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HIGH SCHOOL DETENTION AND DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

by

JAMES RODGERS COMSTOCK

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

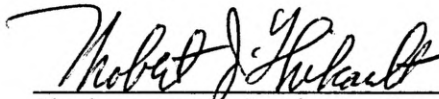
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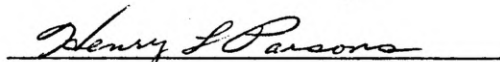
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ABSTRACT

During the fall quarter of 1978, a study was made of the detention discipline problems at Hardin High School, Hardin, Montana. The purpose of the study was to focus upon the discipline problems of high school students and a method of dealing with these problems.

The entire faculty of the high school staff of 37 and 100 students placed on detention made up the population. The two questionnaires were conducted in the interview method and covered the following investigative categories: amount of detention given to a student, the effect of parental involvement as perceived by both teacher and student, discipline problem areas in the high school, and new approaches to solving discipline problems.

The results of the study indicated that students and teachers wanted changes in the present detention program. An in-school suspension program was approved by faculty and students.

More research into detention as an effective means of dealing with discipline problems was supported by both a review of literature and the survey.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

As our society became more complex, the traditional family ties were weakened. It has fallen upon the schools to teach children values of citizenship, moral conduct and respect for the rights of others. The purpose of this study was to focus upon the discipline problems of high school students and a method of dealing with these problems. That method is detention which has a wide spread use in Montana high schools according to Donald Kennedy's thesis on discipline problems (Kennedy, 1971:70):

Discipline is necessary if a child is to function properly. All teachers have had the unfortunate experience of observing either children or adults who are undisciplined. We usually refer to such people as lacking motivation, apathetic, rowdy or even mean, spiteful or deceitful. . . If self discipline is to be internalized, then how is the child to achieve this attribute? The answer is obvious -- it must be learned. (Madsen, 1974:7).

With the advent of the 1960's civil rights programs an added burden was placed on the nation's schools, that of achieving school discipline coupled with the protection of the students own civil rights. Discipline problems evolved into an area of due process, court decisions and a weakening of the individual teacher's discretionary powers.

Schools resorted to two types of discipline methods for

those students whose behavior was against school rules but not serious enough to warrant expulsion from the system. The two types were detention and in-school suspension. Detention was the act of retaining the student for a specific time (usually one hour) before or after school in an enclosed study hall type of atmosphere. In-school suspension were keeping the student in a supervised study area for the entire school day.

This investigator studied detention for two reasons: 1) very little had been written about detention effectiveness and 2) detention was in wide spread use in Montana (Kennedy, 1971:70).

The investigator did not study an in-school suspension program because of its two drawbacks: 1) the added expense for most school districts in the hiring of a teacher for eight hours to supervise this type of a program, and 2) in-school suspension requires the student to actively work for an extended eight hour study hall day.

The investigator wanted to stress that detention was punishment. There were four drawbacks in the use of abrasive punishment that should be considered in any discipline method;

- 1) Punishment tends to suppress misbehavior but does not facilitate its extension.
- 2) Punishment does not necessarily indicate the preferred alternative behaviors.
- 3) Severe punishment often causes students to avoid their academic problems rather than solve them.
- 4) Fear of punishment inhibits creativity. A student who is continually anxious about his ability to please the teacher, in order to avoid punishment, will seldom take the risks

necessary to create new ways of solving problems (Gnagney, 1975:34).

Statement of Problem

The problem of this study was to determine the reason for placing Hardin High School, 1978, fall quarter students in detention and to assess the attitudes of teachers and students placed in detention toward the effectiveness of detention on solving or remediating their discipline problems.

Reason for this Study

The basic reason for this study was a belief that the success of a school academic program relies on its discipline methods. In other words to meet the challenges that parents, students, and government places upon educators, this investigator tried to determine if this method of detention was effective for Hardin High School. The three features that were especially studied were the added expense of teacher man hours in dealing with discipline, the help of discipline in aiding academic stability and the attitudes of students toward detention in creating a successful school experience.

General Questions to be Answered

Questions for Teachers

1. Reasons for placing a student on detention?
2. Has this student had a past history of detention?

3. In the past was detention an effective tool in dealing with discipline problems?
4. If this student continues to exhibit problems, what methods should be used to deal with him/her?
5. Are parental conferences effective in dealing with discipline problems?
6. Would an in-school suspension program be effective for this school?
7. Where was the student when he engaged in disruptive behavior?
8. What changes would you make in this school's discipline program?
9. Should the detention program be placed under one person's authority?
10. Should students be able to work detention hours off by clean up projects around the school?

Questions for Students

1. State the reason for your being placed in detention.
2. How many hours of detention have you been given?
3. In your opinion is detention an effective discipline method in this high school?
4. Was the amount of detention (or number of hours) justified?

5. Do you think that a conference with your parents and your teachers would help this situation?
6. Would you rather be suspended in-school for eight hours than stay after school with detention?
7. Where were you when notified, that because of your actions, you had been placed on detention?
8. What changes would you make in the detention program?
9. Should the detention program be placed under the supervision of one person?
10. Would you like to work off detention hours in such activities as cleaning the school and school grounds?

