was also named as the most disliked. The favorite subjects were selected because the students found the material easy, interesting, challenging, and taught by a teacher interested in helping students. Unfavored subjects were selected because students found the material too difficult, uninteresting, and taught by a teacher they did not like. Details with respect to this question may be found in Appendix E.

Several questions were asked to find the attitudes of drop-outs toward school discipline, teachers, counselors, and principals. All of the students believed teachers should have discipline so the students could have a chance to learn. The main things they seemed to like about teachers were their ability to understand pupils, present material in an understandable way, and treat pupils on a

basis of equality. Some of the things they did not like about teachers were privileges granted to some students, qualities which made them difficult to work with, and failure to create profitable learning situations. More detailed answers can be found in Appendix F. With regard to counselors and principals only two of the students said they had seen a counselor or principal on their own concerning problems. Fourteen of the others indicated they had never sought such help and one student did not respond to the question. Nine students did feel that they could talk to a friend or teacher, usually a friend, about their problems. Teachers who were selected as their favorites and teachers who were remembered as not favorite teachers were selected from every grade beginning with the first grade on through senior high school. They were teachers teaching in every area the school offers.

IV. CHANGES DESIRED IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Dropout students were also asked what changes they would like to see made in the grade school, the junior high school and the senior high school. Some of the changes they would like to see in the grade school are better discipline, not so much taught in too short a time, teachers willing to take time to help the slow students, and teachers without favoritism. In the junior high they want understanding teachers, no favoritism, and more time for studies. Changes suggested for the senior high included better

discipline, less favoritism, more emphasis on participation in activities, and teachers with greater interest in students.

Student answers to school changes may be found in Appendix G.

Community changes suggested included more wholesome, supervised recreation, better understanding for slow students, and greater stress on the importance of continued education. They believe the community could implement their suggestions in the following ways: secure help from the Federal government or from people who were in a position to donate funds; elect people to the city council who are really interested in young people. Community changes suggested by the students may be found in Appendix H.

V. SUMMARY

Many interesting aspects are discovered concerning the drop-outs of the Hugoton Schools. Almost as many girls as boys dropped out of school and nearly all the dropouts had ability adequate to attain a high school education. Twelve students had intelligence quotients in the ninety to one-hundred nineteen range. Over half the students had reading and arithmetic achievement of average or above at the sixth-grade level. No subject stood out as being of especially high or low interest to the group. Most students dropped out in the ninth or eleventh grade and were fifteen, sixteen or seventeen years old. The grades of these students seemed to slip from C's and B's to D's by the time they dropped out of school.

Though school and community organizations did not attract these students into their activities, they expressed strong desire for recreational facilities which are not of an organizational nature. Very poor rapport with counselors and principals was typically expressed and many students felt that favoritism was shown certain pupils. These students seem to have low opinions of themselves and apparently expect to meet rejection from adults whom they contact.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary. In an effort to analyze the needs of the dropouts in the Hugoton Public Schools, this study attempted to ascertain attitudes and abilities of students who discontinued their academic education before completing high school. It is hoped that through using a longitudinal approach of study from elementary through junior high school and or senior high school a more complete picture of the individual will develop.

The problem studied was to ascertain the needs of the students who have dropped out of the Hugoton Public Schools; and how the school and community may meet these needs in order to retain more of such students in school for a longer period of time. It was the writer's belief that influences contributing to early school leaving have their roots in elementary school experiences and that efforts to reduce the incidence of early school leaving must give attention to contributory factors in elementary schools. This study thus represents an effort to determine the nature of these influences and what may be done to alter them.

Information concerning this study was acquired through school records and by questionnaires to individual dropouts. From information obtained in connection with the dropouts, it was discovered that most of these individuals fell within the normal

range of intelligence, lack initiative to complete school, are inactive in school and community organizations, have parents with only an elementary education, view many of their teachers with rejection, and seemingly do not know how to cope with their school environment.

Student responses to the questionnaire seem to indicate that very few things in school interested them sufficiently to get them to participate in school activities. It appears that by the time the dropouts had reached junior and senior high school they felt there was no opportunity for them to become active participants. Many of these students were doing some complicated things: for instance, repairing radios, working on electronic equipment, reading Shakespeare, studying historical literature, setting hair, painting portraits, and even working with people. Yet the responses of students suggest that they felt uncomfortable around their teachers. They believe many teachers had pets and showed favoritism. Some teachers did not conduct interesting classes and needed better discipline in the classroom. Selecting teachers they like was usually based on their ability to conduct interesting classes and be liked by students.

