

A DROPOUT STUDY AT WEST

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by

WILLIAM LEON SALONEN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation was to determine educational implications through an intensive study of three case studies. The case studies were constructed after the three boys dropped out of school.

The case histories involved three eighth grade boys who quit school during the year 1967-68. Procedures used to collect the data were: interviews with the students; arrangement and conduct of home interviews with the parents of the students; an extensive study of the health records, permanent records and cumulative folders; interviews with the school nurse; and interviews with the juvenile and probationary authorities.

Educational implications were drawn involving the student, parents and the school. No recommendations or conclusions were made in this study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School dropouts are the concern of everyone, from government to industry, educator to parent, and society to the student. The opportunity for education in the United States is supreme. No where in the world today can the leaders of tomorrow find an education so readily available. Why then, at a time in history when education can do so much for the individual, is the dropout rate so exceedingly high? What factors, conditions, and problems are so intense that the student conceives himself to be better off by quitting school rather than continuing towards educational goals which can mean greater success in later life?

This country needs to examine the dropout problem in the schools very closely. The labor market and the economy of the nation are currently suffering from inflation and high unemployment figures. School dropouts are a causation in part of this dilemma. More information is necessary so that proper guidelines and procedures can be constructed. This information must come from dropouts, clinical sources, and all other media of work associated with school dropouts. This study of three dropouts at West Junior High School is being conducted with the intent of furthering this area of study.

This is a study of three students, who were dropouts during the school year 1967-68, at West Junior High School, Great Falls,

Montana. The study attempted to analyze and answer some of the questions concerning the dropout problem by construction of individual case studies on these dropouts. The three students involved in this study were interviewed, records extensively examined, teachers and nurses recommendations evaluated, family background thoroughly investigated and juvenile and probationary officers interviewed, to provide as complete as possible a collection of facts for each dropout. Implications for education of these and similar students were drawn.

Chapter II contains the review of literature related to characteristics of school dropouts, symptoms of school dropouts, differences between delinquents and dropouts, motivational forces prompting students to drop out of school, and employment outlook for dropouts. Chapter III is a presentation of three intensive case studies of students who dropped out of school during their eighth grade year.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The Research Division of the National Education Association (2) in 1960 listed some characteristics about the dropout. The average dropout was sixteen years old and often had been marking time, waiting to reach the age when he could legally quit school. He was most likely to quit between the ninth and tenth, or between the tenth and eleventh, grades and would not return after a summer's vacation.

As a rule, the dropout had shunned participation in extra-curricular activities and had failed to become a part of a social group within the school. Usually his relationship with his teachers and with many of his fellow students indicated tension, suspicion and strain. His poor attendance record, lack of interest, and failure to cooperate had contributed to his being retarded by about two years. Normally the student had been retained once or twice at different grade levels.

The dropout's parents were unimpressed with the value of an education. Often they ridiculed and scorned the educational process within the school. In addition, the family was likely to regard school as a financial burden. There was the cost of keeping the children in school and the family was deprived of the money which the boy or girl could have been contributing to the budget.

Williams (8) in 1961 conducted a survey on 13,715 dropouts from the Maryland Public Schools for the State Department of Education. In his study, Williams found no evidence to support the idea that most dropouts were delinquent children and that dropouts were not necessarily homeless or the product of broken homes. It was found that more males dropped out than females, normally in their sixteenth year, and that more than half had been retained once. The dropouts were retarded in reading and arithmetic ability, and had low intelligence quotient (IQ) scores. Students were living with both parents in seventy per cent of the cases and with one parent in eighty per cent of the cases. Williams did find that seventy per cent of the mothers and eighty per cent of the fathers, of the dropouts, had never completed high school themselves. The dropouts cited a lack of interest and success in school as the two major reasons for quitting school.

One of the significant aspects of the study was the educational background of the parents. Parental attitudes, according to the study, have had an influence on the children concerning their acceptance or rejection of school.

Miller (4), in his study of the dropout problem, saw the student leaving school for several reasons. Home life, attitudes towards school, socio-economic status, and school progress were listed as major factors for quitting school. Common symptoms among the dropouts were reading retardation, failure of a grade, low IQ, and marked

absenteeism. Employment studies between the dropout and the graduate showed a definite factor for more occupations, shorter periods of employment, and longer periods of unemployment for the dropout as compared to the graduate. Miller reported that there was a relation of lower class culture and juvenile delinquency associated with the dropout.

In both studies by Williams and Miller, there was a definite relationship among the backgrounds of the dropouts. Home life, social status, and parental education were common factors which played a role in assisting the dropouts to reach a decision.

It was interesting when Schreiber (6) in his research study emphatically stated that it would be an injustice to both the dropout and the delinquent to equate them. Schreiber stated that there were more dropouts than delinquents and while the delinquents were usually dropouts, the large majority of school dropouts were not, and never become, delinquents. Studies conducted in Seattle and Rochester by Schreiber supported findings in that area. The study showed that both dropout and delinquency occur most frequently among the populations which comprise the lower, and lowest, elements of the society. Factors influencing the dropout were retardation, grade retention, negative self image, and family attitude. Schreiber felt that better guidance and counseling for the students and the parents would generally improve the dropout situation.

