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THE DROPOUT PATTERN
IN
NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1963-64

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THE DROPOUT PATTERN IN NEW JERSEY
1963-64

The data in this publication represent the students who were reported as dropouts in the New Jersey Public Schools during the school year which began in September 1963 and closed June 1964. The information was collected from the schools on an IBM card format designed for this purpose. A supply was mailed to the schools early in September with the request that a card be completed and returned to the Bureau of Research for each student defined as a dropout. The accuracy of this report is directly dependent upon the cooperation shown by the schools in providing this information.

This is the third report of a continuing series which began with the collection of data in September 1961. The tables drawn from the data are for the most part identical to those which were published in the preceding reports. The data can be compared but it is too early to make valid predictions of trends. Assumptions can be drawn by discerning the degree to which trends may be appearing.

The purpose of the study is to present the magnitude and extent of the problems of dropouts in New Jersey Public Schools. It is a general study and has inherent the weaknesses encompassed in any study of this type. It is definitely not an analysis in depth of the problem. The numbers represent individuals who are complex human beings and the circumstances which led to the ultimate decision to withdraw from school are as uniquely individual.

The term dropout is popularly conceived as the student who chooses to withdraw from school before completing the required twelve years of formal study which terminates with graduation. However, the term has a broader concept and requires a general definition that is inclusive of the wide range of students withdrawing from school, for example, the student who has no other choice than to withdraw from school because of poor health. This broader term is conceived as any student who withdraws from a public school before receiving that diploma which signifies his successful completion of the requirements established by proper authority nor presents evidence

of an intent to continue this pursuit in the immediate future. Therefore, the definition of the term dropouts in this report is any students who leave school prior to the completion of a normal program of studies, and with no immediate intention of continuing their education.

Adopting a broad concept necessitated an imposition of limitations to allow for more specific identification. Two categories were established. The dropouts were categorized as involuntary and voluntary with the distinction being determined by the authority to control the decision to withdraw from or continue in school. In the involuntary category, an authority other than the student makes the decision to withdraw or continue. Conversely, the voluntary category leaves the authority for this decision to the student.

The categories were further sub-divided on the basis of reason for leaving school. The reasons selected were general in nature. For example, a student was reported withdrawing because of a dissatisfaction with school. In counseling with the student it may have been discovered that a single factor or a combination of factors ranging from personal conflicts with students or teachers to a feeling of a lack of accomplishment due to failure led to the ultimate decision. As was pointed out earlier, each individual requires a special case study.

In the following paragraphs this report will attempt to describe the problem by answering the questions: (1) How many dropouts were reported in the public schools? (2) Where did the dropouts occur? (3) When did the dropouts occur? (4) Who were the dropouts in relation to age, sex and grade? (5) Why did the dropouts leave school?

How many dropouts were reported?

The findings of studies made over the last five years using school attendance data indicate a trend toward increased holding power in public schools. The data in this report would tend to support these findings.

There were 11,392 dropouts reported in the public schools of New Jersey

in 1963-64. This represented .94 percent of the 1,216,968 students enrolled on September 30, 1963. Computed as a rate, it was 9.4 dropouts per 1,000 students or approximately 10 students withdrawing from school for every 1,000 students enrolled.

The comparison with the 1962-63 school year shows that 47 fewer dropouts were reported in 1963-64: 11,439 to 11,392 in actual numbers. The combination of increased enrollments and reduced dropouts in this period lowered the rate from 9.8 dropouts per 1,000 students to 9.4. Although this may not seem startling, it is significant.

Where did the dropouts occur?

In answering this question two areas were considered: (1) the geographical pattern and (2) the counties.

There was no definite geographical pattern on a north-south division of the State. Dropouts occur at approximately the same rate in the northern section of the State as in the southern section. The combination of the size and the degree of industrialization of the state may account for this. Boys and girls withdrawing from school to seek employment have relatively easy access to highly concentrated industrial sites from any location in the State.

The range in the rate of dropouts was from a reported low of 2.1 dropouts per 1,000 students to the high of 17.2 per 1,000 students. This varies from year to year and there is no accurate standard by which a local district can predict the number of dropouts it will have in a school year. There are criteria used by the counsellors to recognize the symptoms of potential dropouts but these are not adequate to cover the range of the reasons for leaving used in this study. Any predictions in this area would at best be guesstimates based to a degree on intuition.

When did the dropouts occur?

During the school year, the largest numbers left in January (1,623), October (1,491) and April (1,323.) This has been a fairly consistent

pattern from the beginning of this study: a high number of dropouts early in the fall which tapers off through December, peaks in January, gradually decreases in February and March and rises in April with a subsequent decrease in the last two months of the year.

