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**A SURVEY OF THE HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUTS AT THE STANDING ROCK
COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, FORT YATES, NORTH DAKOTA DURING
A FOUR-YEAR PERIOD--1950-54**

by

Donald Arthur Weston

**A Problem Submitted to the Faculty of South Dakota
State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Science
Plan B
November 1954**

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The less talented pupils are being eliminated from the schools and caused to meet adult problems without adequate preparation due to the unflexible definition entertained of what constitutes an education. Efforts to achieve a high level of scholarship have been causing schools to be more selective than they should according to the spirit of the public school laws.

The discouraged low-ability pupil tends to drop out of school at a lower grade level than would have been necessary providing the school programs were more adaptable to the individual differences of pupils. Schools have had a tendency to attempt to prepare all pupils for college entrance despite of the fact that only a minority of them actually do attend college. Many feel that there is a definite need for the high schools to set up separate programs for the prospective college students and for those who do not intend to continue their education in college. It is reasonable to believe that if the high school had a life career-program of studies for those not going to college then pupils would remain in school and complete such a program. Early drop-outs have terminated their formal education before they should thereby lowering the educational level of the community below that which the level would be had the drop-outs remained

through high school and graduated.

A greater recognition of individual differences and an adjustment of the school program to these differences in ability and personality would have helped prevent students from leaving school before graduation. Advance recognition of which pupils are likely to drop out of school early, in order that they may receive additional guidance or have their programs adjusted where necessary, would have enabled the school to hold some of them in school and prevented them from becoming drop-outs.

In some ways the drop-out problem which is quite a serious and critical one for the individuals, for the schools, and for society needs critical study. As it affects the standard public schools, it also affects the Indian boys and girls enrolled in the schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is just as important that someone make a study of the facts and factors influencing drop-outs in the schools for the Indians as that these important matters be studied in the ordinary public schools attended by the whites. Doubtless a different pattern of factors will be found due to the fact of the Indians living under reservation conditions and situations with unlike background of traditions and a dissimilar set of social mores.

Just now the writer does not know of any similar study on the matter having been made at this school at Fort

Yates. However the school staff recognizes the lack of holding power of the school as a serious handicap in the process of achieving the educational objectives of the school. The next part of this paper seeks to give a clear description and explanation of the Indian School situation at Fort Yates, North Dakota.

Description of the Fort Yates School

The community of Fort Yates, North Dakota is located on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation where the population is approximately ninety per cent Sioux Indian. The amount of Indian blood will range from full-bloods to those of less than one fourth Indian blood, with a majority being over one half Indian. Besides the local Indians, who are mostly subsistence ranchers, there are a few white ranchers, merchants, and government employees. The United States government employs about a hundred people at the agency. Half of the government employees are of Indian extraction from many different tribes. According to the latest census figures, Fort Yates had a population of slightly over one thousand people.

The public -school district has contracted with the Indian Bureau to educate the public-school pupils in the Indian School. There are sixteen teachers in the school system. Five of these teachers are employees of the public-school district. The Indian Bureau hires the other eleven

teachers, furnishes and maintains the plant, and pays the operational expenses of the school. The pupils in grades one through six are all local pupils who either live within walking distance or ride the bus to school. The first six grades are located in a separate building across the street from the high-school building.

There are five other Indian villages on the reservation which have elementary schools run by the Indian Bureau. Graduates of these elementary schools who continue their education attend the Standing Rock Community High School along with the local pupils. While they are in school they live in dormitories near the school which are of the cottage type in which an attempt is made to create a homelike atmosphere. About fifteen boys are housed in one wing of a dormitory and about the same sized group of girls in the other wing. A house mother or matron lives in rooms located between the two wings of the building. Their living and eating facilities are used in common. The pupils are trained in home management by the rotation of the housekeeping and cooking duties under the supervision of the house mother. Usually one or more of the teachers also live in the building and assist the matron with the guidance of the pupils. The dormitory pupils may return to their homes on week ends and holidays providing transportation is available both ways.

The average enrollment of the entire school system

includes the following pupils: approximately one hundred pupils in grades one through six; about two hundred pupils in grades seven through twelve, of which about a hundred and twenty live in the dormitories and eighty are local students. St. Bernard's Mission, an eight grade parochial elementary school with an average enrollment of about seventy pupils, is also located in Fort Yates. Graduates of St. Bernard's Mission usually enroll in the Standing Rock Community High School.

The curriculum of the Fort Yates High School consists of the academic constants prescribed by the Department of Education of the state of North Dakota in the NORTH DAKOTA COURSE OF STUDY and a strong vocational program in Agriculture and Home Economics. The only other vocational course taught is one in Typing. This strong preponderance of a traditional academic program, in which there is little if any election of subjects on the part of the pupils, may have a much greater influence on the continuance in school or the elimination from school of the pupils than we are willing to recognize. The academic subjects offered by the school are: four years of traditional English, one year each of General Science, Chemistry, Biology, World Geography, American History, World History, Social Studies, Arithmetic, Algebra, and four years of Physical Education.

