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A comparative study of the involvement of dropouts and graduates in high school activities

Randall Charles Nichols
University of Northern Iowa

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A comparative study of the involvement of dropouts and graduates in high school activities

Abstract

In recent years, schools have been faced with an increasingly burdensome financial strain as prices for fuel and supplies climb, maintenance costs grow, teacher associations demand better salaries and benefits for their members, and governmental regulations multiply. These increased costs, combined with decreasing income due to declining enrollments, have severely pinched public schools' ability to continue to provide current programs. On top of this, schools confront a depressed economy and taxpayer cries for economic accountability. Schools find themselves increasingly forced to consider the possibility of eliminating programs.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF DROPOUTS
AND GRADUATES IN HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Department of School Administration
and Personnel Services
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by
Randall Charles Nichols

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Entitled: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF DROPOUTS
AND GRADUATES IN HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the
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James E. Albrecht

7-9-82

Date Approved

Director of Research Paper

Robert Krajewski

7/19/82

Date Approved

Second Reader of Research Paper

James E. Albrecht

7-9-82

Date Received

Graduate Faculty Adviser

Robert Krajewski

7/19/82

Date Received

Head, Department of School
Administration and Personnel
Services

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In recent years, schools have been faced with an increasingly burdensome financial strain as prices for fuel and supplies climb, maintenance costs grow, teacher associations demand better salaries and benefits for their members, and governmental regulations multiply. These increased costs, combined with decreasing income due to declining enrollments, have severely pinched public schools' ability to continue to provide current programs. On top of this, schools confront a depressed economy and taxpayer cries for economic accountability. Schools find themselves increasingly forced to consider the possibility of eliminating programs.

In trying to cut costs, schools have tried to eliminate those programs that affect the fewest students. Unfortunately, sometimes the programs cut are the very ones designed to keep in school those students most likely to drop out. Such programs include those which are considered frills by some taxpayers.

Does the loss of these activities also contribute to the dropout problem that has been frequently decried in recent years? Just what influence do the various activities that schools sponsor have in motivating students to complete their education? How dedicated to maintaining these activities should schools be when faced with the serious financial difficulties that exist today?

Statement of the Problem

The research clearly states that dropouts generally have relatively little involvement in extracurricular activities. However such research has typically been conducted in large metropolitan and suburban school systems. How does this research hold up in the smaller, rural school districts of a state like Iowa? What effect does a farming community have on students' involvement in extracurricular and cocurricular activities?

Most of the previous studies have centered on what percent of dropouts and graduates were not involved in any activities. This suggests an interesting and largely unanswered question: What is the average number of activities in which the typical dropout and the typical graduate are involved?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the importance of the various activities sponsored by schools as motivators to students in completing their high school education. The study will investigate the disparity, if any, in involvement in activities by graduates and by dropouts.

Procedures

Fifteen schools in northeast Iowa were selected for inclusion in this study. They were chosen for the following reasons:

1. The researcher's familiarity with the two athletic conferences to which the schools belong.

2. The range of size represented by the schools within the two athletic conferences, which is comparable to other Iowa schools.
3. The composition of the school districts, which include both towns and rural areas.
4. The proximity of the schools to the researcher, a consideration necessary to enhance the availability of data.

School officials within both athletic conferences were then contacted. Both conferences declined to sponsor the study through the auspices of the conference. The conference officials suggested that each school should be contacted individually through its superintendent.

Correspondence was sent to each of the fifteen schools. A cover letter (Appendix A) and a preliminary survey (Appendix B) were included in that correspondence. The preliminary survey was designed to gather basic statistical information about the schools and to identify a contact person at each school. Statistical information requested on the survey included K-12 enrollment figures; 9-12 enrollment figures; the number in the graduating class for the last two academic years (1980-81 and 1981-82); the number of dropouts in either 9-12 or 10-12, depending on each school's secondary structure; the population of the largest community in the school district; and the number of incorporated communities within the school district.

After receiving the completed preliminary surveys from the schools, a visit to the schools was arranged. This was done by telephone with the contact person identified on the survey. At this point one school

chose not to participate and a second school was unable to participate due to an administrative change.

During the visits, information was compiled regarding the total number of activities in which the dropouts and the graduates of each school had been involved during their last year of attendance.

