DATA AND REACTIONS
CONCERNING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
IN LEDYARD, IOWA, HIGH SCHOOL,
1950-1953

BY

JOHN GORDON CHRISTIANSON, B. A.

A FIELD REPORT

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science in Education
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study was made with the hope that it would contribute materially to a better understanding of the school attendance program in the high school at Ledyard, Iowa. Regular school attendance seems to be an attitude of mind that may or may not become a habit. In the rural schools, such as Ledyard, there seems to be a tendency to keep pupils out of school during the busy farm seasons and also at other times to assist with work. Along with the other necessary reasons for pupil's being absent from school, this accounts for a rather high rate of absenteeism among the students.

It is a known fact that school districts go to great expense to provide children with their heritage of a free education. Because of this fact, the American people have been quite concerned that all children do make use of this privilege to prepare themselves for a better standard of living. This is evidenced through the passing of compulsory education laws in the various states by which children of school age, who are physically or mentally able to benefit from this training, are compelled to be in school until they have reached a certain age or educational level. To insure the effectiveness of this law, the states require periodic accounting of attendance from the school. Upon this accounting of pupil attendance, the State of Iowa bases its payment of state aid to the schools.
The legal duty of seeing that compulsory education laws are observed locally belongs to the school board and superintendent, but usually the heaviest responsibility for seeing that students are in school with reasonable regularity falls upon the principal. Even though school attendance may be only one of the many duties of a school administrator, he will often find that the regular attendance of students has a direct connection with the smooth operation of school activities.

The manner in which the attendance program is handled by the school principal may condition the attitude of teachers, parents, and pupils toward the school. If the principal should be authoritarian in his methods and show no consideration for the pupil's school or home problems, which might be affecting their school attendance, he could easily cultivate a negative attitude toward school co-operation among these persons. Whereas, if the principal has a good understanding of the state and local regulations on school attendance, knows the attendance patterns of the school in which he works, and is aware of pupil and parental attitudes toward school attendance, it should be possible for him to work out an attendance program that would insure greater co-operation from all sources.

It was for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the attendance program at the school where he has been principal for the last two years that this writer selected this topic. The initial procedure of the study was to analyze the attendance records of the Ledyard High School for the three school years, 1950 to 1953. A survey was then made of all high school students and their parents to determine their attitudes toward school attendance. It was hoped that from a better understanding of their
There are students who have been taught to handle the educational system, to challenge the educational system, and to demand change in the school system. The Lackawanna School has an enrollment of approximately 1,400 pupils.

The tight area on the streets of itching.

men of ignorance and a result there is a lot of unnecessary and dangerous.

One bad feature of the town is that the doors are locked when under the direction of the high school, which is closed for the school start and after school dismissed.

Also, a strong summer attachment program during the summer season which the town does provide some extracurricular activities for the children.

The town does provide some worthwhile opportunities for the children.

Since it is a very much isolated location, the community school district.

However, there is no extracurricular program for the children.

In conclusion, Lackawanna, Iowa, is a small town of 2,500 population located on the

In conclusion, the author hopes to make some suggestions that will prove of value to himself and also to future students.

In regard to attendance duties and other phases of schoolwork, the writer would be better qualified to perform his functions.
A new building program is in progress at this time for the purpose of adding vocational homemaking and agriculture to the curriculum and of providing a new gymnasium and band room for the school. The Ledyard School should be better able to satisfy the needs and interests of its students with the completion of this project.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROGRAMS

Since the creation of this nation, there has been a complete change in the attitudes toward school attendance. Formerly, school attendance was simply for those who chose or who were financially able to attend. At one time in school history, it was considered necessary only to educate members of the male sex because they were the ones who were responsible for providing for the family needs. But this has all changed. School attendance is now a required experience for all children. This required school attendance policy has resulted in court cases between the state and individuals in an attempt to determine the rights and responsibilities of the school authorities.

The courts usually attempt to strike a balance between the rights of the individual and the state as is evidenced by the enactment of the compulsory attendance laws. Hamilton and Mott say this about compulsory school attendance:

Legislation requiring pupils between stated ages to attend school is on the statute books of all states. The constitutionality of such legislation has been attacked in a great number of cases but has been uniformly upheld. The constitutional objection raised is that by compelling school attendance, the individual liberty guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution is unreasonably infringed. Since the welfare of the State is served by the creation of an enlightened citizenry, the
enactment of compulsory attendance laws is held to be a valid exercise of the police power of the state.1

With the American people becoming aware of their heritage of a free education, the teaching profession is faced with the task of handling larger and larger numbers of students each year. This privilege of an education is discussed by E. M. Stern in an article in The Woman's Home Companion:

We Americans are rightly proud of our educational standards. At least twelve years of free schooling and a high school diploma constitute a democratic right. Once such an education was only for the few who wanted to enter the professions. Today we take it as a matter of course for the many, and never before has such a large proportion of our young people been enrolled in high school.2

Since the public schools are supported by means of taxation, it is apparent that everyone helps pay for them, and should, therefore, be entitled to share in their benefits. Kelly develops the following idea:

If the system is operated for the benefit of only part of society, some are being denied the equity for which they have paid. If some cannot profit by our education, we are permitting a section of our people to become the educationally disinherited.

The acceptance of compulsory school attendance laws in all states was evidence that the American people were realizing that the school had an important task to perform. Next, the people became concerned that their children attend school regularly until they have satisfied minimum require-


ments. As the importance of education in an increasingly complex society is realized, these requirements have to be constantly changed.

More states, however, have minimum requirements set up in their statute books and these requirements illustrate the concept of education in that state. The following attendance requirement is on the Iowa statute books:

Any person having control of any child over seven and under sixteen years of age, in proper physical and mental condition to attend school, shall cause such child to attend some public or private school for at least twenty-four consecutive school weeks in each school year, commencing with the first week of school after the first day of September, unless the board of school directors shall determine upon a later date, which date shall not be later than the first Monday in December.