Schreiber in his study brought out an important point when he compared the delinquent and the dropout, although he did not equate them. Further study was cited as being necessary before generalized statements associated with juvenile delinquency and school dropouts could be made.

Strom (7) studied many of the factors involved with quitting school. Strom felt that family tendencies greatly influenced the student when decisions, regarding school, had to be made. As a result of the family lower socio-economic conditions and prevalent broken homes, many adolescents had chosen the wrong, rather than the right, road to success. Lack of encouragement, incentive, and drive from the home and the parents caused the student to have a negative attitude towards school.

According to Strom, parents play an important part in the decision making process that any child goes through. The parents must not make the decision for the child. The child needs to make the decision and assume the responsibility for that decision.

In two studies of dropouts in the State of Illinois there were some significant findings. According to Lichter, Rapien, Seibert, and Sklansky (3) in their study of dropouts and under-achievers amongst Chicago youngsters, they noted that knowledge about adolescents and their school problems was of paramount importance. This clinical study revealed "identification" of potential dropouts as

a significant factor in helping the students. After identification, proper assistance could be employed to try and prevent the student from withdrawing from school. Case studies cited repeated examples where clinical treatment failed because identification of the potential dropout was too late. In almost all cases these students then become dropouts.

Lichter and associates (3) in their study showed that early identification of potential dropouts was necessary. The reviewer agreed that the earlier the identification, the greater the chance for assisting the potential dropout.

Bowman and Matthews (1) conducted a survey to determine what motivates youth to leave school. Dropouts in the Quincy Public Schools were interviewed after dropping out of school. Reasons given by the dropouts for discontinuing were that they could not see education as a means to practical ends, that they did not value education in itself, and that they felt rejected by the school. The dropouts left school at ages ranging from fourteen to eighteen and as early as the seventh grade. The study revealed that these dropouts were consistent with many others in other studies so far as IQ, social status, progress in school, and other factors were concerned.

Studies conducted by different agencies and authors have found that employment opportunities were not as adequate for the dropout as they were for the graduate. Schiffman (5) in 1963 conducted a labor force study on graduates and dropouts of the 1962

class. Information was geared to unemployment, part-time work, and occupations of those employed. The study showed that the dropout was in a much less favorable position within the labor market, as compared to the high school graduate. Periods of unemployment were greater for the dropout and stability of occupation was also less. With automation in industry, the dropouts' chances of continued employment were being lessened. Dropouts were employed in the areas of harder work, longer hours, and less pay. Advancement opportunities were less for the dropout as compared to the graduate.

This study, along with the others that have been used as background material, indicate certain trends, actions, attitudes, and feelings that the dropout has in regards to school and his chances for success in later life. This next study will summarize much of what has been presented in the area of dropouts.

The Research Division of the National Education Association (2) in 1960 examined the dropout problem in the schools of the nation and found the following facts: 1) that only slightly more than half of all the fifth grade pupils finish high school; 2) persons lacking a high school diploma were the first to feel the results of the diminishing demand for unskilled labor and were at a disadvantage during times of high unemployment; 3) juvenile delinquency was ten times more frequent among dropouts than among high school graduates; 4) to keep the youth in school, attention had to be focused on a meaningful curriculum, enlightened guidance effort, and a program of financial aid; 5) generally the dropouts have lower IQ's than the

high school graduates; 6) difficulty in reading in the early grades, magnified in the later grades making the work almost impossible for the students; 7) the students believed that the curriculum did not help them, and that they were wasting their time; 8) extracurricular activities were available for the potential dropouts, but normally they did not participate; 9) financial needs and pressure exerted by the parents many times forced the student into quitting school; 10) the school had to recognize that each child should receive the type of training and education best suited for their needs as an adult; 11) the guidance program played a critical part in identifying potential dropouts and initiated a program to keep those students in school.

In summary, the dropout problem is one of concern for everyone. There are numerous reasons why every student should stay in school, as we have just reviewed. It must be a combined effort on the part of many if the problem is going to be improved.

Chapter III outlines the educational, juvenile, and family history of each of three dropouts.

CHAPTER III

THREE CASE STUDIES

West Junior High School is one of three Junior High Schools in Great Falls, Montana, a city of some 80,000 inhabitants. Located on the west side of the Missouri River, West Junior first opened the doors of education in 1951. The initial enrollment of 600 students has grown to an overcrowded 1,100 students for last year. This enrollment figure also caused the Junior High Schools within the city to shift ninth grade students. Socio-economic backgrounds of all classes are represented within the student body.

During the school year 1967-68, nine students dropped out of school at West Junior High School. One was in seventh grade, four in eighth, and four in ninth. The seventh grade student was a fourteen year old girl who quit school to get married. In the eighth grade, three boys and one girl quit school. (The three boys are the subjects of this study.) The eighth grade girl was dropped for non-attendance reasons. At the ninth grade level, two boys and two girls dropped out of school. The two boys and one of the girls were all age sixteen, and were dropped for non-attendance; the other girl was withdrawn at the parents' request, at age fifteen.