Attitudes suggested about the quality of the dropout's education, gave evidence that they need teachers who can establish a good rapport with a potential dropout. Not enough time was allowed to grasp some subject materials, and a teacher interested

in helping the slower student was expressed. It does appear that these would be drastic handicaps for a slower student or a student handicapped by his social background. In order to reduce this early school leaving, the schools must more critically evaluate the curriculum and teachers in light of the effect this has on culturally deprived students. They probably have normal ability to learn, but not the experiential background or parental initiative to stimulate interest and instill a desire for learning.

The dropouts expressed a desire for some recreational facilities which they might attend such as a skating rink, and a recreational hall with music to enjoy, place for soft drinks, and a place to visit with friends. Other kinds of recreation need to be provided, as this town has limited activities in which youth may participate outside of school hours.

Conclusions. Only through the dedication of educators in all areas of instruction toward becoming aware of future dropouts can any real in-roads be made in meeting needs of these individuals. In every classroom we have the "drop-in" student who attends school through parental or legal force. Educators must begin meeting the needs of the dropouts before they begin looking for the nearest exit. If teachers expect to see more individuals with skills which may be applied in future occupations, then the teachers will have to show greater interest in each individual student.

A greater effort must be expended at elementary levels in meeting each student's needs for basic skills and in helping to create a desire within the student to secure an education or skills adequate to enable him to earn a living. Neither can the junior high school or senior high school teacher take for granted that the basic skills have been taught because this is an on going process which should continue throughout his school years. Every teacher must assume his responsibility for teaching skills needed to understand the type of material he is teaching. Concentrated effort is needed from all educators to see that each child has a chance to achieve some valid success. A false sense of success cannot be condoned at any level, if the overall progress of the individual is to be met. This feeling of success must be gained when the individual begins school and must continue throughout his schooling, as he soon learns to assess himself in the same way his school does. If he does not find elements of success within the school, he eventually begins looking for a way out of this deplorable situation. For some students this "giving up" on school work begins early with a rigor mortis effect which becomes next to impossible to alter.

In this study every student except two had the potential to acquire a better education than he had, but because of school and teacher influences, he found the school room not a place to be desired. Furthermore, his home situation does not indicate that he is likely ever to return as his parents usually did not complete

their education. When this student finally lost interest in school and quit, he lost more than an education. He lost his self-esteem. Knowing that he was a failure at school, as he had proved to him many times throughout the years, he has an astronomical load to lift before he even regains his confidence in his own ability to succeed. Lacking an education or training in a skill is almost certain to doom him to a subservient existence.

Recommendations. As a result of this study it is recommended that schools establish a curriculum which more adequately meets the needs of individual students by helping them to consider academic and vocational curriculums rather than choosing unrealistic pathways to goals. A more personal guidance program should be initiated to help the student meet his needs at school, at home, and in the community. Educational systems should adjust to a child and his problems instead of the child's trying to adjust to school and its standards. Individual achievement must be based on personal rather than group progress. Extracurricular programs designed to attract the dropout-prone student are needed.

Potential dropouts should be discovered early in their school years, and an effort should be made to establish closer pupil-teacher relationships. The characteristics of the potential dropout should be made available to all faculty members. A more sympathetic attitude is needed among teachers toward the problems of the low social status, academically unsuccessful student.

Faculty members must take time really to listen to a child to hear his inner feelings as well as his surface problems. The potential dropout needs help in learning to live within his community and among his peers. He should have more family-living and appropriate sex instruction at an earlier age.

Churches and civic organizations need to consider their programs and recreational facilities to see if they are adequately meeting the needs of the underprivileged children.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Havighurst, Robert J. et. al., Growing Up In River City. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962.

Norris, Roy A. "A Survey of the Dropouts in Class AA Public High Schools in Kansas." An unpublished thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, April, 1964.

B. PUBLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, LEARNED SOCIETIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Alden, Vernon R. and John A. Hodges. "When Classrooms Fail," Teachers College Record. New York: Columbia University, January, 1965.

Allen, Charles M. Combating the Dropout Problem. Chicago, Illinois: Science Research Associates, 1956.

Bowman, Paul H. and Charles V. Matthew. Motivations of Youth for Leaving School. Quincy Youth Development Project, Quincy, Illinois, U. S. Health, Education, and Welfare Project No. 200, September, 1960.