The board may, by resolution, require attendance for the entire time when the schools are in session in any school year.

In lieu of such attendance such child may attend upon equivalent instruction by a competent teacher elsewhere than at school.\(^1\)

The presence of these attendance laws in the statute books gives the state and local school district officials a necessary source of power to keep pupils in school. Penalties are set up in these statutes which can be assessed against people who might keep children out of school. The enforcement of attendance laws is not always the simplest procedure because as Hamilton and Mort say:

Enforcement of compulsory attendance laws must be tempered with reason. If a child is ill, lives an unreasonable distance from school and transportation is not furnished, or other good cause exists for failure to attend school, he is not a truant and his parents are not guilty of keeping him out of school contrary to law.\(^2\)

Most school administrators would prefer not to have to resort to the law in promoting regular school attendance. Rather, they would make use of the idea put forth by Butterworth and Dawson:

To achieve desired results it is necessary that attendance administrators do more than use state laws to keep children in

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\(^1\) State of Iowa, School Laws (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1961), Sec. 299.1.

\(^2\) Hamilton and Mort, op. cit., p. 462.
school. While in some cases it may be necessary to have recourse to law for this purpose, a more constructive approach is preferred. This approach calls for an analysis of reasons pupils do not attend and for the expenditure of effort in removing or reducing the causes. If the truant or prospective drop out believes that school is not worth while, there is need for analyzing the school's program to see what can be done to improve the situation. If the home does not see the importance of regular attendance, there is opportunity for the school to try to change that point of view. If health is the significant factor, it is evident that the health authorities of the school or community should have a responsibility.

The duty of seeing that children are in school with reasonable regularity falls upon the principal in most small schools and upon the principal and attendance officer in the larger cities. If these individuals are interested in doing a good job for the school and its students, they should have a background of training in both the social and education field. Having such training, they could better understand the implications of school absenteeism on both the student and the school. Along this line of thought, Elsbree and McNally say:

Investigators have found that the amount of truancy and absenteeism in school systems is affected by policies relating to pupil progress and by the nature of the school offerings. The implications of these findings have led the more thoughtful administrators to take stock of their guidance provisions and to appraise their instructional programs critically. Students of the attendance problem emphasize the need for teachers to give thought to the mental health of their pupils.\(^1\)

Most of the recent literature that the writer has reviewed points out the close interrelation between school attendance and other school problems. It is also intimated that the principal who can interpret this relationship to all persons connected with the school will be doing his community a real service.


Absenteeism has an effect on classroom procedure if the percentage of absences becomes too high. It can mean repeating much of the classwork so that students who have been absent are able to comprehend the material. This in turn could be annoying to the students who have been in school regularly and might even promote disinterest in the class. Teachers, themselves, can be subjected to the extra work of explaining assignments again and checking make-up work. Hudson expresses another view on the problem of absenteeism:

How can I teach an empty seat? How can I help in the educational development of a pupil who is absent much of the time? Will this practice of absenteeism become a habit that will be carried forward into the future vocation of the pupil concerned? If so, how will it effect his earning capacity? These questions have passed through the minds of most teachers time and again.  

The causes of nonattendance may be numerous for the pupils in any particular school, urban or rural. Some of the reported excuses for absences are personal illness, sickness in family, work at home, poverty, parental indifference, shopping, medical appointments, funerals, and other miscellaneous reasons. Although all the above reasons may be encountered in both urban and rural schools, being absent for work is much more prevalent in the rural schools. During the spring and fall seasons, the farmers become rushed in the planting and harvesting operations and, as a result, some farmers keep their children home to help with this important work.

Since the harvesting of crops may be very essential to the general welfare of the farmer and community, some schools have a practice of closing school at this time in order not to interfere with the schoolwork of the pupils.  

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1C. H. Hudson, "Absences Cut 43%. Plan Also Reduces Number of Failures," The Clearing House, XXVI (February, 1950), 328.
children. In the rural schools, a school administrator has to have a sympathetic understanding of this problem of work in connection with the school attendance.

Elsbree and McNally have the following to say about the importance of a principal making a study of the attendance problem in his own particular school:

The chief value in examining the statistics relating to causes of pupil absence is to provide the principal with a basis for assessing his own situation. There is no substitute for a local analysis of nonattendance. The principal must know the causes of pupil absence if he is to make an intelligent attack upon the problem.¹

Besides being aware of the relationship of a good attendance program to the smooth functioning of a school system, the administrator or principal must establish a program that will encourage the regular attendance of the students. Harl Douglass in his book, Organization and Administration of Secondary Schools, advocates working through the following three sources:

1. Pupil
2. Parents
3. Attendance Officer²

The writer would like to briefly summarize the theories of Douglass along these lines.

Through the Pupil.—Douglass suggests two ways of working through the student for better school attendance. The first method is making the school attractive. He feels that, if the school is attractive physically

¹Elsbree and McNally, op. cit., p. 229.
and the teachers put forth more than ordinary effort in making classes interesting, there will be no attendance problem because the students will want to be in school. Also, if assignments are definite, if students are allowed freedom in planning, if there is good teacher-pupil rapport, and if recognition is made of student problems and achievements, there will be no problem because pupils will feel that they are definitely accomplishing something by being in school. Providing enjoyable opening exercises in the morning can also encourage pupils to be in school.

A second method of working through the pupil is through indirect incentives. Douglass states that this is an artificial approach to the problem that often works. Appealing to the student to be in school for the purpose of improving the school record is an example. Publishing attendance honor rolls, giving certificates for perfect attendance, and giving holidays to students having regular attendance are other examples. Perfect attendance could even be made a condition for the exemption from examinations.