General Procedures

To obtain the data that was necessary for the evaluation of the detention program at Hardin High School, the investigator planned to go to the two sources involved, teachers and students. Every student who was placed on the detention program for fall quarter of 1978, received a questionnaire that was filled out by the investigator in the course of a verbal interview. At the end of fall quarter, 1978, a questionnaire was given to teachers who had placed students in detention and had their reasons and attitudes of the program assessed.

The investigator worked with 100 students placed in detention out of a high school population of 550. Detention hours ranged

from one to fifty hours.

Limitations and Delimitations

The population of this study was limited to those students enrolled in Hardin Senior High School fall quarter, 1978. The teachers were classroom certified teachers employed by School District 17-H at the Hardin High School.

This study was limited by several factors. The background of both students and teachers with diverse ethnic, social and economic backgrounds affected the way in which they responded to questions.

Definition of Terms

Detention. The act of placing students in an enclosed study hall atmosphere before or after school because of their behavior breaks a school rule.

Detention hours. The amount of time that the individual student will have to spend on detention.

Detention list. The names of students in detention collected on a monthly list.

In-School Suspension. A student spent the entire school day in a study hall type of atmosphere. Work was provided by his teachers. The time spent was considered to be in a punishment quiet atmosphere.

Summary

An evaluation of Hardin High School detention program was necessary in order to determine if the discipline program in the high school was meeting the needs of the high school students and the expectations of the teachers. The data was obtained by the use of two questionnaires. One questionnaire was given to students as they arrived to serve their detention time. The other questionnaire was given to teachers at the end of the quarter in order to evaluate the program.

The data was received during a personal interview.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the review of literature dealing with student disciplinary problems, this investigator found many articles and books on student discipline but very little on the subject of detention. This indicated that although detention was in wide spread use, very little study had been made of its effect on student discipline problems. The use of detention in Montana was well documented in Donald Kennedy's thesis. He found detention was used for the problem of:

1) Unexcused absence, 2) Habitual tardiness, 3) Cutting of classes, 4) Truancy, 5) Smoking, 6) Vulgar Language, and 7) Unauthorized walkout (Kennedy, 1971:27).

In order to understand what steps school administrators must take to control students who have deviant behavior, J. William Gnagey found there were five basic conditions for ideal teaching:

1. School must be a good place. If the students like the school and find school people thoughtful and bent on helping them succeed, then good discipline is enhanced.

2. Students must know the school rules. If a teacher's behavioral expectations are clear to his students, there is a lot better chance for those preferred behaviors to increase.

3. Within reason, students should agree with the rules.

4. Students should participate in rule making. Since classroom situations are always changing, rules should be changeable also.

5. Students should know the consequences of rule breaking. If a student contemplates breaking the rules he should know the

price he will have to pay (Gnagey, 1975:31).

Detention was defined as the act of placing high school students in an enclosed study room for one hour before or after school for the purpose of study because they had committed an infraction of the rules. Detention was not serious enough for the suspension from high school itself nor was it at the stage of Parent-Teacher Conference. With court decisions frequently taking away the corporal punishment teachers historically have had, coupled with the American belief that education is a right for all, enhanced the attraction of the less controversial hour of detention. (Walch, 1960:154)

K. Daniel O'Leary stated in his book, Classroom Management, that his definition of punishment was a consequence of behavior which reduced the future probability of that behavior. Furthermore, O'Leary stated that you could have avoided the negative side effects of punishment if you:

1. Use punishment sparingly.
2. Make it clear to a child why he is being punished.
3. Provide the child with alternative means of obtaining some positive reinforcement.
4. Reinforce the child for behavior incompatible with those you wish to weaken.
5. Avoid physical punishment if at all possible.
6. Avoid punishing while you are in a very angry or emotional state.
7. Punish at the initiation of a behavior rather than at its completion (O'Leary, 1972:152).

Dwane Collins in the Survival List for Teachers and Parents stated that two things happened:

1. The brunt of maintaining sound discipline rests on the classroom teacher.

2. The best disciplinary measures open to the teaching profession are preventive ones (Collins, 1975:3).

Teachers had a great deal at stake in maintaining a good classroom and school environment. If a teacher could not control his students then he would leave the profession voluntarily or be dismissed. William Amos made it quite clear in his Managing Student Behavior:

. . . creates a cycle whereby continual teacher loss generates an atmosphere of insecurity and restlessness among both staff and students which in turn results in more teachers seeking a way out of the situation (Amos, 1967:9).

This investigator found that the authorities on discipline agreed on the common theme that the main role of a teacher was to impart knowledge. They cautioned against a teacher taking on the aspects of a policeman. Staten Webster concluded that the teaching task cannot be completed successfully if educators focused their attention only on student misbehavior (Webster, 1968:10).