For the graduates, records for their twelfth grade (senior) year were examined. For the dropouts, records covering their last two full semesters of attendance were examined. Thus, for a student who dropped out in the spring of the junior year, the last full year of attendance consisted of the fall semester of the eleventh grade year and the spring semester of the tenth grade year. Activities in which this student participated in these last two full semesters were used to derive the totals.

All data gathered was from the most recent years available. Eight of thirteen schools' most recent graduate records were for the 1980-81 and 1981-82 academic years. Four schools, B, I, K, and N, had records available for the 1979-80 and 1980-81 academic years. The final school, E, had records available only for the 1979-80 and 1981-82 academic years.

Treatment of the Data

The data gathered from the survey and from the school visit were used to establish means for the graduates' and dropouts' respective involvement in cocurricular activities at each school. These two means were compared in order to identify the difference in the involvement ratio of graduates and dropouts for each of the individual schools.

Next, an overall comparison of the involvement of graduates and dropouts in activities was made by totaling the figures for all the schools in the study. Overall means showing the involvement of graduates and dropouts were then computed. These means were then compared to determine the difference in activity involvement between the total graduate population and the total dropout population.

Finally, the schools were divided into two classifications by size, those with under 500 students in grades 9-12, and those with 500 or more students in grades 9-12. The means showing the involvement of the graduates and dropouts were computed and then compared in order to discover if school size made any difference in student involvement in activities.

Definition of Terms

Three terms key to this study need to be defined: activity, dropout, and graduate.

Activity. All athletic, music, speech, drama, clubs and organizations, and student government opportunities sponsored by the school. Athletic activities include football, softball, volleyball, cross country, wrestling, basketball, track, golf, swimming, tennis, baseball, and any managers, statisticians, and cheerleaders for any of these activities. Music includes all band activities such as the concert, marching, jazz, and pep bands and solos and small ensembles organized for participation in Iowa High School State Music Association (IHSSMA) contests and all choral activities such as mixed, male, female, and swing choirs and solos and small ensembles organized for participation in

IHSSMA contests. Speech activities include both individual and ensemble activities organized for participation in Iowa High School State Speech Association contests. Drama activities consist of plays, musicals, variety shows, and follies. Clubs and organizations include Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, Future Teachers of America, Future Business Leaders of America, Distributive Education Clubs of America, Trades and Industries, Office Education Associations, business clubs, foreign language clubs, music clubs, drama clubs, pep clubs, letter winners clubs, chess clubs, and National Honor Society. Student government includes class officers and the student council/senate.

Dropout. A student who

has been in membership for any regular school term and who withdraws or is dropped from membership for any reason except death or transfer to another school before graduating from secondary school (grade 12).¹

Graduate. A student who completed the twelfth grade. "Completion" includes those who did not receive a diploma, such as special education students or students who received attendance certificates, as long as these students were allowed to participate in the activities program of the school.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations affect this study. First, the number of schools included in the study comprise a small sampling of the total number of schools in Iowa. The small sample suggests the possibility that the schools are not completely representative of Iowa's schools. In fact, the schools in the sample tend to be slightly larger than the average

Iowa school. Although none of the schools is a city district, they do represent a selection which is skewed toward the larger community school district.

Second, the schools were not randomly selected. Again, this allows for the possibility that the schools included in the study are not representative of Iowa schools in general.

Third, dropouts from grades 9, 10, and 11 were included in the study and compared to graduates who had completed grade 12. It is probable that ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders are not able to be involved in some activities to which twelfth graders have access. Also, there is no certainty that the level of involvement remains constant from ninth grade through twelfth grade.

Fourth, the schools in the sampling do not all offer the same activities, nor the same number of activities. For example, one school only offered a total of fourteen activities, while another school offered forty-two different activities.

Fifth, the study is dependent upon the accuracy of the record keeping of the schools. Most of the schools were in some way dependent upon the students to report their involvement. It is difficult to know just how accurate such student reporting is, for students, like most people, tend to display themselves in the best possible light, or can be somewhat forgetful.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

According to Schreiber, there is a paradox in the recent national focus on dropouts because the percentage of American youth to drop out from high school is at the lowest level ever.² Howard and Anderson conclude that only twenty-five percent of American young people do not obtain a high school diploma.³ However, as Beck and Muia state, even a twenty-five percent figure is too high.⁴ It seems apparent that America's educators must continue to combat this problem.