A negative approach could also be used in indirect incentives by setting up penalties for unexcused absences and tardiness. Examples of penalties that were mentioned are making up all unexcused time, probation or suspension from school, lowering of grades, and the revocation of exemption from examinations. Most educators prefer not to use these negative methods, but in many cases they are found to be a necessity.¹

Through the Parent.--The second approach to improving school

¹Ibid., pp. 415-416.
attendance, suggested by Douglass, is to encourage the parents to use their influence in bringing about regular school attendance. He suggests notifying the parents by telephone or letter whenever their child is absent. Also, he would have the pupil bring a written excuse from the parents stating the reason for the absence. Douglass states that the following reasons for absences or tardiness are the ones accepted in most schools.

1. For absence
   a) Illness of pupil.
   b) Serious illness or death of a member of the family.
   c) Grave emergencies calling for the services or the presence of the pupils at home.
   d) Unusual opportunities for educational experience, such as trips and excursions not available at other times.

2. For tardiness
   a) Occasional (not frequent) unavoidable and unforeseen delays in transportation as failure of automobile or unusual congestion or delay of traffic owing to accidents, storms, bad roads, and detours.
   b) Occasional emergency calling especially for services of pupils before school as fires, accidents, and recovery of escaped livestock.

It is also mentioned that, if the relation between pupil progress and regular attendance is discussed with the parents at parent-teacher meetings, better cooperation by the parents may result.1

Through the Attendance Officer.--The attendance officer usually refers to the principal, although in many of the larger city school systems there are special persons employed full time in the follow-up of attendance problems. Douglass suggests several methods that principals might use in checking on pupils absent from school. In the morning as soon as an absence is noticed, he suggests that the principal call the home. If the pupil is home for an acceptable excuse, the principal is then relieved of any

1Ibid., pp. 417-418.
follow-up on that pupil. If the parents should not be aware of the pupil's absence, the principal might secure their aid in locating the probable truant.

Principals can also require pupils to bring written excuses from their parents on the day after a period of absence from school. Knowing that there could be the possibility of forged excuses, some principals keep a file of parent signatures and check the handwriting when in doubt. Mailing of letters to the parents of an absent child is another method, somewhat expensive, of making sure that parents are aware of their child's absence from school. This concludes the brief summary of the suggestions by Harl Douglass for improving school attendance.¹

The writer found some advice for parents in a book by Edmonson, Roemer, and Bacon.

Parents may help students to get the most out of their school days by:

1. Stimulating the students to appreciate the opportunity to secure an education.

2. Picturing the school as a happy, desirable place, rather than as a place students should wish to avoid.

3. Avoid criticism of teachers or school within the student's hearing and developing in the student habits of co-operation and respect for authority.

4. Helping the school authorities to attract and retain superior men and women in teaching and administrative positions.

5. Encouraging punctuality and regular attendance, not permitting trifles to interfere.

¹Ibid., pp. 418-419.
6. Seeing that students are dressed simply, neatly, modestly, and suitably in accordance with the weather.¹

Despite the efforts of any high school principal to initiate a program that attempts to stimulate good school attendance, he will probably find that he has to contend with absences caused by illness and necessary work. The pupils who are absent often because of illness should be helped through the health facilities of the school or community. Edmonson, Roemer, and Bacon have a suggestion for aiding the pupils who find it necessary to work during school hours to supplement their family income. "The part time and evening schools are now enabling large numbers of adolescents who have to work during the day, to continue their secondary school education at hours more favorable to them."²

In completing this survey of literature on the school attendance program, the writer discovered a paragraph in one book that gives a short description of the importance of regular school attendance. Even though this book was published in 1930, the thought behind it may still apply. This idea was developed by Herman Cooper and is as follows:

Regular school attendance is an attitude of mind which may or may not become a habit. It needs to be instilled in the mental life of rural teachers, parents, and pupils. The elementary school is an institution of society, and passes on to the younger generation those customs and traditions found to be most worthwhile for the general welfare of society.


² Ibid., p. 51.
Success in life depends in part upon one's regular attendance to the job at hand. The school and the home must co-operate to see that such habits of action are firmly instilled in the youth of the nation. Punctuality and regularity of attendance at school are essential to such training.¹

¹Herman Cooper, An Accounting of Progress and Attendance of Rural School Children in Delaware, p. 123. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1930.
CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF DATA

Description of Techniques

There were two methods used to obtain the data for this study. First, an analysis was made of the Ledyard High School attendance registers for the three school years, 1950 to 1953, to gain an understanding of the attendance patterns. Secondly, a survey was made of the high school students and their parents to obtain their attitudes toward school attendance. The results of these two surveys will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter, but the writer would first like to explain how he obtained his information and what he hoped to find.

In analyzing the attendance registers for the three school years, 1950 to 1953, the writer wanted to obtain the pattern of attendance for each year in order to see how the rate of absenteeism fluctuated during the different seasons of the year. Also, it was desired to know whether boys or girls were absent from school more often, what the predominant reasons were for absenteeism, and other related facts about school attendance.

The survey made of the high school students and their parents was identical except for two extra questions asked of the parents. The student survey was given to each of the four high school classes separately.
The purpose of the survey was explained carefully to each class and the students were encouraged to give their true opinion to each question.

To insure frankness, pupils were not asked to put their name on the survey sheets when handing them in and the writer also left the room while the questionnaire was being answered.¹ There were eighty-five students who participated in this study.

There were sixty-six pairs of parents for these high school students and a questionnaire was sent to each of them. A letter accompanied each questionnaire which explained the purpose of the survey. Also, before the questionnaires were sent out, the writer explained to the Parent-Teacher Association why he selected this topic and urged their cooperation in obtaining a good percentage of returns. Fifty-six or 85 per cent responded. The parents, too, were asked to leave their surveys unsigned in the hopes that they would give a more honest opinion under such conditions.²

School Attendance Patterns for 1950-1953

The Ledyard High School should not be too different from other rural high schools of similar size and, consequently, the information disclosed in this chapter may be of interest to school administrators elsewhere. The four year high school in Ledyard averaged between seventy and ninety students during the school years, 1950 to 1953. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the number and percentage of girls and boys during the three years used for this study. There were more girls than boys in each year except 1951 to 1952.