One aspect of the teacher's role in the discipline situations failing was the desire to be liked and accepted by the students. Students barraged by hours of television, tended to demand more entertainment than a classroom routine. The key factor in instituting a good disciplinary situation was courage on the part of the teacher. Charles Madsen explained in Teacher Discipline, that the

teachers approval was probably more important to the student than vice versa. It should not have been given away indiscriminately (Madsen, 1974:13).

When the student was given a clear set of rules to follow, discipline ideally should be administered when deviant behavior first occurs. The importance of establishing the consequences of deviant behavior upon the student was indicated by Nancy Buckley in Modifying Classroom Behavior. Buckley felt the student would have two decisions to make:

1. Stop the behavior rather than risk the consequences,
or
2. Continue the behavior, receive the punishment but also receive needed attention (Buckley, 1970:34).

The result of a discipline problem was seen by the student as a direct individual punishment such as loss of privilege, expulsion from school, and loss of free time. The individuality of punishment was felt and strengthened. What was often overlooked is the importance of the peer group. Lois V. Johnson stated that once a group had established standards for behavior, attempts to change to the group needs, required increasing the attractiveness of the group to the members. There were three groups involved in discipline situations: 1) individual, 2) the classroom group, and 3) the school organization (Johnson, 1970:261).

The disruptions in the routine of a classroom, not serious

enough to require expulsion, was the major focus that this investigator studied. The way to handle these problems has been, in the past, a formal detention room. J. Weston Walch in his book, High School Discipline, has compiled descriptions of various detention programs.

The areas held in common by several programs were:

- 1) One person in charge for the period.
- 2) Support of the Administration.
- 3) Quiet time for study.
- 4) Time to do class assignments.
- 5) Limited counseling to troubled students (Walch, 1960:155).

As teachers searched for various ways of maintaining a sense of order in their classes one approach that can be used was putting a contract on expected behavior for the classroom. This practice was known as contingency contracting. There were five rules in regard to proper contracting:

- 1) The contract must be fair.
- 2) The terms of the contract must be clear.
- 3) The contract must be honest.
- 4) The contract must be positive.
- 5) Contracting as a method must be used systematically (Homme, 1970:19).

The word discipline was defined by Sister Helena Brand as having many meanings:

- 1) Discipline is dignity.
- 2) Discipline is moving deliberately and purposefully.
- 3) Discipline is preparation-long range and short range.
- 4) Discipline is speaking with a pleasant voice.
- 5) Discipline is anticipating difficulties (McKenna, 1974:11).

One of the ways teachers can anticipate difficulties that was found by this investigator was in a study of behavior modification. Dr. Irwin G. Sarason found that the teachers own behavior influenced pupils behavior:

Reinforcement is found in grades, checkwork, smiles, frowns, praise, criticism, ignoring, and rewarding. Positive reinforcement includes verbal approval, tangible rewards, earned points, and the appreciation of peers. The problem with negative reinforcement is, that although punishment may cut down on questionable behavior, it often satisfies a child's desire for attention. (Sarason, 1972:11)

In the school's discipline situation that does get serious, the next step that this investigator found imperative was making the principal of the high school aware of the situation. This position was so important that William Morse stated:

The principals leadership role has to do just with the total school mental health climate, the goal is to reduce that portion of a child's disturbance produced by a negative school environment. This includes concern about the overall willingness of all school personnel to talk with youngsters and work out conflicts whenever possible. (Morse, 1971:39)

In spite of the importance of the role of the principal in discipline problems it was the classroom teacher who bore the

initial impact of poor behavior. When a teacher examined the relative seriousness of student problems he had two major considerations: First, the impact of the problem upon the entire class. Second, to determine whether or not a student's behavior was an indication of poor emotional adjustment (Brown, 1971:104).

In order to view poor emotional adjustment in the school, this investigator found one factor was stressed in the classroom:

Over the past decade, we have become increasingly aware of how undue stress create both health problems and emotional difficulties in adults. Accepting the fact that children are under stress, however is harder. Children are supposed to be happy and carefree. But they react to stress in the same way that adults and adolescents do. Their bodies use extra sugar and adrenalin and they must call on emotional resources to pull through difficult situations. (Miller, 1978: 110)

The teacher must be aware that at any given time a segment of the class had emotional or mental anxieties. Since practically all children occasionally presented problems, the good teacher was usually aware of their development. Continued educational problems such as severe behavior deviation and emotional disturbance most often resulted in referral to the school psychologist (Vallett, 1963:6).

Van Miller writes in his article, "Inner Direction and the Decision Maker" that the efficient school administrator when confronted with a problem had two resources to base his decision:

One area of refuge has been recourse to a social interpretation of the American Way which has been variously described as a socially conscious capitalism, a free enterprise system and the way of equal opportunity (Hack, 1965:12).

The role of the teacher is changing as trends in education do from an imparter of knowledge to one who has the greatest possible unsight in children behavior and personalities. According to them (New Theorists) more than any other characteristic to be developed in the appreciation for, and empathy with the child, he will teach (Venable, 1967:100).