Much of the research indicates that, to a large extent, the dropout problem is caused by factors outside the domain of the schools. Kaplan and Luck attribute much of the dropout problem to "social ills." They state that alleviation of these social ills demands an unprecedented commitment of resources and determination.⁵

Schreiber cites seven factors that have brought the dropout problem into public focus. Of the seven factors which he determined in 1969, four continue to be in the public eye, perhaps even more so than in 1969. These four are: continuing unemployment, the rise in delinquency and youth crime, the rise in public-assistance payments, and the increased use of technology in farming.⁶ These factors indicate that the public is worried about the costs to society caused by dropouts.

A New York State study, cited by Kaplan and Luck, confirms these fears. The study indicates that dropouts confront

relatively high unemployment and relatively low earnings. Other evidence suggests that school dropouts are more prone to

juvenile delinquency than graduates and more likely to require public assistance of all types than graduates.⁷

Schreiber concludes that one reason unemployment becomes a problem for dropouts is that personnel managers use the high school diploma as a screening device even when the job does not require it.⁸ This problem is magnified by downturns in economic conditions. Kaplan and Luck state that the nongraduate becomes a marginal quantity in the work force when competition for jobs allows employers to oversimplify qualifications.⁹

Even if a dropout does find and hold a job throughout his or her lifetime, the dropout's earnings are considerably less than those of the graduate. A U. S. Department of Labor fact sheet, cited by Schreiber, demonstrates in 1964 a difference of approximately \$65,000 between the average lifetime earnings of graduates and dropouts.¹⁰

Thus, it seems that the cost of dropping out to both society and to the dropout is great. However, determining the cause of a student's decision to drop out can prove very difficult. Howard and Anderson, in their review of the literature, surmise that the cause is likely not an isolated incident, but the culmination of conditions and actions experienced long before the decision.¹¹

Characteristics of the Average Dropout

Although the cause of a dropout's decision to leave school may be hard to pinpoint, several studies attempt to draw a composite of the "typical" dropout. Generally, the dropout is on a treadmill of failure. Schreiber calls him or her a "fugitive from failure."¹² Tannenbaum refers to the dropout as a "multiple failure."¹³

The average dropout, according to Schreiber, is slightly overage for his or her grade placement, having been held back once in the lower grades.¹⁴ Hewitt and Johnson find the dropout to be an individual with poor grades.¹⁵ Cervantes identifies the dropout to be two years behind in reading or arithmetic at the seventh grade level.¹⁶ Beck and Muia conclude that the dropout has a history of disruptive behavior in school,¹⁷ although Schreiber points out that the average dropout has not been in trouble with the law.¹⁸ It is also suggested by Schreiber that the dropout's family likely has a history of dropping out.¹⁹

Other characteristics held in common by many dropouts can also be identified. Kaplan and Luck place great emphasis on dropouts being victims of socioeconomic forces. They view poverty as the most important characteristic of most dropouts.²⁰ Howard and Anderson report that dropouts often come from broken homes or homes psychologically "broken."²¹ As also documented by Howard and Anderson, dropouts, after experiencing the treadmill of failure, begin to lose interest in school. This lack of interest grows into a marked dislike for school.²² According to Herschaff, this eventually results in a sense of alienation.²³

Involvement in the Activities Program by the Average Dropout

Finally, study after study reveals that the typical dropout has had little or no involvement in extracurricular activities. A 1965 Los Angeles City School District study reports that eighty-three percent of dropouts hold records of little or no participation.²⁴ A 1964 study in Dade County, Florida, by Gillingham shows that 91.9 percent of the dropouts are not participating in an extracurricular activity at the

time of withdrawal, compared to 34.2 percent of the graduates.²⁵ A 1963 Maryland State Department of Education study indicates that two-thirds of the dropouts in the study show no participation in extracurricular activities.²⁶ Hewitt and Johnson report similar results in their study of Muncie, Indiana, students. There, 61 percent of the dropouts are not involved in any extracurricular activities. Hewitt and Johnson also report that over 40 percent of these dropouts are not involved in organized activities in the community, e.g., church, hobby clubs, "Y" clubs, etc.²⁷

Although lack of participation in extracurricular activities is one of the most frequently identified characteristics of dropouts, very few programs are documented and researched to show the effectiveness of attempting to involve potential dropouts in extracurricular activities.