¹A copy of the student survey will be found in the appendix.

²A sample of the parent survey and the accompanying letter are found in the appendix.
TABLE 1

A COMPARISON OF THE NUMBER OF GIRLS AND BOYS IN THE LEDYARD, IOWA, HIGH SCHOOL DURING 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1952</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1953</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the fact there were usually more girls than boys in high school, the boys were nearly always responsible for the greater percentage of absences. This can be credited to the fact that, since this is a rural community, boys are quite often the ones who stay home to help with the field work. The author would like to comment, though, that there are several girls in the high school who are occasionally kept out for farm work and housework. Table 2 shows the percentage of absences caused by the girls and the boys during each of the three school years, 1950 to 1953.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE RATIO OF ABSENCES FOR GIRLS AND BOYS IN LEDYARD, IOWA, HIGH SCHOOL DURING 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1952</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1953</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since one question used in the student-parent survey asked how many days it was felt that a student could be absent and still succeed in his classwork, the author ascertained how many students had been out of school more than eighteen days a year. This number was selected because it meant that the student had been absent on the average of two days each month. Table 3 shows the results of this investigation. It should be noted that it was almost always the boys who were kept out the most days.

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1952</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1953</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tardiness is another factor of regular attendance that school administrators prefer to keep at a minimum. Punctuality is a desirable characteristic for all persons and its development should be encouraged during school days. Table 4 shows how many Ledyard High School students were absent more than five times during the year in each of the three school years used for this study. In the school year, 1962 to 1963, there were two boys who were tardy more than twenty-five times each.
The author felt that it would be interesting to know whether the girls or boys were responsible for being tardy most often. Table 5 shows the boys were tardy most often in the Ledyard High School during each of the three years. The boys having the highest rate of tardiness had their own cars and worked at chores around home for a longer time on those particular mornings.

### TABLE 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1952</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1953</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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### TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1952</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1953</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Another item that the writer includes in this analysis of attendance is the fact that there were drop-outs in the Ledyard School. Table 6 shows to what extent the drop-out problem was prevalent in Ledyard during these three years. The reasons given by these drop-outs for leaving school were varied. Not interested in school, schoolwork too hard, and the possibility of a good job are examples of the reasons they gave. The writer was curious about the school attendance of these drop-outs and found that they stayed out of school very often to work.

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF DROP-OUTS IN LEDYARD, IOWA, HIGH SCHOOL DURING YEARS 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1952</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1953</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the writer was principal of the Ledyard High School during the years, 1951 to 1953, it was his duty to write the admit slips for students after they had been absent. A record was kept of the reasons given by the students for being absent during the school year 1952 to 1953. As Table 7 shows, work and personal illness are the two predominant reasons for student absenteeism.
TABLE 7
REASONS GIVEN BY STUDENTS FOR ABSENTEEISM IN LEDYARD, IOWA, HIGH SCHOOL DURING 1952-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal illness</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (trips, business, and church activities)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical care</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main purpose in making this analysis of attendance records was to set up a graph for the three school years that would show to interested persons how the absenteeism rate fluctuates during the different seasons of the year. Each of the three years shows somewhat characteristic fluctuations. In the fall and spring seasons there is an upsurge of absenteeism while the students are being kept out for seasonal farm work. Chart 1 shows these increases. During the winter season the absenteeism rate drops to a percentage rate that compares favorably with other schools. Chart 1 shows that in 1952 and 1953 there was an upsurge of absences during January and February. This was caused by the presence of an influenza epidemic during that particular time.
Percent of absenteeism in Ledyard High School during each six weeks period of the school years, 1950-1953.
For the benefit of the readers, the approximate time of the year that each six weeks' period on Chart 1 corresponds to will be given now. The first period falls from about September first to October ninth, the second period from October twelfth to November seventeenth, the third period from November twentieth to January twelfth, the fourth period from January fifteenth to February twenty-third, the fifth period from February twenty-sixth to April thirteenth, and the sixth period runs from about April sixteenth to May twenty-seventh.

In studying Chart 1, it should be remembered that the absentee rate given for each period is the average. Therefore, it means there were times during the period when the absentee rate for a day was much higher than that shown on the graph. During the busy fall and spring seasons there have been days when the absentee rate was as high as 28 per cent.

Results of Student-Parent Check Lists

The freedom that people have to express their true opinion on whatever they choose to discuss is a characteristic of democracy. Similarly, if America is to have democratic schools, pupils and their parents should be allowed to voice opinions on the operation of their schools. A survey, such as was used in this study, is one means by which student and parent reactions can be brought to the school administrator. A wise administrator should then use these opinions to analyze the school program to which they refer.

Rather than have a separate section for the students' opinions and one for the parents' opinions, the writer thought it might be beneficial to compare the reactions of both groups in the same tables. This should
make possible recognition of any relationships which might exist between the thinking of students and parents on the topic of school attendance.

In the first question both groups were asked to give their opinion concerning the adequacy of their public school. As Chart 1 shows, the majority of both groups felt the school was doing a "fair" to "good" job of preparing the youth for life in present day society. Even though this question was not directly related to school attendance, it was felt that a poor opinion of the school's success might be a factor in understanding attendance habits.

**TABLE 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Student No.</th>
<th>Student Per Cent</th>
<th>Parent No.</th>
<th>Parent Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next question was asked to determine if both students and parents felt that it was beneficial to obtain a high school education. The parents were entirely in favor of it, probably because they can now see how it had or could have benefited them. Five of the students were
not certain whether high school would be beneficial to them. Table 9 shows the response of both groups to this question.