In addition to the nine students who quit school, there were three students who terminated their schooling on a temporary basis. One student had to leave school during the last month due to medical

reasons, but will be in attendance next year. The two other students left school as a result of probationary custody and confinement. These students continued their schooling at institutions within the state.

From the dropout list at West Junior High School for the school year 1967-68, the three eighth grade boys were selected for this study as a result of personal interest by this investigator. As an instructor, guidance counselor, and administrator the investigator had become more closely associated with these three boys than with any of the other dropouts for the school year.

Procedures used in the collection of data for writing the case studies were: 1) interviews with students to become familiar with their reasons for quitting school; 2) arrangement and conduct of home interviews with parents of students to record necessary family background material; 3) extensive study of pertinent health records, permanent records, and cumulative folder information; 4) interviews with the school nurse about the family life and problems of students; and 5) interviews with juvenile and probationary authorities to gain their recorded information for each boy.

Fictitious names are used throughout this study to protect the true identity of the individuals, who were dropouts.

CASE STUDY ONE

Early school years. John Smith, youngest in a family of six children, lived with his mother, a divorcee of eight years, at their family home in a lower socio-economic neighborhood. They lived on welfare, \$130 a month, provided by Cascade County. John's sister, Betty Jones, and her son Tom, age four, also lived at the family home. Mr. Jones died in a fire in a previous family home in January of 1964. The remaining Smith children were all married and had families.

Educationally, none of the Smith children had gone beyond the ninth grade. Both parents had quit school during or after the eighth grade.

John Smith received his education, grade one through grade six, within six elementary schools in Great Falls. He began his educational process August 31, 1959, at Franklin Grade School. During that year, John transferred schools twice. He first moved on February 16, 1960, to Whittier School; and then on February 23, 1960, he transferred back to Franklin School.

First grade records indicate that John was credited with 142 days present and 25 days absent. Three letter grades recorded were arithmetic "D", reading "D", and writing "C". School records also noted that he was very slow in his work, untidy at times, attendance and health were good, and that his mother did not come for a conference.

During first grade his mother and father were divorced. Effects of the divorce on John could not be measured or reconstructed.

Before the end of the second grade at Franklin School, John moved three times, and he enrolled in four different schools. On October 25, 1960, he left Franklin and enrolled in Largent School. On January 11, 1961, he left Largent and enrolled at Longfellow School. On February 9, 1961, he left Longfellow and entered Collins School, where he completed the second grade. Reasons given for each change in school were "moving to a different home".

John was given credit for $168\frac{1}{2}$ days present in second grade and $23\frac{1}{2}$ days absent. Letter grades received were arithmetic "D", language "C", reading "D", science "C", social studies "D", spelling "C-", and writing "C". School records noted that John had moved so often that he had difficulty in school, was often extremely dirty, did average and below work, that his mother was on welfare and was having a great deal of difficulty, could do better with some encouragement from home, needed regular attendance, was sweet and very polite, and that his reading and writing improved considerably toward the latter part of the year.

During the year John was given the Lorge Thorndike Intelligence Test. His IQ was 75, indicating a slow learner.

The third grade started for John on September 5, 1961, at Largent School. On September 27, 1961, he transferred to Franklin School and completed the school year there.

Attendance records for John showed 133 days present and 45 days absent. Grades received were arithmetic "D", language "D", reading "D", science "C-", social studies "C-", spelling "C", and writing "C". School records noted that he was very unclean, had poor economy and parent cooperation, had missed too much school, and was polite and well behaved.

The records indicated no reason for the excessive absence from school other than the indication that the family situation was less than satisfactory.

For the first time since John began school, he finished an entire grade at one school, he completed fourth grade at Franklin School. In fourth grade John improved his attendance record with 145 days present and 35 days absent. Grades recorded for all subjects were "D's", except for spelling, "C-". The school records continued with the same type of descriptive comments.

John was administered the Iowa Basic Skills test that year. The results showed that he was deficient by one year and more in basic skill areas. As a result of John's academic work, the school decided to retain him at the fourth grade. Records indicated fifth grade promotion was not advisable at that time.

On June 24, 1963, John was questioned by officers of the juvenile department concerning the theft of some hubcaps from the Westside Iron Works. No punitive action or further investigation was necessary.

The fourth grade (second time) began at Franklin School. On January 9, 1964, John transferred to Valley View School (as a result of a fire which destroyed the family home and took the life of Jack Jones, John's brother-in-law). On February 3, 1964, he returned to Franklin School where he completed the fourth grade.

John was present $158\frac{1}{2}$ days and absent $22\frac{1}{2}$, an improvement from the previous two years. Grades recorded were arithmetic "C", language "C-", reading "D", science "D", social studies "D", spelling "C", and writing "C-". School records noted that John came to school dirty and unkept, that he was a low achiever, had poor attendance, and that he seemed to lack energy and interest. One additional comment was interesting:

"John did average work and even above the first four months of school. He was a good citizen and a happy boy. In January, John's house was burned and he transferred to Valley View. That fire took the life of his brother-in-law, Jack Jones. In February, he returned to Franklin with a changed attitude. He has not been trying and he is constantly interrupting the class by bothering others. I know John can do fourth grade work, however, his achievement up to date is below grade level and this is his second year in grade four."