Dade County Public Schools. A Study of Dropouts 1960-1963. Miami: Department of Research and Information, 1963.

Engelbreton, R. J., and H. A. Falk et. al. Dropout Study. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Office of Secondary and Vocational Education, August, 1955.

Gillingham, Jonathan. A Study of Dropouts.

"High School Dropouts a 20th Century Tragedy," U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1963.

Miller, Leonard M. "The Dropout-Schools Search for Clues To His Problems," U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Reprint from School Life, May, 1963.

Neisser, Edith G. "School Failures and Dropouts," Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 346, July, 1963.

Schreiber, Daniel, Ed. The School Dropout. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1964.

_____, and Bernard A. Kaplan. Guidance and the School Dropout. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1964.

School Dropouts. Washington, D. C.: NEA Research Division, National Education Association of the United States, April, 1963.

Sofokidis, Jeanette H. and Eugenia Sullivan. "A New Look At School Dropouts," U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, April, 1964.

Student Drop-outs in the Kansas City, Missouri, Public Secondary Schools, First Semester, 1959-1960. Kansas City, Missouri: Department of Guidance and Counseling, Public Schools, December, 1960.

"The 1963 Dropout Campaign," U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Bulletin No. 26.

C. PERIODICALS

"Another Study of Dropouts," The School Review, September, 1950, pp. 318-319.

Applegate, Ed. L. "A Voice of Experience," Virginia Journal of Education, Vol. LVII, No. 8 (April, 1964), p. 17.

Bailey, H. L. "Non-Academically Oriented Teaching in Elementary School," Virginia Journal of Education, Vol. LVII, No. 9 (May, 1964), p. 11.

Chamberlin, Gordon L. and Calvin D. Catterall. "Acceleration for the over-age Potential Dropout," Education Digest, XXIX (January, 1964), pp. 11-13.

Erickson, Reynold. "The Dropout Whose Failure?" Minnesota Journal, Vol. 45, No. 1 (September, 1964), p. 41.

Jacques, Wm. T. "Hastings High School Work on the Dropout Problems," Personnel and Guidance Journal, September, 1956, pp. 39-40.

Murphy, Laurice Allen. "An Elementary Solution to High School Dropouts," School and Community, September, 1963, p. 16-17, 32.

- Novak, Benjamin J. and Mina E. Sundheim. "Careers for Potential Dropouts," Education, Vol. 85, No. 4 (December, 1964), pp. 199-205.
- Reynolds, Vernon James. "School Failures: Let's Help Them Drop Out," Journal of Secondary Education, Vol. 39, No. 7 (November, 1964), pp. 302-303.
- Riendeau, Albert J. "Facing Up To the Dropout Problems," Clearing House, May, 1962, pp. 523-536.
- Rombouts, J. R. "Reaching the 'Drop-In' Before He Drops Out," Michigan Education Journal, Vol. 41, No. 6, p. 24.
- "Rural Kids in Big Cities," Scholastic Teacher, November 15, 1963.
- Schreiber, Daniel. "Helping the Potential Dropout," Education Digest, XXIX (January, 1964), pp. 8-10.
- Strom, Robert D. "Our Ugly Americans?" Kentucky School Journal, October, 1964.
- Thompson, Michael L. and Robert H. Nelson. "Twelve Approaches To Remedy the Dropout Problem," Clearing House, Vol. 38, No. 4 (December, 1963), pp. 200-203.
- Tischler, Christina and Grace O'Liken. "Horizons Unlimited," Christian Science Monitor, February-March, 1964.
- Van Til, William. "Five Bold Ways To Attack the Dropout Problem," Parents Magazine and Better Homemaking, Vol. XL, No. 3 (March, 1965).

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Hugoton, Kansas

April 30, 1965

Dear

I am making a study of the "early school leaver" in our schools. I hope that by doing this study I can help improve our schools in the areas in which you indicate there is a weakness.

Will you please help me by filling out the enclosed questionnaire? I am mailing this questionnaire to all of our early school leavers. The information received from you will be kept confidential.

Please fill out this questionnaire as soon as possible and mail it back in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for this help.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Ray Morgan

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____

PRESENT JOB _____

(You may make additional comments on any question. Use the back, if needed.)