**Table 9**

Opinions of 85 Students and 56 Parents of Ledyard, Iowa, School District with Reference to the Question, "Do You Feel That It Is Beneficial to Every Person to Obtain a High School Education?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third question was asked to determine if children who have the ability should be encouraged to attend college. The majority of the students and parents felt that they should. Some persons qualified the affirmative answer by adding the phrase, "if they desire to attend." The author agrees that the question should have been so worded when it was first asked. Table 10 gives the responses to this question.
TABLE 10

OPINIONS OF 85 STUDENTS AND 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "SHOULD CHILDREN WHO HAVE THE ABILITY BE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND COLLEGE?"
1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The writer realizes that boys in the graduating classes of the last three years have been unsettled in light of the present world situation. This is a general problem in all schools and it is hard to advise these young men. It was hoped that the student-parent reaction to the question, "What would you advise the boys of the present high school graduating classes to do after graduation since most of them have to look forward to military service in a short time?" would prove helpful to the author in advising high school boys. Table 11 gives the response of each group to this question.
TABLE 11

OPINIONS OF 85 STUDENTS AND 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "WHAT WOULD YOU ADVISE THE BOYS OF THE PRESENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASSES TO DO AFTER GRADUATION SINCE MOST OF THEM HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO MILITARY SERVICE IN A SHORT TIME?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlist right now and get it over with.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work at odd jobs and have an enjoyable time until they are called into the services.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start college right away so that if they enjoy it and see its benefits they will be encouraged to continue it after leaving the armed forces.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously try some job that they feel they would like for a life occupation so they will not have to make those job tryouts after leaving the armed forces.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others. (list)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some persons checked more than one of the above responses and even listed others. Two persons felt that these young men should be entitled to a free college education after leaving military service. One person made the comment that these young men should make the best use of the time between graduation and their entrance into military service and not look at life discouragingly.

The fifth question used in this survey endeavored to get a list of skills that students and parents feel should be developed during high school training. The writer made a list of some skills which both groups felt were quite important, as Table 12 indicates. They were given the opportunity to write in other items they felt should be developed and it was in this list the author was most interested. Some of the items written in are:

1. More vocational training.
2. Become socially alert and responsible.
3. Shorthand training.
4. Develop moral ethics and character.
5. Greater understanding about world affairs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to carry on conversation with other people.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be able to read and write intelligently.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand and be able to use business arithmetic.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop acceptable habits of conduct and learn to respect the rights of all persons.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the civic responsibilities of all citizens.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take part in athletic games and develop sportsmanship.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to type.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The preceding list of items indicates that both groups felt the students were not being offered enough subjects and activities to interest them. The students are allowed no choice in the Ledyard High School in selecting their course of study. Consequently, the writer has often felt that some of the student dissatisfaction in classes is because they are forced to take subjects for which they lack either the ability or interest. The question in Table 13 indicates to what extent the students are not satisfied with their school curriculum.

**TABLE 13**

OPINION OF 85 STUDENTS AND 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR SCHOOL OFFERS ENOUGH SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES TO APPEAL TO THE INTEREST AND ABILITIES OF ALL STUDENTS?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next question, as shown in Table 14, was asked in both groups to determine how many days per month they felt students could stay out of school and still succeed in their classwork. The author realized that individual student ability would determine their answers, but their opinion to this question was still desired. The questionnaire provided a space to
fill in if they believed more days could be skipped each month and the student still succeed. A few students thought that they could be absent seven or eight days a month and still keep up with their work.

**TABLE 14**

OPINIONS OF 85 STUDENTS AND 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "HOW MANY DAYS DO YOU FEEL THAT A STUDENT COULD STAY OUT OF SCHOOL PER MONTH AND STILL SUCCEED IN HIS OR HER CLASSWORK?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2 days</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or 4 days</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or 6 days</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More? (how many?)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Getting down to the specific topic of this study, it was desired to know if students could be expected to do better in their work if they were in school regularly rather than if they were out of school quite often. Table 15 gives the response of both groups to this question. Most of them believe that regular attendance is vital to school success.
Teachers and principals are always curious as to why students are not getting as much from their classwork as is hoped for. A number of responses were set up and they were answered as shown in Table 16. The dominant reason given by both groups was that students do not study hard enough. The other reasons are important, also, and should never be disregarded in understanding a student's classwork difficulties. An opportunity was given for both groups to list more reasons why they felt school success was not too high. Some of the reasons given are listed below:

1. Poor attention and lack of concentration.
2. Teachers are not interested in a student's progress.
3. Students are not interested in certain subjects.
4. Popular idea is to "get by."
5. Modern methods teach sloppiness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15

Opinions of 85 Students and 56 Parents of Ledyard, Iowa, School District with Reference to the Question, "Could students be expected to do better in their work if they were in school regularly rather than if they stay out of school quite often?" 1950-1953
6. Too much written work.

7. Expected everything to be simple in the senior year, but when found it was not simple, students experienced difficulty in doing their best.

### TABLE 16

OPINIONS OF 85 STUDENTS AND 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU (STUDENTS) ARE NOT GETTING AS MUCH OUT OF SCHOOLWORK AS YOU (THEY) SHOULD, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE REASONS ARE?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (they) do not study hard enough.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work is too hard.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (they) do not understand the assignments</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers do not give enough individual help.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers do not give enough attention to slow learners.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough opportunities for rapid learners.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have too much schoolwork to do. (assignments too large, or too many subjects.)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They do too much work outside of school.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They spend too much time on student activities (athletics, plays, music, and others.)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested in schoolwork.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others. (list)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers all know the effects on class progress and interest when there are large numbers of students absent for a period of time. The question in Table 17 sought the opinion of students and parents concerning the effect of absenteeism on classwork. Both groups were in majority agreement that it was detrimental to the progress of the individual student and class and, also, that it meant extra work to the teacher.