Successful Dropout Prevention Programs which
Utilized Increased Extracurricular
Involvement

An Illinois survey of secondary school administrators reveals that an after-school-recreational-opportunities-in-school program, the fifth most-mentioned program out of forty-seven different types of programs listed on a questionnaire, was regarded by the administrators as being effective in preventing dropouts.²⁸

The only well-documented project in the literature which utilized extracurricular activities to prevent dropouts is St. Louis, Missouri's Project STAY. There are six basic components in this project, of which increased extracurricular activities was one. The dropout rate goes from 49.8 percent in the baseline year to 22.1 percent during the first year

of the project. However, the variety of programs in the project makes it difficult to determine what effect any particular component had.²⁹

Even though few studies document successful dropout prevention programs which utilized extracurricular activities as a major component, several studies indicate a dire need for more prevention programs with affective priorities. Hewitt and Johnson discover in Muncie, Indiana's schools that between 1924 and 1977 dropouts' reasons for withdrawing shifted dramatically from being economic to personal. Subjective feelings become the basis for student withdrawal.³⁰ Beck and Mula find that the trend for educators to demonstrate feelings of love and approval toward potential dropouts is one of the more positive measures in recent research on the dropout problem.³¹ Kaplan and Luck acknowledge that home contact programs provide much needed rapport between the community and the school.³² Hershaff implores schools to emphasize not only the cognitive, but also the affective domain in dropout prevention, citing a program entitled Focus as an example of a successful combination of affective and cognitive learning.³³ Stoughton and Grady contend that many dropouts are in reality "pushouts."³⁴

Thus, although the amount of research on dropouts has diminished in recent years, several valid conclusions can be drawn from the literature available: First, because dropouts continue to be a burden on a society already experiencing economic difficulties, new ideas and approaches to solve the dropout problem are needed. Second, among the many characteristics dropouts tend to have in common, one of the most damaging is the treadmill of failure on which most dropouts have been trapped during their school experience. Third, very few dropouts are

involved in extracurricular involvement as a means to combat student withdrawal. Finally, affective means seem most promising as avenues toward solving the dropout problem.

CHAPTER THREE

Presentation and Analysis of the Data

Overall Comparison of Activity Involvement by Graduates and Dropouts

There was a total of 3,414 graduates from the thirteen schools over the two years of the study. The 3,414 graduates were involved in 7,269 activities during their last year of attendance for an average of 2.13 activities per graduate.

There was a total of 268 dropouts from the thirteen schools over the two years of the study. The average dropout rate was just over 10 dropouts per year per school. These 268 dropouts were involved in 70 activities in their last two full semesters of attendance for an average of 0.26 activities per dropout.

The collective mean of 2.13 for the typical graduate's involvement in activities was more than eight times greater than the typical dropout's involvement in 0.26 activities. The difference between the means was 1.87 activities.

Comparison of Activity Involvement by Graduates and Dropouts in the Individual Schools

Table 1 shows that the graduates of the individual schools ranged from a low of 1.28 activities per graduate at School B, to a high of 3.10 activities per graduate at School L. The involvement rate for dropouts ranged from a low of 0.00 at School A to a high of 1.00 at School J.

Table 1

Comparison of Graduate and Dropout Activity Involvement

Schools	No. of Graduates	No. of Activities	Average No. of Activities/ Graduate	No. of Dropouts	No. of Activities	Average No. of Activities/ Dropout	Difference
A	147	261	1.78	1	0	0.00	1.78
B	180	231	1.28	25	5	0.20	1.08
C	80	203	2.54	7	1	0.14	2.40
D	323	865	2.68	45	4	0.09	2.59
E	353	578	1.63	33	21	0.64	0.99
F	213	521	2.45	6	1	0.17	2.28
G	465	971	2.09	55	2	0.04	2.05
H	324	656	2.02	30	5	0.17	1.85
I	346	631	1.82	19	3	0.16	1.66
J	128	329	2.57	1	1	1.00	1.57
K	203	355	1.75	10	5	0.50	1.25
L	313	969	3.10	13	12	0.92	2.18
M	338	699	2.07	23	10	0.43	1.64
Total	3,414	7,269	2.13	268	70	0.26	1.87

The smallest difference in the rate of involvement in activities between the graduates and dropouts at an individual school was 0.99 at School E, while the greatest difference was 2.59 at School D.