This new found empathy for children should always be coupled with the fact that teachers, in order to teach, need the cooperation of students:

I am always amused at the school teacher's surprise when the 'have to' approach to learning simply doesn't work. Children do not learn because teachers say they have to. In fact, the 'have to' command draws rebellion. 'Our have to' are lies. (Rothman, 1977:55)

In order to insure students voluntary cooperation, they must have been motivated by a reward that (however small) was worth their collective effort. Conceptions of success and reward were distinguished in two respects:

- 1) Success is intrinsically linked to performance, and
- 2) In the case of human behavior, substantial ego satisfaction may be attached to success independently of the availability of altruistic reward (Nattin, 1968:6).

Possibly the key word to ensure success in the classroom was to excite the self-interest of the student because the outcome was obvious. People enjoyed what they were interested in. J. Dewey

wrote in a monograph in 1916 that children would not only learn quickly what they were interested in, and they would learn it in an untroubled-some and cooperative sort of way, but also that what they were interested in, was what they would learn best. The presence of interest he pointed out, maximized that the energy put forth to master the problem would sustain the best effort to master its difficulties (Wilson, 1971:39).

Interest was linked to qualities that students admire in teachers. Ten qualities that were repeated here were found to be by this investigator to put forth the ideal in which the teacher should strive:

- 1) Sincerity. It is an easy task to discern sincerity or indifference in the teacher.
- 2) Discussing topics other than subject matter. Many teachers are willing to take class time to discuss matters which are important to students.
- 3) Enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is that vibrant quality which shows the teachers excitement about the subject.
- 4) Recognition of student problems. If you have ever worked for an employer who cares for nothing but getting the job done, you probably experienced the feeling of being forgotten.
- 5) Speak to the point. A habit to not slip into is to ramble on and on.
- 6) Knowledge of the subject. Adolescents are a group of idealist and are impressed with the teacher who obviously labors diligently to become the best possible educator.
- 7) Humor and wit. Time for humor or witty remarks can have a rather surprising way of popping into class routine.
- 8) Informality. Teachers who are not confident often hold a firm grip on the reins of their class.
- 9) Respect for the student. The cry, 'He treats us like kids', may have more truth in it than teachers care to admit.
- 10) Resourcefulness. The resourceful teacher in the eyes of the student is a person who can bring into class discussion materials and ideas from other areas to give substance to his statements. (La Grand 1969:88)

Discipline and effective learning were intrinsically linked:

Discipline is a set of procedures designed to eliminate behaviors that compete with the effective answers to the question, 'Why not punish?' makes a formidable list. There are six reasons not to punish students:

- 1) Reduces the reinforcing value of the teacher's attention.
- 2) Is an inefficient way to teach new behaviors.
- 3) Can generalize to make an entire setting aversive.
- 4) Increases avoidance behaviors.
- 5) Promotes a variety of escape attempts, and
- 6) Generates aggressive reactions. (Bashell, 1971:78)

Consistency in the classroom seemed to be the glue that holds the successful teaching method together:

When the teacher is too lenient, there is much fooling around and the student may learn very little. On days the teacher is too strict the students who get the upper hand often resort to embarrassment, ridicule, and make students fear the teacher by making statements designed to end the power the teacher may represent. (Chamberlin, 1977:87)

The latest in assertive discipline came from California State University Psychologist Dr. Lee Carter who stressed that discipline was necessary and possible for all teachers. Dr. Carter was quoted by the Gig Harbor, Washington paper, The Peninsula Gateway as calling for a three part plan:

The plan should include rules, consequences, and means of re-enforcing good behavior. In this way everyone knows where they stand and action taken by teachers is not the result of intuition or mood, but in accordance to a carefully laid out, step-by-step procedure. (Peninsula Gateway, 1978:2)

Summary

This investigation found numerous articles and books on discipline

and classroom managerial techniques. But there was a lack of information on:

- 1) The practice of detention,
- 2) The attitudes of the teacher, and
- 3) the attitudes of the students.

There were five major points that this review of literature chapter stressed:

- 1) Students should know the rules of the school.
- 2) Avoid physical punishment if possible.
- 3) The brunt of school discipline fell not upon the administration of the school but upon the classroom teacher.
- 4) Teachers should have the courage to enact disciplinary measures against disruptive students.
- 5) If detention was given, one person should be in charge, support of both teachers and administration for a program of detention and assigned school work should be completed in a silent enclosed study area.

Chapter 3

INTRODUCTION

This chapter states the general procedures that were used in an evaluation of the detention program at Hardin Senior High School during the fall quarter of 1978. To maintain the highest standards of accuracy, the evaluation was planned in advance. There are seven sections in this chapter that have attempted to meet this challenge:

- 1) Population
- 2) Investigative Categories
- 3) Method of Data Collection
- 4) Hypothesis
- 5) Analysis of Data
- 6) Precautions Related to Accuracy
- 7) Summary

Population

There were two sections to the population. The investigator worked first, with the student population of 550, out of which it was estimated at least 100 students were in detention from one hour to fifty hours. The second section of the population included a staff of 37 certified teachers. This study was unique in its approach

of going to one high school and studying if the detention program was effective. Detention has already been documented to be in wide-spread use in Montana, it has not been determined, if at the high school level, it was effective (Kennedy, 1971:27). Each member of the population was surveyed so no sampling procedures were necessary.