Two other suggestions were given by students that might occur as a result of absenteeism. It was indicated that absent students might lose interest in school and that the remainder of the class might become restless and uninterested during some of the necessary repetition of classwork that would occur. There have not been many complaints from either the students or parents in Ledyard during the last three years about the school policy in regard to acceptable excuses for absences. The Ledyard School has a practice of excusing students for illness, necessary work at home, and other justifiable reasons. It was still deemed desirable by the author to get the opinion of both groups concerning their feeling of what constitutes an acceptable excuse. Table 18 shows the responses obtained from these two groups. The majority were in close agreement with the present school policy. A few more suggestions were listed as follows:

1. Medical and dental appointments.
2. Important church services.
3. Educational trips if work is made up in advance.
4. Hunting and fishing. (opening days)
5. Any excuse given by parents.
TABLE 17

OPINIONS OF 85 STUDENTS AND 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REREFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "WHICH FOLLOWING RESULTS MIGHT OCCUR IF LARGE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS SHOULD HAPPEN TO STAY OUT OF SCHOOL ON THE SAME DAY?"

1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of class might be slowed down in its progress.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent students are handicapped because of missing class discussions.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are subjected to extra work of giving and explaining assignments again.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers find it hard to accurately grade student's progress.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others. (list)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There has been an occasion during the 1952-1953 school year when a student and his parents questioned the right of the school to ask for an excuse for a two days' absence. They felt that the reason for staying out of school was strictly their own business. They even said that the school was making liars out of students and parents by demanding them to bring excuses for absences. Their notion was that parents would make up any excuse just to have it acceptable to the school authorities. Because of this one occasion, the writer was anxious to determine how all parents felt about the school requiring them to state reasons for a student's absence from school. As Table 19 clearly shows, most parents feel that
school authorities do have this right. Since the problem of student drop-outs is present in Ledyard High School, the author was prompted to ask a question concerning the students who are allowed to stay out of school occasionally to work for wages. The majority of students and parents felt that, if students were given this privilege, they might be tempted to quit school to continue earning this "big money." Concerning the three drop-outs of the 1952-1953 school year, money was a factor in each of these cases. All three boys were sophomores. One had been permitted by his parents to work occasionally at a friend's place on school days for wages. When this boy quit school, he said it was because he wanted to make enough money to buy a car. The other two boys already had cars and when they left school they drove out to the west coast to seek good paying jobs. They were brought back home by their parents after a few weeks and have been working at home since.

Lastly, on the parent's questionnaire, the writer desired the reasons which the parents felt applied to their situation when a student was kept out of school for work. The necessity of having the work done at once was the most important reason given. That could be expected since the attendance pattern graphs showed the upsurge of absenteeism during the rush seasons of fall and spring on the farm. The lack of available hired help and financial reasons were important, also. One mother commented that she had a full-time job so that whenever a young child in the family was ill, an older daughter was kept out of school to take care of her. One parent commented, also, that his children have never been kept out of school for work.
TABLE 18

OPINIONS OF 85 STUDENTS AND 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "IF IT IS FOUND NECESSARY FOR YOU (STUDENTS) TO BE KEPT OUT OF SCHOOL, WHICH REASONS GIVEN BELOW DO YOU FEEL SHOULD BE ACCEPTABLE AS EXCUSES?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal illness.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help at home during family illness.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals of near relatives.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important seasonal work, such as spring work.</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odd jobs that could be done outside of school if necessary.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trips which could be classified as educational, such as fairs.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping with parents.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others. (list)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 19

OPINIONS OF 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "SHOULD THE SCHOOL REQUIRE PARENTS TO STATE REASONS FOR A STUDENT BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 20

OPINIONS OF 85 STUDENTS AND 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU BELIEVE THAT STUDENTS WHO ARE PERMITTED TO BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL TO WORK FOR WAGES MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO QUIT SCHOOL FOR WHAT THEY NOW CONSIDER TO BE "BIG MONEY?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not necessarily</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 21

OPINIONS OF 56 PARENTS OF LEDYARD, IOWA, SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION, "WHICH REASONS DO YOU FEEL APPLY TO YOUR SITUATION WHEN A STUDENT IS KEPT OUT OF SCHOOL FOR WORK?" 1950-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is imperative that the work be done at once.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is hard to obtain other hired help.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary to use family help because of financial reasons.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others. (list)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data obtained from these surveys have been of great interest to this writer and it is hoped that future administrators of the Ledyard High School will find it beneficial to review the findings that have been tabulated in this section.

The line of argument throughout this study has been to interpret student and parent opinions toward regular school attendance. The correlation of attendance habits as a psychological and social problem that should be handled through educational means rather than by legal enforcement. A better attendance program in the Ledyard High School should be achieved when the social, economic, and educational needs of the community are understood by the school, parents, and students.

The ramifications of the various sections are almost endless. The supervision of attendance is certainly as important as the supervision of instruction. The whole responsibility for the learning process rests upon the teachers for the regular attendance of the pupil, so that the learning process may go on without interruption. Once and again, supervisors is pointing out that the case action involving investigation, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up is the most hopeful means of bringing about permanent changes in student behavior. Attendance work is an integral part of the teaching process and must be understood and dealt with in connection with all psychological factors involved.

Realizing that success in life depends in part upon one's capacity to attend school, the school and the home must co-operate in
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The line of argument throughout this study has been to interpret student and parent opinions toward regular school attendance. The correction of attendance habits is a psychological and social problem that should be handled through educational means rather than by legal enforcement. A better attendance program in the Ledyard High School should be achieved when the social, economic, and educational needs of the community are understood by the school, parents, and students.

The ramifications of the attendance problems are almost endless. The supervision of attendance is certainly as important as the supervision of instruction. The one is responsible for the learning process; the other for the regular attendance of pupils, so that the learning process may go on without interruption. More and more, experience is showing that the case method involving investigation, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up, is the most hopeful means of bringing about fundamental changes in human behavior. Attendance work is an integral part of the educative process and must be undertaken with a full realization of the psychological factors involved.