Comparison of Activity Involvement by Year

Table 2 shows that no substantial difference was found between the two years of the study. In the first year, the schools had 1,707 graduates who participated in 3,599 activities for an average involvement in 2.11 activities. In the second year, there were 1,707 graduates involved in 3,670 activities for an average involvement in 2.15 activities.

For dropouts the figures were 136 dropouts in the first year who were involved in 38 activities for an average of 0.28, and in the second year there were 132 dropouts in 32 activities for an average of 0.24. Therefore, the graduates' involvement went up slightly from the first year to the second while the dropouts' involvement dropped slightly.

Table 2

Comparison of Activity Involvement by Year

	No. of Graduates	No. of Activities	Average No. of Act./Grad.	No. of Dropouts	No. of Activities	Average No. of Act./Drop.
Year 1	1,707	3,599	2.11	136	38	0.28
Year 2	1,707	3,670	2.15	132	32	0.24

Comparison of Activity Involvement
According to School Size

Table 3 shows that school size apparently did not make any notable difference in the rate of involvement in activities by either graduates or dropouts. Graduates of the schools with secondary enrollments of 500 or more were involved in a slightly higher average of activities than graduates in schools with under 500 students, while there was no difference between the dropouts' involvement in the two groups of schools. The larger schools had 2,463 graduates involved in 5,369 activities for an average of 2.18, and 218 dropouts in 57 activities for an average of 0.26. The smaller schools had 951 graduates in 1,900 activities for an average of 2.00, and 50 dropouts in 13 activities for an identical average of 0.26.

Table 3

Comparison of Activity Involvement by School Size

School Size 9-12	No. of Grads.	No. of Activi- ties	Average No. of Act./Grad.	No. of Drops.	No. of Activi- ties	Average No. of Act./Drop.
Under 500 students (A,B,C,F,J,K)	951	1,900	2.00	50	13	0.26
500 or more students (D,E,G,H,I,L,M)	2,463	5,369	2.18	218	57	0.26

CHAPTER FOUR

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Thirteen schools in northeast Iowa were surveyed and visited to determine the extent of involvement by graduates and dropouts in extra-curricular activities. Records of each student's last full year of attendance were examined to determine the number of activities in which each student was involved. Records for the two most recent academic years were utilized for each school.

The data gathered from the survey and visits were organized to compare the activity involvement of dropouts and graduates in four areas: for each individual school, for all thirteen schools, for schools with under 500 students and those with more than 500 students in grades 9-12, and for the two different years of the study.

The eight to one difference between the activity involvement of graduates and dropouts in the thirteen schools was dramatic. Apparently, the dropouts studied in the smaller, rural schools of northeast Iowa were much like the dropouts of the larger urban schools used in earlier studies. Neither the dropouts of northeast Iowa schools nor those of the metropolitan schools displayed any substantial degree of involvement in extracurricular activities.

While the 8:1 ratio of involvement in the totals from all the schools was noteworthy, the statistics for the individual schools were not conclusive in themselves. Some schools had too few dropouts

to display any real tendency. One, two, or three dropouts were not enough on which to base any conclusion.

However, the totals for 268 dropouts which indicated involvement in only 70 activities were sufficient to merit a conclusion. Dropouts displayed a distinct lack of involvement in school activities. This was especially apparent when comparing their collective involvement to the collective involvement of graduates. The typical dropout was involved in only one-fourth an activity.

The year-to-year figures, while only for two years, did suggest that graduate and dropout involvement was fairly constant, with little variation from one year to the next. This consistency suggested that dropouts did tend to follow a pattern of non-involvement.

A slight difference existed between the rate of involvement by the graduates from the larger schools and the graduates from the smaller schools. The 2.18 rate of involvement compared to a 2.00 rate was not overwhelming, however. The dropout rate of involvement in both the smaller and the larger schools was 0.26. The marked similarity in the statistics for these two groups was somewhat remarkable when one considers that the larger schools tended to offer a much greater variety of activities. As mentioned earlier, one of the larger schools offered forty-two separate activities to its students, while one of the smaller schools offered only fourteen activities to its students. Of course, the greater number of activities was offset by the greater number of students who could be involved in these activities.