Investigative Categories

The areas that were investigated in this chapter were from the general questions that were raised in Chapter 1. There were two questionnaires. They were presented in this fashion.

- 1) Please state the reasons for placing a student on detention.
 - A) Tardiness
 - B) Class disruption
 - C) In the halls without a pass
 - D) Skipping class
 - E) Other _____
- 2) You have placed (a given number of students on detention). Please state which student has a past history of discipline problems.
- 3) In the past, was detention an effective tool in dealing with discipline problems?

Yes _____

No _____
- 4) If this child (referring to the list of students) continues to exhibit problems, what method should be used besides detention?
 - A) Parental conference
 - B) Principal of high school-parental conference
 - C) In-school suspension
 - D) Suspension from school
 - E) Expulsion from school

- 5) If you believe a parental conference would be effective, why?
 - A) Good home life
 - B) Parental interest
 - C) Parental discipline
 - D) All of these characteristics
- 6) Would an in-school suspension program be effective for this high school?

Yes _____

No _____
- 7) What area in the school or school grounds is the highest area of student discipline problem?
 - A) Classrooms
 - B) Restrooms
 - C) Halls
 - D) School grounds
- 8) What changes would you make in the high school's discipline program?
 - A) Longer detention hours
 - B) In-school suspension
 - C) Hiring of additional staff to specialize in discipline problems (i.e., additional Assistant Principal)
 - D) More parent-teacher conferences
 - E) Other _____
- 9) Should the detention program be placed under one person's authority?

Yes _____

No _____
- 10) Should students be able to work detention hours off by cleaning up projects around the school?

Yes _____

No _____

Questions for High School Students

- 1) Please indicate the reason for your being placed upon detention.
 - A) Tardiness

- B) Problem with a teacher
- C) In halls without a pass
- D) Classroom disruption
- E) Other _____

2) How many hours of detention have you been given? _____

3) In your opinion, is detention an effective way of handling a high school student's discipline problem?

Yes _____
No _____

4) Was the amount of detention (or numbers of hours) justified?

Yes _____
No _____

5) Would you prefer a conference with your parents and your teacher in order to "help the situation"?

Yes _____
No _____

6) Would you prefer a program of in-school suspension rather than stay after school for detention?

Yes _____
No _____

7) Where were you notified that because of your actions you were on detention?

- A) In class
- B) From the posted detention list
- C) In the high school office
- D) On the school grounds

8) Should the detention program be placed under the supervision of one person?

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) I prefer the system of teacher rotation
- D) The principal should be in charge of detention

9) Would you like to work off detention hours in such activities as cleaning the school and school grounds?

Yes _____

No _____

10) What in your opinion is the cause of the most serious discipline problem in the high school?

- A) Unexcused absence
- B) Habitual tardiness
- C) Cutting of classes
- D) Truancy
- E) Smoking
- F) Vulgar language
- G) Unauthorized walkout

Methods of Collecting Data

The questionnaires given to the teachers and students were conducted in the interview method. The investigator interviewed everyone who came in contact with the detention program.

The questions were designed to be of several basic varieties, such as: 1) multiple choice, 2) fill in the blank, and 3) short answer.

The investigator designed the questionnaires to need no special knowledge or skills. The investigator researched the detention program at Hardin High School to determine: 1) past history, 2) need, and 3) relevancy.

Hypothesis

The attitudes toward detention is independent of group membership of either a teacher or a student.

Analysis of Data

The data that was collected for this study was basically the opinions and attitudes of the entire population. They were placed into a percentage which was rounded off to the nearest whole number. The hypothesis was tested using the percentages to see if there was any significant differences between the attitudes of teachers and students.

Precautions Taken for Accuracy

A hand Texas Instrument calculator was used as a precaution to insure accuracy in this study.

Summary

Two sections of the population were surveyed by the interview method in order to study the detention program's effects on discipline problems at Hardin High School. The questionnaires differed because they were written for two different groups: 1) students placed in detention, and 2) teachers who had actually placed students in detention for disciplinary reasons. The data was organized into two tables, and the analysis was completed when data collected was represented by percentages.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The results of the study evaluating Hardin High School's Detention Program presented in this chapter were obtained from the use of the two groups of 100 students and thirty-seven faculty. The researcher particularly looked for:

- 1) The location of problem areas in the school.
- 2) The detention program success rate.
- 3) The uniformity of the staff on enforcing the rules of the school.
- 4) The response of the students toward detention.
- 5) A possible alternative toward the detention program.

Returns

The 100 students who were interviewed made up the 100 percent of the student's population that were having problems both major and minor during the fall quarter of 1978. The questions were grouped in ten tables that directly related to each other. In order to have a better understanding of the responses, "N" equals the number of possible responses, the small "n" equals the actual responses and the percent sign represents the percentage the "n" is of "N". One student equals one percent of the survey. The teachers were listed both as

the number responding and the percentage of the 37. All were interviewed in the completion of the study. Each teacher was equal to 2.70 percent.