John had standardized test results from that year. Lorge Thorndike indicated an IQ of 89. The composite score of the Iowa Basic was 3.3 for grade 4.5 (second time).

John attended the fifth grade at Franklin School and for the second time since he started school, there were no moves during the school year. Two records show John improving at school in subject grades and attendance.

Days present were 167 and days absent 13. Grades were arithmetic "C", language "D", reading "C-", science "D", social studies "C-", spelling "B", and writing "B". School records noted that his attendance was much improved, that he tried hard, was a poor achiever, was improving in handwriting, and that he had a poor family situation.

Records show that standardized test results were Lorge Thorndike IQ 89, and Iowa Basic composite score of 3.8 for grade level 5.5.

It was also noted that Mrs. Smith came to school for a parent conference on April 30, 1965. The teacher's comment concerning the conference was that Mrs. Smith did not seem interested in anything she was told about John.

The sixth grade was started at Franklin School. On October 22, 1965, John was questioned by juvenile authorities relative to a bicycle that was missing. No action was taken against John and the case was discontinued.

On January 5, 1966, John transferred to Valley View School, and on January 31, 1966, he returned to Franklin where he completed the sixth grade.

Continued improvement in attendance was recognized with 164 days present and 11 days absent. Grades were arithmetic "C-", language "D", reading "C-", science "D", social studies "D", spelling "B-", and writing "B". School records noted that he had good

attendance, was achieving low but could do better, and that he had a satisfactory family situation.

Iowa Basic test results showed a composite score of 4.7 for grade 6.5.

Absence for the year was less than ever before. His family life was listed as satisfactory. Educational tests indicated he was almost two years behind in basic skills.

Later school years. On September 6, 1966, John entered West Junior High School as a seventh grade student. From a one room, one teacher elementary education, John now faced multiple rooms, over 1,000 students, and several faculty members.

On October 13, 1966, John received the Otis Intelligence Test. He was 13 years, 11 months old at that time. Results showed an IQ of 90.

Throughout the school year unsatisfactory work slips were issued to students who were not doing acceptable classroom work. John received slips in most of his classes. The slips were taken home by the student, signed by the parents, and returned to the respective counselors. No parental contact to the school was made concerning John. The school nurse made the only contact to the home. John continued to do poor academic work throughout the school year despite attempts by his teachers and counselor to assist him. His attitude was normally negative towards school and learning. Continued efforts were exerted to assist John, but all failed.

John participated in the seventh grade wrestling program, the only extra-curricular activity for him during that year.

Student failure meetings were held by the faculty prior to spring dismissal of school. Social promotions and retentions were discussed. John was given a social promotion into the eighth grade by his teachers. The faculty felt John would not benefit from repeating the seventh grade.

Final marks on John's report card were arithmetic "F", English "F", science "D-", social studies "F", spelling "C-", art "C", French "D", music "F", physical education "C" and library "F". Attendance for the year was 152 days present and 29 days absent.

On August 15, 1967, John was questioned by the juvenile authorities about a swimming suit at Mitchell Pool. No record of punitive action was recorded.

John started the eighth grade at West Junior High School on September 5, 1967. Absence and truancy were evident early in the school year. Cooperation from the home was negative. More absence was noted. The Welfare Office was notified of John's excessive absence. He would attend briefly after each notification. John's counselor attempted home visitations with no results. The school nurse visited the home, but attempts to have John return to school failed. Periodic attendance continued to get worse. Every effort made to get John back into school ended negatively. On January 25, 1968, John requested a transfer to St. Joseph Catholic School. He

was checked out with 18 days present, 60 days absent, and 23 days dropped for the first semester.

On January 31, 1968, John re-enrolled at West Junior High School. Attendance efforts were non-existent. On March 29, 1968, John Smith was officially dropped from the enrollment. John's mother requested the withdrawal. The destination of John was unknown. The final checkout card for John had 10 days present, 19 days absent, and 20 days dropped. Grades received were all "F's".

Summary of case study. Education always had difficult obstacles in the Smith family: parents had quit school at the eighth grade and five Smith children before John had quit school before the tenth grade.

Moving during the elementary years was excessive. Absence from school was normally high with 45 days recorded during the third grade.

Divorce of the father and mother occurred when John was a first grader, and may have had early effects.

Death of a brother-in-law could have had implications. According to records, John was doing satisfactorily in school prior to that death.

Cooperation from the home was indicated as either non-existent and/or poor. (Perhaps without encouragement from his home, John was unable to develop needed motivation to succeed in school.)

Standardized test results always indicated below grade level

performance. John was always reported as polite and well behaved, was well liked, tried hard in elementary school, but achieved low.

CASE STUDY TWO

Early school years. Steve Roberts, third oldest in a family of four children, lived with his parents at the family residence in west Great Falls.

Mr. Roberts was employed by the Great Northern Railroad as a car repairman. Length of employment has been twenty-five years. Mrs. Roberts has never worked and was a house wife.