Conclusions

The data demonstrated that a disparity existed between the involvement in school activities by those who completed their schooling compared to those who dropped out prior to completion. This finding supported the findings of earlier studies. However, earlier studies dealt with students from large, metropolitan and suburban school systems, while this study examined students from smaller, rural schools.

While there is no certainty that being involved in cocurricular activities prevents potential dropouts from withdrawing, it seems apparent that the potential dropout's lack of involvement makes it easier or more convenient for him or her to leave school. As the literature suggests, the dropout does not have a sense of attachment to school life since it has likely only produced failure. If dropouts could be involved to a greater degree in school activities, that involvement could provide the potential dropout with another avenue in which to be successful outside the academic arena, an arena which has likely proven unsatisfactory.

Recommendations

Logically, in order for schools to help any student, that student must be in school. Any program that can provide additional incentive for a student to be in school should be maintained. However, in these difficult economic times, it appears that schools will begin to eliminate perhaps the only programs that enhance certain student's feelings of success, and thus possibly increase the rate of student withdrawals from schools. If the exodus from schools increases, an already disenchanting

public will only speak more disparagingly of the schools and their ability to properly educate this nation's youth. Therefore, the following five recommendations are proposed.

One, consider offering more, not less, activities. If "extra-curricular" activities help keep students in school as the data suggest, they are a necessary and vital part of the educational system. If schools are to effectively educate students, they must first get and keep students in school.

Two, develop a program which increases the rapport between the community and the school. As indicated in the literature, increased rapport can effectively aid in preventing students from dropping out. Communities which feel their schools are successful will support those schools. As stated previously, an increasing dropout rate will make communities belittle schools even further. One avenue through which community support can be improved is the activities program.

Recently, Dr. Robert Parks, President of Iowa State University, discussed how he utilized the successful athletic programs of the school to attract people to the university and, through that initial contact, to eventually garner financial support for academic programs.³⁵ The same philosophy can work in the public schools.

Three, develop programs to keep potential dropouts in school. One possible approach, apparently, would be through increasing the involvement of potential dropouts in cocurricular activities.

Four, develop data to show the success of such efforts and how the school is improving the education of the community's youth. Cocurricular activities by their very nature elicit support and enthusiasm, qualities needed in today's educational environment.

Finally, communicate successful educational efforts to the public. As Donald Bagin and John H. Wherry told the annual convention of the American Association of School Administrators, in order to combat the low public confidence in education, educators must employ sound public relations and let the public know what is being done.³⁶ One avenue to improve a school's public relations is through the natural appeal of the activities program.

If the dropout problem is a problem, it seems that one way to combat it is through a program designed to increase the potential dropout's involvement in the school activities program. This can accomplish four things: First, it can break the treadmill of failure on which the potential dropout often finds himself or herself. Second, it can provide the positive affective learning experiences for the potential dropout that the literature describes as being so necessary. Third, the very nature of activities lends itself to promoting more positive community rapport with the school, which further aids in dropout prevention. Finally, the nature of activities also lends itself nicely to promoting good public relations and a positive school image, as activities are easily visible elements of schools. Therefore, the activities programs in schools need strong support from educators now as schools continue to face the economic crunch.

Notes

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³ W. Vance Grant, "Estimates of School Dropouts," American Education, 51 (1975), back cover, cited by Mary Ann Powell Howard and Richard J. Anderson, "Early Identification of Potential School Dropouts: A Literature Review," Child Welfare, 57 (1978), 222.

⁴ Lisa Beck and Joseph A. Muia, "Potential High School Dropouts," Education Digest, 46, No. 7 (1981), 16.

⁵ Jay L. Kaplan and Edward C. Luck, "The Dropout Phenomenon as a Social Problem," Educational Forum, 42 (Nov. 1977), 41.

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⁹ Kaplan and Luck, op. cit., 46.

¹⁰ U. S. Department of Labor, Worth of Education, Youth Employment, Fact Sheet, The Department, (1964), cited by Daniel Schreiber, "Dropout -- Causes and Consequences," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. Robert L. Ebel, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 309-310.

¹¹ Mary Ann Powell Howard and Richard J. Anderson, "Early Identification of Potential School Dropouts -- A Literature Review," Child Welfare, 57 (1978), 223.