TABLE 1
DATA ON STUDENTS INVOLVED

Sex:	1) 60 males
	2) 40 females
Grade level:	1) Freshmen - 21
	2) Sophomore - 12
	3) Juniors - 31
	4) Seniors - 36

The students involved in this study were represented by both sex and by all four grade levels. The majority were in the Junior and Senior classes and more males than females were involved in the study. Students of that age group felt more comfortable participating in the study because of their experience in high school procedures.

TABLE 2
DATA ON THE TEACHERS INVOLVED

Sex: 1) 26 males
2) 11 females

Grade level of Responsibilities:

All 37 teachers dealt with students in grades
9, 10, 11, and 12.

Male teachers outnumbered female teachers on the faculty of the Hardin High School. The researcher conducted the survey utilizing the interview method. No discernable difference in answers on account of sex nor grade level were indicated by the research.

TABLE 3
DATA ON THE HOURS AND STUDENTS PLACED UPON DETENTION

Students: How many hours of detention have been given?
A) 321 hours

Teachers: How many students have been placed on detention?
B) 260 students

The 321 hours of detention readily translated into an additional 40.1 days of 8 hour school days. This showed an enormous amount of time had been spent for the 100 students to complete their punishment.

The 260 students, out of a student population of 500, indicated to

the investigator that over one half of the student population was placed on detention for discipline reasons.

TABLE 4

REASONS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS FOR DETENTION

Student Question:

Please state the reason for you being placed upon detention:

	N	n	percent
A) Tardiness	100	63	64.00
B) Problems with teacher	100	4	4.00
C) In the hall without a pass	100	17	17.00
D) Classroom disruption	100	2	2.00
E) Other	100	14	14.00

Teacher Question:

Please state the reason for placing the student on detention:

	N	n	percent
A) Tardiness	37	17	45.94
B) Class disruption	37	6	16.21
C) Skipping class	37	3	8.10
D) In the halls without a pass	37	6	16.21
E) Other	37	5	13.51

Tardiness or being late for a class was the number one reason that students were placed on detention by teachers. Being in the halls without permission was the next reason given by both students and teachers. The only discrepancy came from problems with a teacher or a class disruption. Students rated it very low; only 3 percent, whereas it equaled the second biggest detention problem for teachers.

TABLE 5

WAS THE AMOUNT OF DETENTION AN EFFECTIVE TOOL, OR AN
EFFECTIVE WAY OF HANDLING PROBLEMS

Student: Was the amount of detention (or number of hours) justified?

	N	n	percent
Yes:	100	17	17.00
No:	100	83	83.00

Teacher: In the past was detention an effective tool in dealing with discipline problems?

	N	n	percent
Yes:	37	12	32.43
No:	37	25	67.75

Students: In your opinion is detention an effective way of handling a high school student's problem?

	N	n	percent
Yes:	100	49	49.00
No:	100	51	51.00

Both the students and the teachers agreed that detention was not working in dealing with discipline problems nor effectively handling the student's problems. The interesting aspect of this table was that the students were almost evenly divided on the use of detention in relation to a student's problems.

TABLE 6
PROBLEMS, PARENTS, CONFERENCES

Teacher: If this student continues to exhibit problems, what methods should be used besides detention?

	N	n	percent
A) Parental Conference	37	12	32.43
B) Parental/Principal Conference	37	10	27.02
C) In-School Suspension	37	9	24.32
D) Suspension from School	37	6	16.21
E) Expulsion from School	37	0	0.00

Teacher: Why do you believe a parental conference would be effective?

	N	n	percent
A) Good home Life	37	0	0.00
B) Parental Interest	37	5	13.51
C) Parental Discipline	37	3	8.10
D) All of these characteristics	37	29	78.37

Student: Would you prefer a conference with parents and your teacher in order to help the situation?

	N	n	percent
Yes	100	17	17.00
No	100	83	83.00

The teachers agreed that the three conditions of: 1) good home life, 2) parental interest and 3) parental discipline were all qualities needed to rectify a discipline situation. A parental conference and a parental-principal conference mad up 59.45 of the next step in a discipline situation. The students were opposed to this situation by 83 percent.

TABLE 7

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Teachers: Would an in-school suspension program be effective for this high school?

	N	n	percent
Yes:	37	30	81.68
No:	37	7	18.91

Students: Would you prefer a program of in high school suspension rather than stay after school for detention?

	N	n	percent
Yes:	100	58	58.00
No:	100	42	42.00

Students and teachers would like to see a change in the detention program. Both groups indicated the need for an experimental, quarter long, in-school suspension rather than detention. In-school suspension as explained to the population was in a quiet room, supervised by staff with school work to be completed that would take the place of the regular school day.

TABLE 8

PROBLEM AREA, DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS, NOTIFICATION OF DETENTION

Teachers: What area in the school or school grounds is the highest area of student discipline problems?