Four years of Vocational Agriculture are required of all boys enrolled in the high school and the girls are also

required to take Home Economics for four years. The material taught in these vocational courses for the most part is of the traditional type arranged in units of study by the instructor of Agriculture and the two Home Economics teachers. The school principal plans to enlarge the Commercial Department by the addition of a full-time commercial teacher so that in addition to Typewriting the following courses will be added: Bookkeeping, Shorthand, and Commercial Law. Recently a semester course in Driver-Training was introduced into the school program as a required course for graduation.

The guidance program of the Standing Rock Community High School consisted of a concentrated program of occupational guidance, incidental and informal personal guidance by the entire school staff, and very little educational guidance due to the lack of courses to select from in the limited program of the high school. Regular instruction is given to the members of the upper classes on Occupations. Besides the school staff many outsiders are invited to speak to the pupils on professions and trades. A considerable number of occupational movies are also shown to the pupils. Preparations have been made to obtain a full-time Student Counselor for the coming school year which will strengthen the personal guidance program of the school.

Several intelligence tests have been administered to the pupils through out their school careers. The California

Achievement Test has been given the past two years as part of a nation-wide four-year testing program under the direction of the University of Kansas. The purpose of this testing program is to determine how well Indian students are achieving in comparison with other students living in similar environments in both the Indian Schools and the public schools.

Cumulative records have been made by the school administration on all pupils enrolled in the Standing Rock Community School. These records contain information concerning the personal history of the pupils, their family background, previous school record, test scores, extracurricular activities, and teachers' opinions of the pupil and his school record.

Purpose of the Survey

By a thorough and assiduous search of information available in the administrative office of the Standing Rock Community High School the investigator has endeavored to reveal which traits that school drop-outs have in common, which if known and recognized would indicate to the school staff that certain pupils are potential drop-outs. Other information this survey will indicate will be the number of drop-outs, age of drop-outs, per cent of drop-outs, and other statistical information on the students leaving school. Early recognition by the school staff of the pupils who are likely to be eliminated from school earlier than high-school grad-

uation will forewarn the staff so that some action may be taken in order to try to keep the potential drop-out in school. Possibly a change in the student's program, remedial work in some skill, or guidance through some school or personal difficulty will be all that is necessary to hold the pupil in school

Because of the unique Fort Yates dormitory situation the guidance problem may well be one of orientation and adjustment to dormitory life. The strangeness of dormitory living to new pupils who have never experienced group living before suggest that a thorough orientation program should be a primary requirement. The pupil must develop a sense-of-belonging before he can become adjusted to his new environment.

The investigation was conducted to determine the answers to the questions listed below which the writer was convinced would assist in identifying those who tend to leave school early and determine the remedial measures to be applied in order to reduce the percentage of drop-outs or conversely to increase the holding power of the school:

1. Number of drop-outs.
 - a. How many students dropped out each year?
 - b. What per cent of the total enrollment leave school.
2. Personal characteristics of the drop-outs.
 - a. At what age and grade are boys most prone to drop out of school? Girls?

- b. Are the drop-outs usually overage in grade?
- 3. Intelligence, ability, and achievement of drop-outs.
 - a. Is the IQ of the drop-out below average?
 - b. Do pupils of low reading ability tend to become drop-outs?
 - c. What relationship is there between scholastic achievement and leaving school?
- 4. Influence of school curriculum on holding power.
 - a. Which subjects are failed most frequently by drop-outs?
 - b. How does the percentage of drop-outs of dormitory pupils compare with the percentage of drop-outs who live in homes?
 - c. Do drop-outs participate in extracurricular activities?
- 5. Home, environment, and parental influence on drop-outs.
 - a. Do drop-outs tend to complete more or less school grades than their parents completed?
 - b. Does the degree of Indian blood have any bearing on the tendency to leave school early?
 - c. Are home conditions a factor influencing the holding power of the school?
 - d. Does the marital status of the parents influence the length of time pupils remain in school?
- 6. What reasons are listed most frequently on the school records for pupils leaving school?

Knowing the most frequent reasons why pupils drop-out of the Standing Rock Community High School and understanding the pupil, can assist the administrators, teachers, and matrons in identifying the potential drop-out. Once the

likely school-leaver has been discovered, intelligent and sympathetic preventive measures properly applied will aid in retaining the potential drop-out in school.

However many of the pupils leave school for reasons beyond the control of the school, such as ill health and economic problems. Unfortunately the school usually has not been able to provide an adequate solution to their problems; consequently, 100 per cent holding power is ordinarily beyond the realm of expectancy for the school.

Procedure

Cumulative records, the source of data for this survey, were filled in on every high school student enrolled in an Indian School on standard forms provided by the Indian Bureau. The forms were printed on both sides of a standard manila folder. The information which was recorded in the folders by the home-room teacher and the principal of the high school covers personal history, birth, age, enrollment, family history, home conditions, nationality, religion, parents, previous school record, present school record, test scores, intelligence quotient, activities, departure from school, and comments by teachers, matrons, and administrators.