1. Did you belong to any of these youth groups? Check the ones.

Cub Scouts	_____
Bronie Scouts	_____
Boy Scouts	_____
Girl Scouts	_____
Baseball teams	_____
Kayettes	_____
F.F.A.	_____
4-H	_____
DeMolay	_____
Rainbow	_____
Church Youth Groups	_____

Check answers YES or NO

YES NO

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| 2. Did you read a daily newspaper? | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Did you read magazines? | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Did friends visit you in your home? | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Did you visit in your friends' homes? | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Did you have a car? | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Were you allowed to use the family car? | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Did you have money to spend for occasional treats, special lunches, or school lyceums? | _____ | _____ |
| 9. What is the occupation of your parents? (Examples: clerk in drug store, farmer, salesman, highway maintenance, etc.) | | |

Father _____ Mother _____

10. What was the education of your parents: Check.

Father:	Elementary School_____	Graduated_____
	High School_____	Graduated_____
	College_____	Graduated_____
Mother:	Elementary School_____	Graduated_____
	High School_____	Graduated_____
	College_____	Graduated_____

11. Did either of your parents quit school? _____
 Why? _____
 YES NO
12. Were you a good reader as compared to other students in your class? _____
13. Were you a good student in arithmetic as compared to other students in your classes? _____
14. What was your favorite subject in
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Grade School_____ | Why?_____ |
| Jr. High (7,8,9)_____ | Why?_____ |
| Sr. High_____ | Why?_____ |
15. What subject did you dislike the most in
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Grade School_____ | Why?_____ |
| Jr. High (7,8,9)_____ | Why?_____ |
| Sr. High_____ | Why?_____ |
16. Were you free to select subjects of interest to you? _____
17. Did you ask questions when you did not understand something? _____
18. Did you go to the principal or guidance counselor just for your own reasons? _____
19. Was there a teacher or other friend to whom you felt free to talk out your private problems? _____

20. Who was your favorite teacher in

Grade School _____

Jr. High _____

Sr. High _____

21. Why did you choose these people? _____

22. Which teacher did you dislike the most in

Grade School _____

Jr. High _____

Sr. High _____

23. Why did you select the above teachers? _____

YES NO

24. Do you think teachers should have discipline
in their classes? _____

Why? _____

25. Did your teachers seem to like you? _____

26. Did you ever feel there was partiality in choosing

Athletic teams	_____	_____
Music contestants	_____	_____
Class play members	_____	_____
Class officers	_____	_____
Someone for special jobs	_____	_____

27. Were you ever passed to another grade when you felt unprepared?

28. Were you ever held in a grade when you felt you should have
passed to the next grade?

29. Are you interested in trying to improve your skills in order to get a job or a better job?
30. If a vocational school was available, would you be willing to go to school in order to improve your skills?
31. What do you like to do?
32. What changes would you make in the grade school to help make it a better school if you were going there?
33. How would you change the Junior High School to improve it if you were going to school?
34. How would you change the Senior High School to improve it?
35. What would you suggest that our community do to help more students?
36. How would you have the community do the things you have suggested?

APPENDIX C

OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS OF EACH DROPOUT STUDENT

GIRLS		BOYS	
Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers
City worker	?	Custodian (sch)	Custodian (sch)
Car salesman	Housewife	Car salesman	Housewife
Natural gas worker	Clerk	Farmer	Housewife
Retired Rail-road worker	Housewife	Retired rail-road worker	Housewife
Mechanic	Housewife	Custodian	Housewife
Unemployed	Housekeeper	?	?
Manager Hauling Firm	Baby Sitter	Mechanic	Housewife
Carpenter	Housewife		
Special Students		Farmer Farmer	Housewife Cook

APPENDIX D

AVOCATIONS AND HOBBIES OF THE DROPOUT STUDENTS IN HUGOTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1960-1965

Students	Read Daily Newspaper	Read Magazines	Friends Visit In Your Home	You Visit In Friends Home	Have a Car	Allowed Family Car	Some Money To Spend
Girls	5	7	7	7		1	8
Boys	5	6	7	7	3	3	7
Special Students (Boys)	1	2	2	1	1	1	2
Total	11	15	16	15	4	5	17
Percentages	64.7	88.2	94.1	88.2	23.5	29.4	100

APPENDIX E

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS REGARDING SUBJECTS STUDIED

Favorable answers.

I liked them all
I like to draw
Because I made good grades
I just liked it
I just like making things
Easy
For the enjoyment
It was easy
It was interesting and presented somewhat of a goal to work to
It was interesting
It was my best subject
I liked to read
Teacher was ready to help with any problem
Interested in mechanics
It was fun
It was a challenge
Because I liked to spell
I liked to do the subjects
Quite interesting
Gave a background to America
It seemed easy
The teacher helped me out

Unfavorable answers.