	N	n	percent
A) Classroom	37	10	27.02
B) Restroom	37	6	16.21
C) Halls	37	24	64.86
D) School Grounds	37	1	2.70

Students: Where were you notified that because of your actions you were on detention?

	N	n	percent
A) In class	100	56	56.00
B) From a posted detention list	100	31	31.00
C) On the school grounds	100	8	8.00
D) In the high school office	100	5	5.00

Students: What in your opinion is the cause of the most serious discipline problems in the high school?

	N	n	percent
A) Unexcused absence	100	28	28.00
B) Habitual Tardiness	100	29	29.00
C) Cutting classes	100	18	18.00
D) Truancy	100	3	3.00
E) Smoking	100	14	14.00
F) Vulger language	100	1	1.00
G) Unauthorized walkout	100	7	7.00

According to the teachers, student loitering in the halls was the essential discipline problem. The students choice of habitual tardiness was the most serious discipline problem. Students were told they were in detention by the classroom teacher. Thirty one percent of the students had to wait until the detention list was up before they found out they

were in detention. Unexcused absence and cutting of classes were high on the student's list. Indicating that there was a problem that was serious but going unnoticed.

TABLE 9
CHANGES IN PROGRAM AND SUPERVISION

Teachers: What changes would you make in the High School Discipline Program?

	N	n	percent
A) Longer detention hours	37	0	0.00
B) In-school suspension	37	21	56.75
C) Hiring of additional staff to specialize in discipline problems	37	7	18.91
D) More parent teacher conferences	37	2	5.40
E) Other	37	7	18.91

Students: Should the detention program be placed under the supervision of one person?

	N	n	percent
A) Yes	100	20	20.00
B) No	100	10	10.00
C) I prefer the system of teacher rotation	100	35	35.00
D) The principal should be in charge of detention	100	34	34.00
E) Other	100	19	19.00

Teachers: Should the detention program be placed under one person's authority?

	N	n	percent
Yes	37	27	72.97
No	37	10	27.02

The teachers urged two major changes in the detention

program. They believed in an in-school suspension program and one person to control, direct and actively take responsibility over detention. The student's answers were inconclusive with the present system of teacher rotation receiving a narrow 35 percent of the student approval.

TABLE 10
WORKING OFF DETENTION HOURS

Teachers: Would you like to work off detention hours in such activities as cleaning the school and school grounds?

	N	n	percent
Yes	37	22	59.45
No	37	15	40.54

Students: Would you like to work off detention hours in such activities as cleaning the school and school grounds?

	N	n	percent
Yes	100	30	30.00
No	100	70	70.00

Clearly the results of this question indicated major teacher approval and a decisive student disapproval of the idea of working detention hours off in cleaning up some area of the school plant. Clean up projects were considered an option for some students.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The investigator would remind the reader of this study that when making evaluations regarding conclusions that this study focused upon the discipline problems of one high school with 100 students and 37 faculty members responding. The study brought out how discipline and particularly detention was being handled and received at the high school level. The study represented detention situations that existed fall quarter 1978.

The study would make an excellent tool for an administrator to accurately judge the discipline situation arising in the school day and the steps to correct and counsel the student.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the reason for placing Hardin High School students in detention or to assess the attitudes of students placed in detention, on solving or remediating their discipline problems.

A questionnaire was constructed that was to be utilized in the interview procedure of one-on-one with every member of the sample student population of 100 and the faculty population of 37.

Responses from the evaluation sheets were tabulated

in percentages. A comparison in ten tables was made between the responses of the faculty and the students. Three answers were given. Large "N" was the size of the population; a small "n" was the size of the group that answered that question with a particular response and third number was the percent of the population.

A review of literature was conducted using the combined resources of the Montana State University library and the Eastern Montana College library. The investigator found that a lack of discipline was a national problem and growing in public concern. The methods administrators used in combating discipline problems came under the strict scrutiny of the public, parents, press, educational researchers, educational writers and the students involved with our secondary schools. The review of literature revealed that:

- 1) Detention was a fact of high school life in Montana and in the nation.
- 2) School Administrators were hoping to get a handle on their local school discipline situations.
- 3) Students should know the rules of a school.
- 4) Avoid physical punishment if at all possible.
- 5) The brunt of school discipline falls upon the classroom teachers and not upon the school Administration.
- 6) Teachers should have the courage to exact disciplinary measures against disruptive students.

7) If detention was given, one person should be in charge, support of both teachers and administration for a program of detention and assigned school work should be completed in a silent enclosed study area.

Conclusions

Tables 1, 2 and 3 gave raw data on the population that participated in this study.

Table 4 indicated that tardiness was the major cause of detention hours. This indicated that possibly more time should have been allocated to the class schedule for transferring from one class to another.

Both the students and faculty agree as shown by Table 5 that detention was not:

1) An effective way of handling a high school student's problem
or

2) An effective tool in dealing with discipline problems.
This indicated to the investigator that better behavior modification techniques were needed for handling detention problems.