In order to examine the information available in the school records about the pupils who have been eliminated from school either by their own volition or reluctantly at the insistence of the school the writer constructed the

Pupil Data Sheet, a copy which is page twelve of this survey. The data from the original records which the writer thought would have some bearing on the drop-out problem were then recorded on the Pupil Data Sheet and tabulated in various ways to reveal the characteristics which drop-outs of the Standing Rock Community High School had in common. The information tabulated was then analyzed to provide answers to questions relative to the characteristics, traits, and backgrounds of the drop-outs and also as to the causes of their leaving school so that conclusions could be arrived at and recommendations presented that would enable the school to increase its holding power.

PUPIL DATA SHEET

Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Latest CAT reading grade equivalent _____ I Q _____

Subjects failing when dropped 1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

School year dropped _____ School grade when dropped _____

Grade in school completed by father _____ Mother _____

(check appropriate answer)

Degree of Indian: 4/4 _____ 3/4 _____ 1/2 _____ 1/4 _____ None _____

Home conditions: Excellent _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____

Parents are: Living together _____ Separated _____

Father deceased _____ Mother deceased _____

Reasons on record for
pupil leaving school:

Extra curricular activities
pupil participated in:

- _____ Failing in school
- _____ No interest in school
- _____ Trouble with teachers
- _____ Trouble with matron
- _____ Trouble with other pupils

- _____ Football
- _____ Basketball
- _____ Track
- _____ Chorus
- _____ Band

- _____ Over age in grade
- _____ To get married
- _____ To enter armed forces
- _____ Ill health

- _____ Dramatics
- _____ Journalism
- _____ Clubs
- _____ Class officer

- _____ Difficulty at home
- _____ Financial reasons
- _____ Prefer to work
- _____ Needed at home
- _____ Expelled

Pupil lives in:

_____ Dormitory

_____ in home

- _____ No reason given
- _____ _____
- _____ _____

SECTION II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Considerable has been written pertaining to the reasons for high-school pupils leaving school before graduation and much has also been written concerning the preventative measures the institutions can employ to attempt to keep possible withdrawers enrolled in school. However, because of the unique dormitory situation, the Indian population, and the combination of public and Indian School, none of the investigations reviewed were closely related to the drop-out problem studied at the Standing Rock Community High School, Fort Yates, North Dakota. A short digest of a few of the investigations reviewed are here presented.

In an investigation conducted for the Regent's Inquiry of New York State in 1938 Ekert and Marshall¹ attempted to determine why some pupils drop out of school prior to the completion of their courses. The survey covered a large sampling of approximately 22,000 pupils from high schools located in all parts of New York State. Most of the information surveyed was obtained from high-school records and high-school administrators and teachers. They found that: 55 per cent of the withdrawing group were boys; girls tend to stay

¹ Ruth E. Ekert and Thomas O. Marshall, When Youth Leave School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1939), pp. 1-190.

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in school six months longer than boys; the median leaving school grade in towns under 2,500 population was ten years and three months; the median withdrawal age was seventeen years nine months for boys and seventeen years five months for girls; and that more than 60 per cent of the New York high-school pupils leave school before graduation. They also revealed evidence that the secondary schools tend to be selective by the steady increase in the higher grades of the financial and cultural status of the pupils. Another factor they found in the survey of the drop-out problem was that the school-leaver was in the lower quarter of his class; was below standard in both reading comprehension and arithmetic; and that generally he had few special abilities.²

In an eight-year study of the drop-outs of the Passaic High School, Passaic, New Jersey during the years 1938 to 1946 Holbeck³ found that 45.4 per cent of the pupils left school before they graduated. He interviewed 150 of the drop-outs and tabulated the results of their reasons for leaving school which are listed as follows:

33 wanted to go to work; 21 not interested in school; 17 had to help family; 15 went to vocational school; 14 failed in my subjects; 11 high-school subjects not helpful to me; 10 didn't give what I wanted in school; 10 not encouraged to remain in school.

² Ekert and Marshall, loc. cit.

³ Elmer S. Holbeck, "7 Ways to Help Prevent Drop-outs," The Nations Schools, 44:35-36, May, 1950.

The other 19 pupils listed a great variety of reasons for leaving school. After analyzing the reasons the pupils had given for leaving school Holbeck⁴ stated, "The heart of the trouble is in the curriculum . . . Designed primarily for college preparation . . . Should change to curriculum based on student interest and ability."

The following specific suggestions were made: keep an accurate set of cumulative records; good student accounting; and initiate a thorough testing program to help teachers to understand the students better and enable them to assist in holding the pupils in school. He also advocated more activities in the high school of the type which invite pupil participation. Another recommendation was to get the parents interest and cooperation in the problem of preventing drop-outs.

Meinicke⁵ found that 6 per cent of the total enrollment of the Watertown High School, Watertown, South Dakota left high school before graduation during the years 1946-51. His tabulation of the data gathered from the school records indicated that there was correlation between achievement,

4 Holbeck, loc. cit.

5 Merton L. Meinicke, "A Study of the Drop-outs From the Watertown High School--Grades IX Through XII During the Five Years 1946 to 1951," (unpublished Master's research paper, South Dakota State College, Brookings, South Dakota, 1952), pp. 1-53.

ability, and staying in school. The survey revealed that half of the drop-outs were retarded in school. The retardation was of one or more grades. Other characteristics of the drop-outs indicated by the survey were: overaged; approximately 60 per cent were below average in achievement; and that 23 per cent had an IQ of ninety or less.