Steve has an older brother, Jim, who was in the Navy and an older sister, Sally, who lived at home and was not employed, and a younger sister who was in elementary school.

Both parents terminated their schooling at early ages. Mrs. Roberts quit before she finished the tenth grade while Mr. Roberts quit school when he was in the sixth grade.

The two oldest Roberts children quit school. Jim did not complete the tenth grade and Sally began the ninth and withdrew.

Steve started his education on September 2, 1958, at Franklin School when he entered Kindergarten. No subject grades were given students at that level. School records note that he was fair in attendance, health and achievement. Attendance recorded was 166 days present and 17 days absent. Steve was advanced to the first grade.

Steve entered the first grade at Franklin School on September 6, 1959. During November, same year, his mother was notified that Steve was progressing normally. December, same year, progress slowed because of Steve's colds and his not feeling well. On January 15, 1960, Steve withdrew from school and moved to Cascade, Montana. Grades received were language "C", reading "D", and writing "C". His attendance was $86\frac{1}{2}$ days present and $5\frac{1}{2}$ days absent.

No record was available on Steve from the check out date until he entered school again at Sunnyside School to begin the third grade, on September 5, 1961. On October 10, 1961, Steve withdrew from Sunnyside and enrolled at Longfellow School. Records show that Steve experienced difficulties during the year. Parent teacher conferences were held several times. Mrs. Roberts attended the conferences. On November 16, 1961, the mother was informed that Steve was not reading up to grade level and his number combinations were slow. Thought problems were hard as a result of reading difficulty. His mother expressed concern over impatience with children by their father. Problems continued throughout the year and Steve was designated to repeat third grade. Grades recorded were arithmetic "D", language "D", reading "F", spelling "F", and writing "B". Attendance was $166\frac{1}{2}$ days present and $13\frac{1}{2}$ days absent. School records showed a very understanding and cooperative mother, that Steve writes well, but wasted his time and wouldn't try to learn.

Steve started the third grade (second time) at Longfellow School. Mrs. Roberts dropped in several times and inquired about

Steve. Conferences were scheduled but Mrs. Roberts was always unable to attend. Steve's attitude improved. His reading was still difficult, phonics poor, and interest span short. Grades received were arithmetic "C", language "D", reading "D", spelling "D", and writing "C". Attendance was 145 days present and 35 days absent. School records showed he was absent too much, weak in phonic skills and reading, tended to have a grudge against the world, resented being corrected at times, and family life seemed unsatisfactory. Steve was promoted to grade four.

Steve began the fourth grade at Longfellow School. On November 4, 1963, he returned to Cascade, Montana. On April 7, 1964, Steve returned to Great Falls and enrolled at McKinley School where he completed the fourth grade.

Grades received from McKinley School at the end of the year were arithmetic "D", language "A", reading "D", science "D", social studies "D", spelling "D", and writing "C". Attendance recorded in all three schools showed $136\frac{1}{2}$ days present, and $22\frac{1}{2}$ days absent and 17 days dropped. School records note that he didn't like school, had glasses, but wouldn't wear them, resented correction, and tended to visit with neighbors.

First indication of standardized test was recorded during his fourth grade year. The Iowa Basic Skills test showed grade level as 4.8, and a composite score of 3.7.

Steve was advanced to the fifth grade. He began at McKinley

School, and on December 2, 1964, Steve enrolled at Russell School where he completed the fifth grade.

Grades received were arithmetic "B", language "D", reading "D", science "D", social studies "D", spelling "D", and writing "C". Attendance was $163\frac{1}{2}$ days present, and $16\frac{1}{2}$ days absent. Recorded comments were good attendance, very quiet and shy, poor economic family situation, doesn't do work, and has told teachers "that he hated school".

Standardized test results showed Lorge Thorndike Intelligence test an IQ of 87, and Iowa Basic revealed grade level 5.5 with a composite of 4.1.

Steve began the sixth grade at Russell School. On January 12, 1966, he moved and enrolled at McKinley School.

Composite grades received were arithmetic "C", language "D", reading "D", science "D", social studies "D", spelling "D", and writing "C". Attendance was $137\frac{1}{2}$ days present, and $43\frac{1}{2}$ days absent. Noted comments were that of poor attendance (headaches and stomach aches--mother writes excuses for all), Steve tends to be sarcastic and smart to peers, and he is a poor student.

Iowa Basic test results were grade level 6.5, and a composite score of 4.8. Each skill area was deficient by more than one year and two months or greater. Steve was promoted to the seventh grade.

Later school years. On September 6, 1966, Steve entered Paris Gibson Junior High School. Records indicated Steve experienced difficulty at school when he attended. Excessive absence was recorded and grades were poor.

On September 27, 1966, Steve was questioned by the juvenile authorities concerning possession of a stolen bicycle. No punitive action was taken.

On October 18, 1966, Steve was given the Otis Intelligence test. Results showed an IQ of 88. His age at that time was 13 years and 10 months. Steve continued to experience academic problems during the school year. Absence from school was noted.