Table 6 shows the fundamental difference in outlook between high school faculty and students. Teachers indicated that when serious discipline problems occur, parents should be involved. Students, however, indicated reluctance to involve their parents.

Table 7 indicated overwhelming approval for an in-school suspension program from both faculty and students.

Table 8 showed that sixty-four percent of the teachers believed that student behavior in the halls was the most serious of student problems. Fifty-six percent of the students stated that they learned from a classroom teacher that they were on detention. Another thirty-one percent of the students did not realize they were on detention until they found their name on the posted detention list.

Table 9 presented the fact that fifty-six percent of the teachers thought an in-school suspension system to be the change needed in the high school. Students preferred to retain the present situation of teacher rotation rather than change immediately to in-school suspension. The teachers' second most desired change was for the monitoring of detention to be placed under one person's direction.

Table 10 indicated that teachers approved of students working detention off in school projects that needed physical labor. Seventy percent of the students opposed such a program.

Recommendations for Changing Detention Program at Hardin High School

- 1) The present detention program at Hardin High School should be phased out and an in-school suspension program be substituted coupled

with a new detention program under one authority.

2) One person should be in charge of the detention program if it is to be maintained.

3) Detention should be moved to a classroom situation avoiding the open-space study hall.

4) Students should be given shorter versions of rules and explanations of the discipline program.

5) The staff should be urged to uniformly enforce the rules of the school. The staff should notify the students when they receive detention.

6) After a student receives more than 8 hours detention (the equivalent to one teaching day), parents should be notified. Counselors at the school should be alerted to the problem.

7) School rules should be simplified, uniformly enforced and taught to the student body. Since tardiness was the number one reason for detention, more time should be allowed for movement in the halls and stricter enforcement on repeated offenders.

8) A portion of the students should be allowed to work detention hours off by cleaning up projects around the school.

9) The questionnaires could be used for the comparison of high schools around the state and the level of discipline problems. The questionnaires would also be a useful tool for an administration in pin-pointing specific problem areas in the discipline program

and ways to get both faculty and students to improve the discipline program in the school.

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APPENDIX

Teacher's Name: _____

Grade Level of Responsibilities: _____

Sex: _____ Male
_____ Female

- 1) Please state the reasons for placing a student on detention.
 - A) Tardiness _____
 - B) Class disruption _____
 - C) In the halls without a pass _____
 - D) Skipping class _____
 - E) Other _____
- 2) You have placed (a given number of students on detention). Please state which student has a past history of discipline problems.
- 3) In the past, was detention an effective tool in dealing with discipline problems?

Yes _____

No _____
- 4) If this child (referring to the list of students) continues to exhibit problems, what method should be used besides detention?
 - A) Parental conference _____
 - B) Principal of high school/parental conference _____
 - C) In-school suspension _____
 - D) Suspension from school _____
 - E) Expulsion from school _____
- 5) If you believe a parental conference would be effective, why?
 - A) Good home life _____
 - B) Parental interest _____
 - C) Parental discipline _____
 - D) All of these characteristics _____
- 6) Would an in-school suspension program be effective for this high school?

Yes _____
No _____

7) What area in the school or school grounds is the highest area of student discipline problem?

- A) Classrooms
- B) Restrooms
- C) Halls
- D) School grounds

8) What changes would you make in the high school's discipline program?

- A) Longer detention hours
- B) In-school suspension
- C) Hiring of additional staff to specialize in discipline problems (i.e., additional Assistant Principal).
- D) More parent/teacher conferences
- E) Other _____

9) Should the detention program be placed under one person's authority?

Yes _____
No _____

10) Should students be able to work detention hours off by cleaning up projects around the school?

Yes _____
No _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

Student's Name _____

Sex: _____ Male
_____ Female

Grade Level: _____

1) Please state the reasons for your being placed upon detention.

- A) Tardiness
- B) Problem with a teacher
- C) In halls without a pass
- D) Classroom disruption
- E) Other _____

2) How many hours of detention have you been given? _____

3) In your opinion, is detention an effective way of handling a high school student's problems?

Yes _____
No _____

4) Was the amount of detention (or number of hours) justified?

Yes _____
No _____

5) Would you prefer a conference with your parents and your teacher in order to "help the situation".

Yes _____
No _____

6) Would you prefer a program of in-school suspension rather than stay after school for detention?

Yes _____
No _____

- 7) Where were you notified that because of your actions you were on detention?
- A) In class
 - B) From the posted detention list
 - C) In the high school office
 - D) On the school grounds
- 8) Should the detention program be placed under the supervision of one person?
- A) Yes _____
 - B) No _____
 - C) I prefer the system of teacher rotation _____
 - D) The principal should be in charge of detention _____
- 9) Would you like to work off detention hours in such activities as cleaning the school and school grounds?
- Yes _____
- No _____
- 10) What, in your opinion, is the cause of the most serious discipline problem in the high school?
- A) Unexcused absence _____
 - B) Habitual tardiness _____
 - C) Cutting of classes _____
 - D) Truancy _____
 - E) Smoking _____
 - F) Vulgar language _____
 - G) Unauthorized walkout _____