In his survey he classified the reasons listed on the school records by advisers for the pupils leaving school and found; that 56 per cent disliked school; 10 per cent had failing grades; 11 per cent left for economic reasons; and the others left school for numerous reasons. The questionnaires sent to the drop-outs indicated that half of them realized the value of an education to a greater extent than they did at the time they left school and consequently would like to return to school and continue their education.

This recommendation was made by Meinicke⁶ in his survey to enable the Watertown High School to improve the holding power of the school: "The guidance personnel of the school must learn to recognize the common symptoms of these pupils who may be potential drop-outs and make every effort to help the pupils understand their problems." He was of the opinion that the school could materially improve its holding power through greater effort and understanding.

6 Meinicke, loc. cit.

Delaney⁷ found in his study of the drop-outs from 1946 to 1950 in the forty Chicago Public High Schools, Chicago, Illinois that 17,592 freshmen entered high school, 10,415 received diplomas, while 7,117 or 41 per cent dropped out. Random sampling was used on 379 of the school-leavers and their cases were investigated by talks with teachers, parents, students, and their employers. He discovered that about 20 per cent left during the freshman year, 40 per cent the second year, 30 per cent the junior year, and 10 per cent the last year. Other data revealed by the investigation indicated poor attendance was a common characteristic of drop-outs. Only 19 per cent of the drop-outs had fair scholarship at the time of leaving and the other 81 per cent were failing in some of their subjects. Many of the drop-outs were not achieving up to their ability because almost half of them had average or better intelligence test scores. He listed the following as contributing factors influencing many of the drop-outs: "over crowded homes, broken family ties, guardianship other than parents, financial problems, and disorganized homes because of the mother working."

A survey of drop-outs by Brewer⁸ conducted with the

7 John F. Delaney, "That Vacant High School Seat," American School Board Journal, 121:21-22, November, 1950.

8 Weldon Brewer, "Why Did They Quit?," The Education Digest, 16:54-55, November, 1950.

aid of classroom teachers in Austin, Texas High Schools, for the fall semester of 1949 provided the following information: reading scores of those who withdraw showed them to be at least a year's achievement behind those students who later graduated from high school. Brewer⁹ found the following factors among the drop-outs in this order of incidence: broken homes; financial needs; low test scores; discouraged over academic progress; and a feeling of not being one of the group.

One study¹⁰, conducted in the schools of Providence, Rhode Island, indicated that there was no relationship between IQs and drop-outs in the school years of 1944-46. They also found that: two thirds of the drop-outs were sixteen years old at the time of leaving; 70.7 per cent dropped before completing the tenth grade; and that there was a strong need for better counseling and a larger and better variety of courses.

In summary we can say that throughout The Review of Literature it has been apparent that no two school drop-out situations are exactly alike. While many characteristics of

9 Brewer, loc. cit.

10 Editorial, "Problem of Drop-outs," American School Board Journal, 115:47, July, 1950, citing "Drop-outs of Senior High Schools", (Report of a study by the Junior Placement Office, Department of Public Schools, Providence, Rhode Island, for the school years 1944-1946.)

The potential drop-outs were revealed in most of the surveys; others found some traits of drop-outs and causes of leaving exactly the opposite of those which were indicated in the survey of another school. This divergence of results indicates that the causes of leaving school before graduation and the characteristics of the potential drop-outs should be investigated by each school staff for its own situation. The factors found and solution, or recommended preventive measures, appropriate to one school situation would not be suitable for all schools.

In as much as the student body of the Fort Yates High School is composed mostly of Indian students many of the similarities revealed by the studies reviewed could not apply to the drop-outs of the high school investigated by this survey. All of the studies reviewed were made in schools with a majority of white students.

SECTION III

RESULTS OF STUDY

Personal Characteristics of the Drop-outs

The total enrollment of the Fort Yates High School for the four-year period studied from 1950 through 1954 was 543 pupils. Out of this number 92 or 16.9 per cent of the pupils dropped out of school during the school years. The number of drop-outs for each school year was consistent except for the year of 1950-51 when about 50 per cent more boys than usual dropped out of school to join the armed forces for the Korean Conflict.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS BY GRADE AND SCHOOL YEAR

School year	Grade level				Total
	9	10	11	12	
1950-51	18	8	4	1	31
1951-52	7	6	8	2	23
1952-53	8	6	1	2	17
1953-54	9	9	2	1	21
Total	42	29	15	6	92

Tables I, II, and III indicate that 45.6 per cent of the drop-outs occurred from grade nine, 31.5 per cent from grade ten, 16.3 per cent from grade eleven, and 6.5 per cent from grade twelve.

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF ALL DROP-OUTS BY AGE AND GRADE

Age	Grade				Total	Per cent
	9	10	11	12		
14	3	0	0	0	3	3.2
15	10	3	0	0	13	14.1
16	12	8	4	1	25	27.1
17	12	13	3	2	30	32.6
18	3	3	2	1	9	9.0
19	1	2	3	1	7	7.6
20	1	0	3	1	5	5.4
Total	42	29	15	6	92	
Per cent	45.6	31.5	16.3	6.5		

The large percentage of drop-outs from grade nine disclose that there is a period of adjustment at this time through which the pupils need guidance. An orientation program to help the pupils become acquainted with their unfamiliar environment and develop a feeling of "belonging" would assist in keeping the potential drop-outs in school.