It wasn't very interesting
Don't like to do things in front of people
Teachers wouldn't explain so I could understand it
Hard
Math extremely difficult for me
I didn't think what had happened was necessary
I didn't read enough
Because of the teachers
There were too many dates
Not any special reason
I don't like physical exercise
I couldn't get it, too hard
Because I couldn't write very well
Didn't care much for it
I didn't like the teacher

APPENDIX F

ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARD TEACHERS

Favorable answers.

Made school seem fun
Because they are nice and understanding
They were demanding enough that their classes were not too
easy and not unjustly hard
Because they seemed to treat me even with the other students
Because I liked them and they understood my problems
Explained everything very well
Easy to get along with
Could put subject matter across to be understandable
I liked them personally and thought they were excellent
teachers even if I wasn't a good student
I felt at ease in their class
I could understand what they taught
Because they seemed to be able to teach me more than other
teachers
They all helped me out a lot at school

Unfavorable answers.

They all had pets
This teacher told the class that I missed all the questions
on a test but three
Because I wasn't a cheer leader who was privileged to do as
they pleased
Because the teacher failed me
Teacher wouldn't answer when I'd ask a question
They didn't try to get along with me or teach me anything
Sneaky, blaming me for what other people do
They had special students, ones that received more privileges
Mostly because they were excessively strict
I couldn't get along with him or he with me
They seemed too grouchy and hard to get along with
I didn't select them it's just the way it happened
They either didn't care whether they taught the student
anything or were too lazy to prepare lessons properly

APPENDIX G

CHANGES IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM SUGGESTED BY DROPOUTS

Suggestions for the grade school.

Don't teach them too much in too short of a time
Teachers that would take their time to help kids that were
behind and can't understand how to work the harder problems
Select teachers that have better understanding and aren't
prejudiced
Mainly for the teacher to not play favorites
More and better workbooks
Shouldn't try to teach the kids so much all at once
Studying what I would like to do
Better discipline
Have classes for faster students, according to ability
I would make the teachers more strict with the children

Suggestions for the junior high school.

I would have the teachers to treat all the kids the same and
not have pets
Too many parties and games and no time to study
Select teachers that have a better understanding and aren't
prejudiced
Mainly for the teachers to not play favorites
Not enough time for learning
I would have more recreation than just gym on Saturday night
Junior high is best in the state don't change it
Better discipline
By letting each student select his own electives thereby
letting him prepare for his vocation
I would have more study hours and stricter teachers

Suggestions for the senior high school.

I would have the teachers to treat all the kids the same and
not have pets
Too many parties and games and not time to study
Stop them from wearing shorts and short dresses
Let the girls that don't have a chance to have anything in life
to let them become football queen

Mainly for the teachers to not play favorites
English, history, and science classes need more paper work
Need to have kids give talks
Get more teachers interested in students more than themselves
I think an extreme effort of the teacher and the student to
get along would help greatly. This is one of my mistakes
Better discipline
By putting more emphasis on activity participation, sports,
music, etc.
I don't know, but surely there should be a few teachers that
would take time for us slow students

APPENDIX H

CHANGES SUGGESTED IN THE COMMUNITY

AND WAYS TO IMPLEMENT THEM

Suggestions for the community.

We need more dances and more activities, that's why so many
of us get into trouble
A skating rink for them to use
A place to meet, listen to records and have sodas
Have a center just for kids and not for cliques; kids from
the ages of 14-20 years
Have more clean recreation supervised where children would
keep out of trouble
By getting more activity for the teens in this town so they
won't have to rob stores or go park for excitement
Teen clubs or recreation centers
A place where kids could meet and enjoy themselves
Having more recreation that everybody can join in
Stress the importance of staying in school
Have a conference with the dropouts
Build better understanding for slow students like myself
Our community should make more efforts to keep young people
around
Our town had little to offer in the way of life's vocational
opportunities for the newcomer
I'd like to have them build more recreation places

Ways suggested to implement the community changes.

Get up petitions
By speaking to other people about it
By having some of the people in this community with money to
spare to let go of some of it
Get help from the government and the people in the community
Use the recreation club for help
Put up posters or other means of advertisements
Get someone on the city council and school board that is
really interested in the young people, someone interested
in the future of our town, someone we know will do something