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¹³ Abraham J. Tannenbaum, The School Dropout Today (ERIC ED 021 888), cited by Jay L. Kaplan and Edward C. Luck, "The Dropout Phenomenon as a Social Problem," Educational Forum, 42 (Nov. 1977), 43.

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- 18 Schreiber, loc. cit.
- 19 Ibid.
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Appendix A

Cover Letter

Dear Sir:

I am a graduate student at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). As part of the requirements for my masters degree in secondary administration, I am to conduct a research project. I have chosen to research the area of high school dropouts and the degree of their involvement in the activities program at their high school.

To compile the research for this project, the fifteen schools that comprise the Northeast Iowa and Cedar-Wapsie Athletic Conferences have been selected. These two conferences were selected because of the variety of size among the schools, the rural and town nature of the districts, their representativeness of Iowa schools in general, and their proximity to my home. After consulting with officials in each conference, I have been advised to contact each school individually through its superintendent.

The nature of my study is this. I will use the last two school years, 1981-82 and 1980-81. From school records I will determine the number of graduates in each year and the total number of activities that the graduating class was involved in on an individual basis. I will compare this average to the average for the dropouts in the same two years. The dropout average will be figured through a slightly different formula as the average will be compiled from each dropout's last two full semesters of attendance.

By activities, I mean all of a school's program that is considered either cocurricular or extracurricular. This would include all athletics, varsity or otherwise; all music, speech, dramatic, or other fine arts endeavors; and all chartered or school-sponsored clubs or organizations such as National Honor Society, Future Farmers of America, Music Club, Foreign Language Club and et cetera.

The research will be conducted in two phases. First, a preliminary survey will be used to obtain basic statistical information about each school. The preliminary survey is included with this letter. Please take five or ten minutes to fill out and return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. The second phase will be a personal visit to gather the statistical information concerning the students. To arrange this visit I will call you on Monday, June 14, or Tuesday, June 15. During this visit I will ask to go through student records to gather statistical data. If you desire to have a school official work with me, this would be welcomed. Depending on the size of the school, I expect to spend approximately two hours on each visit.

At this point two major assurances need to be made. First, students will be given total anonymity. No student's name will be used. I do not need names; in fact, I do not need individual statistics. All that I seek is the total number of graduating students and the total number of activities they were involved in during each year and the total number of dropouts and the total number of activities they were involved in during each year. Secondly, each school will be given total anonymity in the report. No school will be identified by name in the research paper.

If you wish to have a copy of the final report, be sure to check the appropriate spot on the enclosed survey. Thank you for your cooperation. It is greatly appreciated.

Appendix B
Preliminary Survey

School District: _____

Address: _____

City

State

Zip Code

Phone: _____

Name of largest community in district: _____

Population of largest community: _____

Number of incorporated communities in district: _____

School Enrollment (Check one in each column)

K-12, 1981-82

less than 250 ___

250-499 ___

500-749 ___

750-999 ___

1000-1249 ___

1250-1499 ___

1500-1749 ___

1750-2000 ___

more than 2000 ___

9-12, 1981-82

less than 100 ___

100-249 ___

250-499 ___

500-749 ___

750-999 ___

1000-1249 ___

1250-1500 ___

over 1500 ___

K-12, 1980-81

less than 250 ___

250-499 ___

500-749 ___

750-999 ___

1000-1249 ___

1250-1499 ___

1500-1749 ___

1750-2000 ___

more than 2000 ___

9-12, 1980-81

less than 100 ___

100-249 ___

250-499 ___

500-749 ___

750-999 ___

1000-1249 ___

1250-1500 ___

over 1500 ___

Graduating Class Size: # of students
 1981-82 _____
 1980-81 _____

Dropouts (from all classes, 9-12): # of students
 1981-82 _____
 1980-81 _____

Person to contact during visit: _____

Position: _____

Check if a copy of the final report is desired

Signature of person completing survey: _____

Position: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Participating Schools

Allamakee Community School (Waukon)

Charles City Community School

Crestwood High School, Howard-Winneshiek Community School (Cresco)

Decorah Community School

Denver Community School

Fredericksburg Community School

Jesup Community School

New Hampton Community School

Oelwein Community School

South Winneshiek Community School (Calmar)

Tripoli Community School

Turkey Valley Community School (Jackson Junction)

Waverly-Shell Rock Community School (Waverly)