Another fact revealed by the survey is that 27.1 per cent of the drop-outs leave school at age sixteen and 32.6 per cent leave at age seventeen. These figures indicate that the typical potential drop-out of the Fort Yates High School is either sixteen or seventeen years of age and in either grade nine or ten. There was little relative difference between the age and grade of the potential boy and potential girl drop-outs as indicated by the figures in Table III.

TABLE III
PERCENTAGE BY SEX DROPPING AT EACH GRADE LEVEL

	Grade				Total
	9	10	11	12	
Male					
Number	23	10	4	2	39
Per cent	59.0	25.6	10.3	5.1	
Female					
Number	19	19	11	4	53
Per cent	35.8	35.8	20.8	7.6	
Total					
Number	42	29	15	6	92
Per cent	45.5	31.6	16.4	6.5	
Per cent of four-year enrollment of 543	7.8	5.3	2.7	1.1	16.9

There was a small percentage greater of boys leaving school in grade nine and a slightly larger percentage of girls leaving in grade ten. However in grades eleven and twelve the percentage of girl drop-outs was significantly larger than the percentage of boys of those grades.

Intelligence, Ability and Achievement of Drop-outs

The Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence Tests are administered to all pupils entering the Fort Yates High School either in grade nine or in the grade in which they first enroll in school. The Intelligence Quotient the pupil registered on the test is then recorded on the pupil's cumulative

record. The Intelligence Quotient of the drop-outs were mostly in the normal group with scores ranging from eighty five to one hundred fourteen. Only eleven of the ninety two drop-outs scored below normal and they were in the seventy five to eighty four range. None of the drop-outs had scores in the superior range or above 115.

Table IV indicates 54.3 per cent of the drop-outs were not failing in any subject at the time of leaving school.

TABLE IV

RELATIONSHIP OF IQS OF DROP-OUTS TO NUMBER OF SUBJECTS FAILED

IQ range*	Subjects failing					Total
	None	1	2	3	4	
105-114	4	0	0	0	0	4
95-104	28	6	3	2	1	40
85-94	15	6	11	2	3	37
75-84	3	1	0	3	4	11
Total	50	13	14	7	8	92
Per cent	54.3	14.1	15.2	7.7	8.7	

* Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence Test Scores

The same table reveals that 14.1 per cent of the drop-outs were failing in one subject, 15.2 per cent in two subjects, 7.7 per cent in three subjects, and 8.7 per cent in all four subjects. Some indication of relationship was shown between low Intelligence Quotients and failure in school subjects but it was not as great a relationship as one might expect to find.

According to the scores received by the drop-outs on the Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence Test and the number of subjects failed by the drop-outs about half of the drop-outs were under achieving in their academic work. This indicates a weakness on the part of the school in academic guidance of the pupils.

The tabulation of the reading-grade equivalents that the drop-outs scored on the California Achievement Tests as copied from the cumulative records of the drop-outs in Table V indicates that there is considerable relationship between

TABLE V
COMPARISON OF SCHOOL GRADES WITH READING ABILITY

Reading-grade equivalent range *	Grade placement				Total
	9	10	11	12	
11.0-11.9	0	4	1	1	6
10.0-10.9	0	3	5	3	11
9.0- 9.9	3	6	3	1	13
8.0- 8.0	4	5	5	0	14
7.0- 7.9	13	4	1	1	19
6.0- 6.9	18	7	0	0	25
5.0- 5.9	4	0	0	0	4
Total	42	29	15	6	92
Median	6.0 to 6.9	8.0 to 8.9	9.0 to 9.9	10.0 to 10.9	7.0 to 7.9

* California Achievement Test Scores

reading ability and remaining in school. The median grade-equivalent in reading of the drop-outs by grades was as follows: grade nine 6.0 to 6.9; grade ten 8.0 to 8.9; grade

eleven 9.0 to 9.9; and grade twelve 10.0 to 10.9.

The median reading score of the drop-outs was two years below the national norms in reading ability. This, no doubt, is partially due to the bilingual difficulties since the first language of many of the drop-outs was the Sioux language.

Since reading ability is a fundamental skill necessary for academic success the drop-outs' low scores indicate that more emphasis should be placed on developing reading skills in the program of the Fort Yates High School. It is fair to assume that with the development of greater reading ability there would be fewer failures in academic subjects and correspondingly less drop-outs.

Influence of the School Curriculum on the Holding Power of the School

A survey of the cumulative records of the high-school students at the Fort Yates High School revealed that the number of drop-outs failing in English was twice as large as the number failing in any other single subject. The investigation also indicated that 35.8 per cent of the boys leaving school and 30.2 per cent of the girls dropping out of school were failing in English. This could be expected since they are retarded in reading ability.

Table VI indicates that Arithmetic ranked second in the number of failures and General Science third. These are

all ninth grade subjects. Since most of the drop-outs occur in the ninth and tenth grades the survey does not reveal too accurately how the subjects taken in the eleventh and twelfth-grades ranked.