On April 20, 1967, Steve was apprehended by the juvenile authorities regarding the charge of forgery. On April 25, 1967, he was placed on probation by the authorities.

There was no change throughout the school year of 1966-67, and Steve finished with grades as follows: arithmetic "F", English "F", French "F", science "F", social studies "F", spelling "F", art "F", industrial arts "D", library "D-", physical education "C", and health "F". Attendance was $97\frac{1}{2}$ days present and $81\frac{1}{2}$ days absent. School records noted Steve was a poor student in most subjects, but that he did well in Math, was absent most of the time, was truant and ill often, and caused trouble in the classroom. Steve was a social promotion to the eighth grade.

On August 5, 1967, Steve was questioned by the juvenile authorities for information purposes only.

On September 5, 1967, Steve enrolled at West Junior High School. He had 2 days absence on September 11th and 12th. From September 14th to the 28th Steve was truant from school. Indications were that he

Steve's counselor and the school nurse made home visitations. The parents were cooperative and willing to assist the school, but Steve still did not attend school regularly.

Steve was interviewed by the Assistant Principal on November 22, 1967, about a classroom incident, and placed on probationary status.

On December 5, 6, 1967, Steve was seen by the Assistant Principal for misbehavior in class. He was given detention time after school.

Continued efforts by teachers, counselor, and the nurse failed to assist Steve with his problems. Absence continued. His parents were invited for a conference. They pointed out that there were problems at home and in school. The parents said "that Steve would not get out of bed and go to school". Indications were parents could not control Steve.

His parents were called by the school and asked for a conference again on January 22, 1968. The counselor and Assistant Principal met with the parents. The main concern was Steve would not go to school. There were no changes regarding Steve for the remainder of the school year. Absence continued, and on May 15, 1968, Steve was officially dropped for non-attendance reasons.

All grades were recorded as "F's". Attendance records showed 40 days present and 128 days absent. Destination of Steve was unlisted.

Summary of case study. The parental education level was low as the mother had quit school during the tenth grade and the father had quit during the sixth grade. Both older siblings had also quit school.

Movement was excessive and absence was high throughout the educational years.

There was an early indication of deficient basic skill knowledge and by the fourth grade Steve had a composite score of 3.7 for grade level 4.8.

Steve had a dislike for school, resented correction, seemed to have a grudge against the world, wouldn't wear his glasses, and had told the teachers "he hated school".

In later years standardized tests continued to show Steve as a slow learner and more deficient in basic skills. Juvenile delinquency began and absence from school was outstanding. Normally the mother would write excuses for Steve concerning his absence. Steve was a social promotion to the eighth grade.

There was questionable parental control as well as truancy and excessive absence until his schooling was terminated.

CASE STUDY THREE

Early school years. Ronald Black lived with his mother and step-father at the family home, located in West Great Falls, approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from West Junior High School.

Mr. White was employed as a construction electrician and had often, due to his employment, been away from the family home. He had a high school education. Mrs. White was a house wife and had quit school during the tenth grade to get married.

Ronald, age 15, and his sister, Mary, age 14, were Mrs. White's children through her first marriage. John, age 14, and his sister, Joan, age 12, were Mr. White's children through his first marriage. The Whites have been married for eleven years.

Records on Ronald's initial education (grades one and two) were not available. Ronald began the third grade on September 6, 1962, at McKinley School in Great Falls. Records showed Ronald had repeated twice at earlier grades and was not progressing at the third grade level. Difficulty existed in the basic skills.

Grades received for the third grade were arithmetic "F", language "F", reading "F", spelling "F", and writing "F". Attendance was $175\frac{1}{2}$ days present and $4\frac{1}{2}$ days absent. Related comments were attendance good, poor family situation, poor social adjustment, low achiever, has already repeated twice, short attention span, and very nervous.

A parent teacher conference was held on October 10, 1962. Mrs. White was informed that Ronald was doing failing work, but she appeared not to be concerned. His mother told the teacher that "Ronald was well disciplined at home by his step-father". Teacher comments were "Mrs. White was a hard person to talk with".

Standardized test results on the Lorge Thorndike showed an IQ of 81. Ronald was a social promotion to grade four. Records were not available on Ronald on his fourth grade education.

Grade five, school year 1964-65, was at the Fifth Ward School in Washington, Pennsylvania. Grades and attendance were the only records obtainable. Grades received were arithmetic "D-", English "F", geography "F", history "D-", health-science "D", reading "D", spelling "F", music "D", art "D", writing "C-", and manual arts "D". Attendance was 171 days present and 9 days absent. Ronald received unsatisfactory marks in dependability and good work habits. Satisfactory marks were received in being courteous. School records indicate that Ronald was placed in the sixth grade.

On September 7, 1965, Ronald began the sixth grade at McKinley School in Great Falls. Indications were that Ronald continued to experience academic failure and was very deficient in the basic skill areas.

On September 22, 1965, Ronald was involved in a burglary of an antique shop. He was reprimanded and warned, and afterward reported each week to the juvenile authorities.