Realizing that success in life depends in part upon one's regular attendance to the job at hand, the school and the home must co-operate to
see that such habits of action are firmly instilled into the youth of the nation. Punctuality and regularity of attendance at school are essential to such training. From analysis of the results of this study, the following general conclusion can be reached:

1. The students and parents of the Ledyard School District are in agreement that every child should obtain a high school education, and if the ability and interest are present, acquire a college education, also.

2. The majority of the students and parents feel that students are not being given enough elective subjects in school to appeal to their interest and ability.

3. Work and personal illness are the two most persistent causes of student absenteeism in Ledyard High School.

4. The moral and social development of students is considered important along with growth in the subject material.

5. Students are not making as much progress as could be expected because they do not study hard enough, put too much time on outside activities, are not given enough opportunities in classwork, and are not given enough individual help from the teachers.

6. Most students and parents are in agreement with the school policy toward acceptable excuses for absenteeism.

Having arrived at the above conclusions, the following recommendations appear pertinent:

1. The subject curriculum of the Ledyard High School should be enlarged so that students will have some selection of subjects at least in their junior and senior years.

2. Students should be permitted a more active part in planning their classwork with increased emphasis on their aims and reasoning.

3. A six period day should be started in the high school. This would provide supervised study periods in the classroom and assure more help to the individual pupils.
4. The high school principal should be relieved of his full-time teaching load in order that he can devote more time to the attendance program and student counseling.

5. Special opportunities should be created in school for those children who tend to be absent quite often. If some unique interest can be created in them, perhaps they will want to be in school regularly.

6. Since there is seldom a guidance expert on the faculty of this size school, each teacher must be alert for children who are experiencing learning difficulties, whose conduct is erratic or troublesome, or who show signs of neglect. Such students will readily agree to stay out of school for work.

7. Teachers and administrators could do much at regular parent-teacher association meetings to promote better school attendance. Through discussions concerning the aims of a high school education, many parents might be encouraged to have their children attend school more regularly.

8. A week's vacation in the fall during the rush season on the farms is advisable. If the school shows this concern for the farmer's economic problem, they will perhaps co-operate by having their children in school more regularly.

9. The school should continue with its policy of excusing students for illness and other necessary reasons, but should be more severe on absenteeism for work unless it is absolutely necessary.

The responsibility of attaining a more secure and lasting democratic society falls on every individual. No group or organization can honestly deny its responsibility. In a country in which such a large proportion of the population attend the public schools, the schools have great potentialities. Competent leaders and citizens are and will be needed. Conditions of the day call urgently for men and women who are skilled in ways of helping youth, men, and nations help themselves in
the solution of their problems. Preserving to each child his rightful opportunity for education is the real challenge in providing school attendance service.
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

(Please answer every question by placing a check next to each choice that you feel expresses your true opinion.)

1. Taking everything into consideration, what kind of a job would you say your public school is doing in educating you for these times?
   Good
   Fair
   Poor

2. Do you feel that it is beneficial to give preference to student's high school education?
   Yes
   No
   Unsure

3. Should children who have APPENDIX be encouraged to continue their formal education?
   Yes
   No

4. What would you advise the boys of this manual's high school graduating classes to do after graduating? Some wish to join the Navy; some wish to go into military service in a short time.
   Work at any job and save as much as you can for college.
   Start college right away.

5. Check one of the following:
   Able to make or change a 2-350, etc., to 2.5-3.0
   Able to read and write
   Understand and be able to add, subtract, multiply, divide
   Overly acceptable

6. (Note the number of all answers)

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STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

( Please answer every question by placing a check mark in each blank that you feel expresses your true opinion.)

1. Taking everything into consideration, what kind of a job would you say your public school is doing in educating you for these times?
   ______ Good
   ______ Fair
   ______ Poor

2. Do you feel that it is beneficial to every person to obtain a high school education?
   ______ Yes
   ______ No
   ______ Uncertain

3. Should children who have the ability be encouraged to attend college?
   ______ Yes
   ______ No

4. What would you advise the boys of the present high school graduating classes to do after graduation since most of them have to look forward to military service in a short time?
   ______ Enlist right now and get it over with.
   ______ Work at odd jobs and have an enjoyable time until they are called into the services.
   ______ Start college right away so that if they enjoy it and see its benefits they will be encouraged to continue it after leaving the armed forces.
   ______ Seriously try some job that they feel they would like for a life's occupation so they won't have to make those job tryouts after leaving the armed forces.
   ______ Others. (list) __________

5. Check some of the following skills you feel all students should develop during high school training.
   ______ Ability to carry on conversation with other people.
   ______ Be able to read and write intelligently.
   ______ Understand and be able to use business arithmetic.
   ______ Develop acceptable habits of conduct and learn to respect the rights of all persons.
Understand the civic responsibilities of all citizens.
Take part in athletic games and develop sportsmanship.
Learn to type.
Others. (list) ________________________________

6. Do you feel that your school offers enough subjects and activities to appeal to the interest and abilities of all students?
Yes
No
Not sure

7. How many days do you feel that you could stay out of school per month and still succeed in your classwork?
None
1 or 2 days
3 or 4 days
5 or 6 days
More? (how many?) ________________________________

8. Could students be expected to do better in their work if they were in school regularly rather than staying out often?
Yes
No
Undecided

9. If you feel that you aren't getting as much out of schoolwork as you should, what do you think the reasons are?
I don't study hard enough.
The work is too hard.
I don't understand the assignments.
Teachers do not give enough individual help.
Teachers do not give enough attention to slow learners.
Not enough opportunities for rapid learners.
I have too much schoolwork to do. (assignments too large, or too many subjects)
I do too much work outside school.
I spend too much time on student activities. (athletics, music, plays, reading library books, and others.)
Not interested in schoolwork.
Others. (list) ________________________________