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS PUPILS WERE
FAILING AT THE TIME OF LEAVING SCHOOL

Subjects failing	Frequency		Per cent		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
English	14	16	35.8	30.2	30
Arithmetic	8	8	20.5	15.1	16
General Science	6	7	15.3	13.2	13
American History	4	6	10.2	11.3	10
Agriculture	8	0	20.5	00.0	8
World History	2	2	5.1	3.8	4
World Geography	2	2	5.1	3.8	4
Social Studies	3	0	7.7	0.0	3
Home Economics	0	3	0.0	5.7	3
Algebra	0	1	0.0	1.9	1
Chemistry	1	0	2.5	0.0	1

Since the curriculum of the Fort Yates High School offers no electives in grades nine and ten and is loaded with a preponderance of academic subjects in which a mastery of the language arts is essential to the success of the pupil, a high ratio of failures among the drop-outs can be expected. Failure causes frustration and consequently drop-outs. There is need to adjust the program of the school to fit the ability, interests, and needs of the pupils.

The strictly academic program prescribed by the State Course of Study is satisfactory for those students who intend

to continue their education beyond high school but the percentage of Fort Yates pupils who continue school after graduation is exceedingly small. Fort Yates High School must equip the graduate to live in this surrounding area without further education.

TABLE VII
PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR
ACTIVITY

Activity	Frequency	
	Boys	Girls
Football	14	0
Basketball	16	0
Track	2	0
Chorus	12	16
Band	2	9
Dramatics	0	0
Journalism	2	5
Clubs	0	0
Class Officers	0	1
Cheer Leader	0	2
Other	0	0
Totals	48	23

Participation of the drop-outs in extracurricular activities was found to be low as is shown by the tabulation in Table VII. Some of the drop-outs took part in more than one activity so the figures tabulated tend to give the impression that more students were active in organizations than actually was the case. Over half of the drop-outs did not enter into any activity. None of the drop-outs participated in dramatics and only one was elected a class officer. The

school athletic program provides much more activity for the boys than the girls have an opportunity to enjoy. These facts indicate that the potential drop-out is not likely to be the active extrovert but rather the inactive introvert.

Home, Environment and Parental Influence on the Holding Power of the School

The investigator found in this survey that 70.6 per cent of the drop-outs were pupils who lived in the dormitory. This indicates that there are some factors in dormitory life with which pupils have adjustment difficulties and some influences that the homes provide which are lacking in dormitory life. Here is an opportunity for guidance and orientation programs to assist in increasing the holding power of the school.

TABLE VIII
DISTRIBUTION OF DROP-OUTS BY HOME CONDITIONS

Home conditions	Frequency	Per cent
Excellent	0	0.0
Good	12	13.0
Fair	50	54.2
Poor	30	32.8

The homes of the drop-outs including those of both the dormitory students and those who live at home are not those which would encourage the pupils to remain in school. Table VIII reveals that according to the ordinary accepted

standards in the United States only 13 per cent of the drop-outs came from good homes. The remaining drop-outs' homes are classified as follows: 54.2 per cent as fair and 32.8 per cent as poor. The investigator was rather generous in his ratings of the homes. If a stricter standard had been followed many more of the homes would have been classified as poor. Very few homes had such things as plumbing and electrecity. Sanitary facilities were those that were more common in this country in the frontiers of this nation as the population moved west. Many of the homes were one-room cabins constructed of logs with large families living, eating and sleeping in the one room.

The martial status of the drop-outs parents was one which does not strengthen the holding power of the school.

TABLE IX

DISTRIBUTION OF THE MARITAL STATUS OF DROP-OUTS PARENTS

Marital status	Frequency	Per cent
Live together	39	42.4
Separated	25	27.2
Father deceased	12	13.0
Mother deceased	13	14.1
Both parents deceased	3	3.3

These facts are shown in Table IX: only 42.4 per cent of the drop-outs' parents live together, 27.2 per cent are separated, 13.0 per cent have deceased fathers, 14.1 per cent have deceased mothers, and 3.3 per cent have both parents deceased.

The average education of the 184 parents of the 92 drop-outs was through grades seven or eight. One parent attended college but did not graduate. Only two parents graduated from high school. On the other hand two parents attended school only through grade three and eighteen did not attend beyond grade six. These figures indicate that the drop-outs are staying in school on a average two years longer than their parents stayed. There seems to be little encouragement from the parents for the drop-outs to stay in school. The parents are not convinced of the value of an education.

TABLE X

DISTRIBUTION OF DEGREE OF INDIAN BLOOD OF DROP-OUTS

Degree of Indian *	Frequency	Per cent
Four-fourths	45	48.9
Three-fourths	22	23.9
One-half	14	15.3
One-fourth	5	5.4
White	6	6.5

* Fractions were rounded-off to the nearest fourth. Less than one-fourth was included with the White as is the policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The greater the percentage of Indian blood the more likely there is to be a bilingual difficulty and a cultural adjustment is indicated by the information tabulated in Table X. There is a greater need for guidance and adjustment in the school situation at Fort Yates for those students who

have a high degree of Indian blood than there is for those of a lesser degree who have been exposed to the culture of the white man for a longer period of time and who use English as their first language. By taking these facts into consideration the school staff can more easily identify the potential drop-out and exercise the necessary guidance to keep him in school.