Ronald's grades for sixth grade were arithmetic "F", language "F", reading "F", science "F", social studies "F", spelling "F", and writing "F". Attendance was $170\frac{1}{2}$ days present and $10\frac{1}{2}$ days absent. Related comments indicated that attendance was good, great admirer of the "Beatles"--wanted to live in England, won't salute the American

Flag, working at about the third and fourth grade level, not reliable, discipline problem, and low economic status.

Standardized test results were Lorge Thorndike showed an IQ of 88. The teacher was unable to get the parents to the school for a conference. Ronald was listed as a social promotion to the seventh grade.

Later school years. On September 6, 1966, Ronald entered Paris Gibson Junior High School. Indications were that he had difficulty academically, and that he was a discipline problem.

On October 18, 1966, Ronald took the Otis Intelligence test. His chronological age was 13 years and 11 months. Results revealed an IQ of 84, consistent with previous tests.

On November 1, 1966, Ronald was involved in a home burglary. He was reprimanded and warned. In addition, he was to spend some time in jail. Ronald continued to have difficulty in school. Truancy and discipline problems were recorded. On November 30, 1966, he was suspended from school for smoking in the lavatory.

On January 4, 1967, Ronald was referred to and seen by the psychometrist in the public school system. Tests administered Ronald were the Welscher Intelligence Scale for Children and the Wide Range Achievement Test. Results of the W.I.S.C. were that he is functioning within the "dull normal" range, verbal IQ 85, performance IQ 89, and full scale IQ 85. Results of the W.R.A.T. were reading grade 5.6, spelling grade 3.0, and arithmetic grade 3.4.

Recommendations noted were that unless the family accepts the fact that they need help, little could be accomplished. Because of Ronald's anti-socialness, and rebellion within school, prognostically the outlook was poor. On January 20, 1967, an interpretation of the report was made to the mother, Mrs. White.

On February 6, 1967, Ronald White was the case discussion at a meeting of the Special Education Staff Personnel in Great Falls. Recorded information by the school nurse was dislikes school, poor personal hygiene, does not relate well with peers, and seemed to be inconsistency of discipline at home. School principal's comments were little comprehension or motivation, interests are girls and his "group"--a guitar playing group, leaves school intermittently during the day and returns, continual disruptive element in the classroom, and not well co-ordinated. Ronald's counselor stated that "he has kept the lines of communication open with Ronald and has not used drastic or physical discipline". Ronald seemed too disorganized to hold most jobs, as well as being too young and unkept. Recommendations of the staff noted again, that unless Ronald and the family accept the fact that they need help, little could be accomplished.

On February 21, 1967, Ronald was involved in a burglary with other juveniles. He was placed in custody, and then released to his mother. On March 9, 1967, he appeared before Judge Hatfield. The case was continued for 30 days. He was later ordered to report each week to the juvenile authorities.

Ronald continued to have school difficulties. Truancy, absence and discipline were recorded. The school year ended and he was a social promotion to the eighth grade.

Grades received were arithmetic "F", English "F", French "F", science "F", social studies "F", spelling "F", art "F", library "D", industrial arts "F", music "F", physical education "D", and health "F". Attendance was $118\frac{1}{2}$ days present, and $61\frac{1}{2}$ days absent and 5 days truant. This was the first record of excessive absence. Recorded comments were has no interest in any academic area, is aggressive, tends to be a bully, and is often in trouble with school and city authorities.

On June 9, 1967, Ronald was taken off the juvenile reports.

Ronald entered West Junior High School on September 5, 1967. He began being noticed immediately.

On September 8, 1967, Ronald was sent to the Assistant Principal because he had been carrying cigarettes in his shirt pocket. On September 13, 1967, he was sent to the Assistant Principal for misbehavior in his English class. He was warned. He also had steel taps on his shoes. He was told about the school rules, and that the taps must be removed. On September 19, 1967, Ronald was sent to the Assistant Principal for misbehavior in English class and for taps on his shoes again. He was taken to see the building Principal. Ronald was suspended for ten days.

On October 4, 1967, Ronald returned to school. He was involved in a fight before school started. He was belligerent when talked with

and was taken home by the Assistant Principal. His mother would bring him to school at a later date.

On October 12, 1967, Mrs. White returned Ronald to school. He appeared before the Principal and Assistant Principal, and his conduct and attitude were explained to him. On October 13, 1967, Ronald was truant from school from 11:25 to 3:00. He returned to school at 3:00 to catch his bus home.

Ronald continued to have difficulty in school. Teachers, guidance personnel, and administrators tried to assist him. Efforts failed and Ronald continued, when in school, to be a problem. On November 1, 1967, he was sent to the Assistant Principal for misbehavior in English class. On November 7, 8, 9, and 10, 1967, Ronald had skipped one or more periods each day, and had gone off the school grounds during his lunch period without permission. On November 13, 1967, Ronald was involved in a fight in a classroom. He left the building for the remainder of the day. The juvenile authorities were called and they apprehended him downtown. He was reprimanded and returned home. On November 14, 1967, he walked out of the classroom. The building Principal suspended him again.

On November 28, 1967, Mrs. White and Ronald appeared for admittance to school. It was approved. On December 4, 1967, Ronald was truant from school. On December 6, 1967, Ronald was off the school grounds during his lunch and went to the store for cigarettes. On December 11, 1967, he was taken into custody by the authorities and held for two days.