10. Which following results might occur if large numbers of students should happen to stay out of school on the same day?
Remainder of class might be slowed down in its progress.
Absent students are handicapped because of missing class discussions.
Teachers are subjected to extra work of giving and explaining assignments again.
Teachers find it hard to accurately grade student's progress.
Others. (list) ________________________________
11. If it is found necessary for you to be kept out of school, which reasons given below do you feel should be acceptable as excuses?
   ___ Personal illness.
   ___ Help at home during family illness.
   ___ Funerals of near relatives.
   ___ Important seasonal work, such as spring work.
   ___ Odd jobs that could be done outside of school hours if necessary.
   ___ Trips which could be classified as educational, such as fairs.
   ___ Shopping with parents.
   ___ Others. (list)

12. Do you believe that students who are permitted to be absent from school to work for wages might be tempted to quit school for what they now consider to be "big money."
   ___ Yes
   ___ No
   ___ Not necessarily

THANK YOU for your cooperation

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Gordon Christiansen
Senior Christiansen
High School Principal
Lansing, Iowa
May 3, 1953

To:

Parents of Ledyard High School Students

Dear Friends:

As one of the requirements for my Master's degree at Drake University, I am making a survey of Ledyard High School students and their parents to determine your attitude toward school attendance and its effects. I believe such information will be of benefit to me in my work, to future teachers and administrators of the Ledyard school, and possibly of interest to you. The results of this survey will be made public to you through the school paper.

State aid to schools is based upon the average daily attendance of students in school. Since schools are seldom, if ever, adequately financed, the loss of any money because of unnecessary pupil absence is serious. But since this loss is unquestionably small in comparison to the economic loss arising from the failure of the pupils to use the educational opportunities intended for them, we should not treat regular school attendance lightly.

Your careful attention in answering the enclosed survey questions will give me the facts concerning this community's attitude toward this important problem. A return envelope is enclosed for your convenience and your prompt attention will be appreciated. You need not add your name unless you desire.

May I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gordon Christianson
Gordon Christianson
High School Principal
Ledyard, Iowa
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

(Please answer every question by placing a check mark in each blank that you feel expresses your true opinion.)

1. Taking everything into consideration, what kind of a job would you say your public school is doing in educating young people for these times?
   ______ Good
   ______ Fair
   ______ Poor

2. Do you feel that it is beneficial to every person to obtain a high school education?
   ______ Yes
   ______ No
   ______ Uncertain

3. Should children who have the ability be encouraged to attend college?
   ______ Yes
   ______ No

4. What would you advise the boys of the present high school graduating classes to do after graduation since most of them have to look forward to military service in a short time?
   ______ Enlist right now and get it over with.
   ______ Work at odd jobs and have an enjoyable time until they are called into the services.
   ______ Start college right away so that if they enjoy it and see its benefits they will be encouraged to continue it after leaving the armed forces.
   ______ Seriously try some job that they feel they would like for a life's occupation so they won't have to make those job tryouts after leaving the armed forces.
   ______ Others. (list) ____________________________

5. Check some of the following skills you feel all students should develop during high school training.
   Ability to carry on conversation with other people.
   ______ Be able to read and write intelligently.
I understand and be able to use business arithmetic.
Develop acceptable habits of conduct and learn to respect
the rights of all persons.
Understand the civic responsibilities of all citizens.
Take part in athletic games and develop sportsmanship.
Learn to type.
Others. (list) ____________________________________________

6. Do you feel that your school offers enough subjects and activities
to appeal to the interest and abilities of all students?
   Yes
   No
   Not sure

7. How many days do you feel that a student could stay out of school
per month and still succeed in his or her classwork?
   None
   1 or 2 days
   3 or 4 days
   5 or 6 days
   More? (how many?) _______________________

8. Could students be expected to do better in their work if they were in
school regularly rather than if they stay out of school quite often?
   Yes
   No
   Undecided

9. If you feel that students aren't getting as much out of schoolwork as
they should, what do you think the reasons are?
   They don't study hard enough.
   The work is too hard.
   They don't understand the assignments.
   Teachers do not give enough individual help.
   Teachers do not give enough attention to slow learners.
   Not enough opportunities for rapid learners.
   They have too much schoolwork to do. (assignments too
   large, or too many subjects)
   They do too much work outside school.
   They spend too much time on student activities. (athletics, music,
   plays, and others)
   They aren't interested in schoolwork.
   Others. (list) _________________________________________

10. Which following results might occur if large numbers of students stay
    out of school for any given reason?
    Remainder of class might be slowed down in its progress.
    Absent students are handicapped because of missing class
discussions.
Teachers are subjected to extra work of giving and explaining assignments again.
Teachers find it hard to accurately grade student's progress.
Others. (list) ____________________________________________

11. If it is found necessary for students to be kept out of school, which reasons given below do you feel should be acceptable as excuses?
   - Personal illness.
   - Help at home during family illness.
   - Funerals of near relatives.
   - Important seasonal work, such as spring work.
   - Odd jobs that could be done outside of school hours if necessary.
   - Trips which could be classified as educational, such as fairs.
   - Shopping with parents.
   - Others. (list) _________________________________________

12. Should the school require parents to state reasons for a student being absent from school?
   - Yes
   - No

13. Do you believe that students who are permitted to be absent from school to work for wages might be tempted to quit school for what they now consider to be "big money".
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not necessarily

14. Check the following reasons that you feel apply to your situation when a student is kept out of school for work.
   - It is imperative that the work be done at once and as soon as possible.
   - It is hard to obtain other hired help.
   - Necessary to use family help because of financial reasons.
   - Others. (list) _________________________________________

Thank you for your cooperation and promptness in filling out these survey sheets. Please return them to me in the enclosed envelope. Remember, you needn't sign your name to this survey unless you desire to do so.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Cooper, Herman. An Accounting of Progress and Attendance of Rural School Children in Delaware. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1930.


State Law Code of Iowa, 1951, Section 299.1.
Articles