Reasons Listed on School Records For Pupils Leaving School

The cumulative records of the Fort Yates High School contained the reasons tabulated in Table XI for the drop-outs

TABLE XI

REASONS ON CUMULATIVE RECORDS FOR DROP-OUTS LEAVING SCHOOL

Reason	Frequency
No interest in school	45
Failing in school	24
Trouble with other pupils	19
Trouble with teachers	19
To get married	15
Overage in grade	15
Financial Reasons	13
Trouble with matrons	13
To join armed forces	11
Difficulty at home	10
Ill health	9
Prefer to work	5
Expelled	4
Needed at home	3
No reason given	1
Total for the 92 drop-outs	206

leaving school before graduation. Most drop-outs had sev-

eral reasons for leaving school therefore there are tabulated 206 reasons for ninety-two pupils dropping out of school. Usually the drop-out has not planned on leaving and there is a cumulation of complex reasons which finally cause him to leave. It was questionable as to whether or not the drop-outs gave their actual reasons for leaving school at the time of their departure or whether they hid their real reasons and gave a convenient answer to the question.

The most frequent reason for drop-outs leaving school was "no interest in school". The lack of interest in school was probably due to a complex variety of reasons including the following: school program not being adjusted to the needs and interests of the student, failing in school, lack of orientation, retardation in grade, lack of guidance, low reading ability, and other reasons. "Failing in school" was the second most frequent reason given by the drop-outs for leaving school. Causes of failures are difficult to determine without a thorough study of the student and his problem. Guidance and a testing program would assist in determining the cause of the student failing and would indicate the proper remedial measures to be taken with the individual student. Likewise many of the other reasons for leaving school tabulated in Table XI are those which the high school staff could reduce with a good guidance program, an orientation program, and a testing program. Unfortunately some of the

reasons for leaving school are those which the school has
neither the means nor the authority to remedy.

SECTION IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study revealed that ninety-two pupils dropped out of the Fort Yates High School during the four-year period from 1950 to 1954. Of this number forty-two or 45.6 per cent were in grade nine, twenty nine or 31.5 per cent were in grade ten, fifteen or 16.3 per cent in grade eleven, and six or 6.5 per cent in grade twelve. It was found that the percentage of drop-outs by age was as follows: 32.6 per cent at age seventeen, 27.1 per cent at age sixteen, 13.2 per cent at age fifteen, 9.0 per cent at age eighteen, 7.6 per cent at age nineteen, and 5.4 per cent at age twenty.

The percentage of boys leaving school in grade nine was found to be much larger than the percentage of girls leaving in grade nine. In grades ten and eleven the percentage of girls dropping out was much greater than the boys, and in grade twelve there was little difference in the percentage of each sex leaving school. During the four-year period surveyed the total enrollment of the Fort Yates High School was 543 students. The 92 students who left high school equaled 16.9 per cent of the total enrollment of the high school for the period surveyed. The percentage of drop-outs of the total enrollment of the Fort Yates High School by

grades from 1950 to 1954 was as follows: 7.8 per cent from grade nine, 5.3 per cent from grade ten, 2.7 per cent from grade eleven, and 1.1 per cent from grade twelve.

There has been no significant change in the number of school-leavers in the Fort Yates High School during the past four years. About 15 per cent of the pupils enrolled have dropped out of school during each year. The loss of this number of students each year presents a problem which the school administration should accept as a challenge and attempt to solve in order to improve the services of the school to the community. The attack on this problem must be one of many phases inasmuch as the apparent causes of pupils leaving school are multiple and complex. No single reason can be isolated as to why pupils drop out of the Fort Yates High School. With cooperative planning and action on the part of the entire school staff the school should be able to improve its holding power.

The typical drop-out of the Fort Yates High School leaves school in either grade nine or ten and is 16 or 17 years of age. He is usually retarded at least one year in his grade placement. The retardation may be caused by a single factor or multiple factors such as social adjustment, economic status, community attitude, failure, unadjustable school program, health, and many other reasons. Each case must be taken separately for each is different.

The survey revealed that the average drop-out is of average intelligence. We can not say then that lack of intelligence is the main reason for retardation of the drop-outs. Either they are just not interested enough in the courses offered in the school or some other factor is causing the typical school-leaver to underachieve.

The tabulations in this survey reveal that the average drop-out of the Fort Yates High School was retarded about two years in reading ability for his grade placement in the school. In view of this fact a program of remedial reading should be instituted which would help those who are low in reading ability to overcome this handicap. Reading is a basic skill necessary for success in the academic subjects taught in the school. With greater reading ability there would be fewer failures and therefore fewer frustrated students and consequently the school would increase its holding power.

Almost half of the drop-outs were failing in at least one subject and one-third of the drop-outs were failing in two or more subjects. This would indicate that one of the characteristics of the potential drop-out is that he is failing in his subjects. Twice as many drop-outs were failing in English as in any other single subject. This could be expected in view of the fact that they are retarded two years in reading and because of the direct relationship between English and reading.