Ronald did not attend school again until January 22, 1968. His absence was unexcused, and he was suspended from school for two days. Ronald continued to resist all assistance of his counselor, school nurse and his teachers. Home visitations were made periodically, but proved unsuccessful. Absence continued until Ronald was officially dropped from the enrollment on April 1, 1968. His last day of attendance was on February 23, 1968. All grades recorded for Ronald were "F's". Final attendance was 37 days present, 101 days absent, and 34 days dropped. Destination of Ronald Black was unknown at the termination of his education.

Summary of case study. Movement by the parents seemed excessive especially during the earlier years. The step-father was away from the home often, because of his employment, leaving the mother to raise and discipline the children. There were indications that the education of the parents was not satisfactory and the ability of the parents to control their children was questionable.

Ronald repeated twice before the third grade as early basic skill deficiencies were noted. His attendance at school was excellent.

During later years Ronald appeared to have a dislike for school. Excessive absence and truancy began. A juvenile record was established with the authorities.

School personnel cited a definite lack of ability was noted and that the family must seek professional help if Ronald is to be assisted educationally.

Chapter IV will be a presentation of educational implications drawn from intensive study of three students who dropped out of West Junior High School.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Through comparison of the individual case studies, educational implications may be drawn. The implications are a result of the intensive study of the existing facts in each case history and will be presented as student, parental, and school characteristics.

Most children do not start school as problem students. Most students want to be accepted and be a successful part of the regular classroom. Nothing contributes to interest in an activity (to as great an extent) as does legitimate success, praise, and reward.

It is essential that the student is ready to learn the particular concept or skill being taught. Innovative changes in the curriculum are necessary for allowing individual student success, and that student must be judged by appropriate individualized standards.

The student must be aided to recognize when he has a problem and also aided in elimination of the problem situation. If adult assistance is necessary then the student should be willing to seek help from his parents and the school.

The student must have a willingness to learn and work. He should obey his parents, observe the rules and regulations of school, and society. He must strive for improvement academically, socially, and morally.

Many parents are not fulfilling their adult responsibility of properly raising their children. They need to love, accept, and

assist their children.

Parents must encourage, direct, and enforce the attitudes of their children toward school. Communications between the parents and the school is highly important. Parents need to be actively concerned about the children in school.

Parental misunderstanding and resentment of children has no place in education. Reward and praise from the parents to the children is essential.

Excessive family movement during educational years should be kept to a minimum. Parental responsibility directs that students must attend school. The school, in conjunction with other agencies, may encourage attendance of the students and suggest that excessive movement disrupts and distracts from the education process.

A fair but firm method of discipline is necessary within the home. The discipline must be enforced by both parents. Children are expected to obey their parents and elders. The school does not have the personnel to discipline children where the parents have failed. The parents must be made aware of those situations deemed necessary and asked for cooperation in training their children.

The school needs to identify with each student and individual differences must be taken into consideration. Articulation for each student must be planned from the start to the completion of his education.

Classroom curriculums must be flexible and modified for each

student. Instruction should be at the child's level of ability. Adjustment of the curriculum to the individual student needs may be accomplished through grouping of students, block-of-time teaching approach, and adequate identification of slow learner students in the regular classroom.

Through grouping, students of similar learning abilities can be placed within the same classes. This method of scheduling should reduce the individual student differences considerably, allowing for concentrated instruction to the group.

Block-of-time teaching allows time for subject instruction in two areas with the same teacher. Normally social studies and English, or mathematics and science are the combinations used. Through this method of teaching, individual student needs may be assisted more and pupil-teacher identification improved.

In the regular classroom, student abilities must be determined through past records, tests, former teachers evaluations, and the student himself. After identification, the teacher then works with each individual, and groups with similar abilities, to the greatest degree possible.

In all teaching and learning situations, appropriate learning materials must be made available for student use. Test results, student abilities, permanent and cumulative records, are all sources indicating the learning level of each student. Close identification with the student's counselor should be maintained where necessary.

Unusual forms of behavior should be diagnosed to better understand each student. Home visitations should be made when necessary. Complete testing services should be utilized within the school system and results used accordingly.

Every teacher should try to enjoy the students within their classrooms. Individual recognition for each student is necessary. In the elementary grades this personal interest, by every teacher for each student, cannot be emphasized enough.

Grading or reporting, and promotion or graduation must be clearly defined. Students in slow classes should not receive grades or marks higher than "C's". If they do, the student should be regrouped into a normal classroom. Promotion and graduation guidelines must be established for all students. If these standards are not met, then retention methods must be examined. In the cases studied, longer retention at the primary level might have helped. Deficiencies in the basic skills were lacking, yet the students were promoted from grade to grade. Promotion, when the student is not doing grade level work, or meeting the established standards, may be harmful unless extreme external conditions exist. If age becomes a factor, perhaps the student belongs in special education and not the regular classroom.

A determined effort to assist each student, regardless of the nature of his problem, should be the philosophy of every teacher within the school.

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