The typical drop-out of the Fort Yates High School was a student who did not participate actively in the extra-curricular activities of the school. He was usually an introvert possibly because of a feeling of insecurity and a lack of self-confidence. This feeling of insecurity could be caused by numerous factors influencing the personality and life of the drop-out.

Living in the dormitory together with a large group of students for the first time in his life is a difficult adjustment for many of the drop-outs and other students to make. Family life and group living are very different in their demands upon the individual. This survey indicates that 70.6 per cent of the school-leavers were students who resided in the dormitory whereas the dormitory students made up only 51.3 per cent of the student body of the Fort Yates High School. A good orientation and guidance program should be a considerable help to the new dormitory student in adjusting himself to this new way of life.

Family relations in the homes of the average drop-out were not of the type that give a feeling of confidence and security to the child. Only 42.4 per cent of the drop-outs come from homes where both parents were living together. The fact that the parents were living together is no indication that the family relations was one in which the children would receive the love and affection necessary to make well

adjusted personalities.

The survey revealed that the average drop-out had already remained in school longer than his parents. Perhaps this is due to greater enforcement of the compulsory school attendance law. From the investigator's observations in this community he would say that the citizens of the community in general are not convinced of the value of an education. We as educators must sell the parents on a value of an education by concrete evidence and proof illustrating this value through examples we can locate in the surrounding area.

The survey showed a direct relationship between the degree of Indian blood and the tendency to drop out of school. In the investigator's opinion it is impossible to claim that the degree of Indian blood was the determining factor but it is possible to state that cultural adjustments and language handicaps of the full-bloods are greater thereby giving the false impression that the percentage of Indian blood was a determining factor in the Fort Yates High School drop-out problem.

Many of the drop-outs gave "no interest in school" as their reason for dropping out of school. This could be caused by many factors including such things as failure, social adjustment, financial problems, and health. The reasons listed by the students for leaving school are very likely not the actual reasons but rather a convenient answer to the question.

In the other investigations of the drop-out problems in other schools which are summarized in the Review of Literature of this study the reasons found for students leaving school before graduation were found to be complex and multiple. Very seldom was it possible to prove that a single difficulty caused a pupil to leave school. This survey has shown that this is also the case with the drop-outs of the Fort Yates High School.

Recommendations

Having assembled these data and studied the tables carefully as to the facts and reasons--also having read other studies dealing with drop-outs and also from my experience as a teacher and an administrator in Indian and public schools the following recommendations would seem to me to be justified and practical. If conscientiously applied by the administrators, teachers, and other members of the staff of the Fort Yates High School they would make a vast improvement in the holding power of the school.

1. A good basic testing program should be placed in the school in order that the staff will have this technical assistance to help them understand the problems of the individual student better and thereby be able through this better understanding to give more intelligent personal and educational guidance. The following tests should be considered the minimum program: intelligence tests, aptitude tests, interest inventory, diagnostic achievement tests in the basic skills, and a personality adjustment test. The information acquired through the testing program

should be entered on the cumulative records along with the school records and be made available to those members of the staff that have contact with the student. This information along with personal observations by the staff members should enable them to handle any problems of the students with more sympathy and understanding.

2. There is a definite need to institute a program of remedial reading for those students who are shown to be below standard in reading ability by the diagnostic reading-achievement tests. The remedial reading program should be operated under the direction of a teacher who has had professional training in remedial reading so that the program will function with maximum efficiency. Remedial reading is a specialty in the teaching field although administrators without training in reading methods often fail to realize this fact and consequently their good intentions result in unremunerative efforts.

3. The curricular offering of the school should be made flexible so that adjustments may be made to fit the needs of the students and the program should recognize individual differences. The Fort Yates High School should not operate an institution designed primarily for college preparation. Likewise we should not try to make farmers or ranchers out of all the students. The program should be responsive to the interests, aptitudes, and needs of the pupils and equip them for life.

4. Every possible effort should be made by the entire staff to identify the potential drop-outs early so the adjustments necessary to hold them in school can be made in time. The student with a problem needs assistance and guidance in order to understand his problems and adjust himself to the situation.

5. A complete orientation program should be placed in operation which will help the new students become acquainted with their new environment and develop a feeling of belonging as early as possible after enrollment. A Big Brother and a Big Sister organization would be a step in this direction. They would assist in the process of orienting new students and make them feel that this is a friendly school. Another step in this direction would be to develop an extra-curricular program that would invite the participa-

tion of all the students with adequate facilities for each activity.

6. The teachers should not be overloaded to the extent that they find it impossible to find time to give the necessary extra individual assistance and guidance to students that is so vital in developing good teacher-pupil relationship.

7. The school must sell the parents, community, and students on the value of an education. This can only be done by producing actual evidence illustrating the value of an education. This is essential in order to develop parent and community cooperation in solving the drop-out problem. Compulsory attendance legislation alone will not develop a wholesome attitude of the students, parents or other citizens toward the school and education.

8. There is a necessity for a follow-up program on drop-outs to try to get them back in school. Frequently after the school-leaver has been out of school for a while he is sorry he did not remain in school and graduate. A little encouragement on the part of the school may bring the drop-out back into school to continue and graduate.

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