The consistency in the frequency of the occurrence of dropouts may mean there is a point in time which could be the "convenient time for leaving." In October the first report card of the year may have been the standard by which the final decision was to be made. Passing; "I stay"; failing, "there is no use, I quit." In January, "I was able to find a job over the Christmas Vacation which I like."

Who were the dropouts?

The dropouts were boys and girls ranging in age from five to twenty years enrolled in all grade levels of the New Jersey Public Schools. One out of eight dropouts was under sixteen years of age as slightly less than 12% or 1,312 of the 11,392 reported cases were in this classification.

The data by grades are shown in Tables II, III, and VII. Nine out of ten dropouts were enrolled in grades seven through twelve. This was 92 percent or 10,468 of the reported total. The problem is most acute in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades. Approximately seven out of every ten or 71 percent of the dropouts were from these grades.

The sophomore year or tenth grade in high school had the largest number of dropouts reported. Slightly less than one-quarter (1 out of 4 dropouts) ended their education at this point.

Table VIII tabulated the dropouts by reason, age group, and sex. Slightly more than 88 percent or 10,080 of the dropouts were age sixteen and over. In this group, three boys to two girls was the ratio. In the under sixteen group, there was an approximately equal number of boys and girls reported. For the total grouping, 6,778 boys withdrew compared to 4,614 girls: A ratio of three boys to two girls.

Why did they leave school?

Tables V and VI show the data for the involuntary and voluntary dropouts by reason and county. Five out of six of the dropouts made the decision to leave school. This represented 84 percent of the total.

Three of the listed reasons contained almost three-fourths of the dropouts. Entering or seeking employment, dissatisfaction with school and married or pregnant accounted for 71% of the reported dropouts. Those entering or seeking employment numbered 4,946 or 43 percent of the total.

The reasons reported in order of frequency and the percentage of the total for the involuntary dropouts were:

1. Entered Correctional Institution	5%
2. Administrative Exclusion	3%
3. Physical, Mental, Social, or Emotional Disability	3%
4. Prolonged Illness	2%
5. Other	1%
6. Deceased	1%
7. Drafted into Military Service	.05%

The reasons reported in order of frequency and the percentage of the total for the voluntary dropouts were:

1. Entering or Seeking Employment	43%
2. Dissatisfied with School	16%
3. Married or Pregnant	12%
4. Volunteered for Military Service	7%
5. Other	6%
6. No Information	6%

Conclusion:

It is apparent from the data that eight out of ten dropouts are age sixteen or over, in the secondary grades, and make their own decision to

leave school. They are leaving school to enter a world of work which is almost closed to them. The need for the high school diploma has never been as great as it is at the present time to secure employment. Many have come to realize this and are taking advantage of the new avenues of learning leading to this goal.

However, this is providing a remedy to cure the ill rather than seeking the vaccine that prevents the illness. Statistical data as expressions of the problem are important for they measure to a certain extent the degree of success or failure that is being achieved in coping with the problem.

A continuous study has the problem of maintaining an open line of communication between the source of information and the reporting agency. Changing personnel and increasing work loads tend to produce complaisant attitudes toward disciplined reporting. The accuracy of the data is then impaired and a false sense of improvement is developed which detracts attention from the problem. For these reasons, we are continuing to request the cooperation of the local schools in guarding against that complaisant attitude in reporting as the fifth year of this study approaches and expressing appreciation for the cooperation the schools have given in the past.

TABLE I
DROPOUTS IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BY COUNTIES
1963-64

County	Total Enrollment*	Total Dropouts	Percent Dropouts	Dropouts per 1,000 Pupils
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Atlantic	29,149	63	.22	2.1
Bergen	152,551	733	.48	4.8
Burlington	53,920	267	.49	4.9
Camden	77,553	993	1.28	12.8
Cape May	8,475	66	.78	7.8
Cumberland	24,493	396	1.62	16.2
Essex	162,458	2,099	1.29	12.9
Gloucester	33,911	303	.89	8.9
Hudson	79,436	1,363	1.72	17.2
Hunterdon	13,960	93	.66	6.6
Mercer	48,805	446	.91	9.1
Middlesex	104,131	773	.74	7.4
Monmouth	80,135	842	1.05	10.5
Morris	63,200	424	.67	6.7
Ocean	30,599	266	.87	8.7
Passaic	75,379	840	1.11	11.1
Salem	14,606	121	.83	8.3
Somerset	36,096	202	.56	5.6
Sussex	13,312	136	1.02	10.2
Union	100,611	803	.79	7.9
Warren	14,188	164	1.15	11.5
Total	1,216,968	11,392	.94	9.4

*Total enrollments are those reported on September 30, 1963.

TABLE II
DROPOUT RATES IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BY GRADES
1963-64

Grade	Total Enrollment*	Total Dropouts	Dropouts per 1,000 Pupils Enrolled
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Kindergarten	112,327	49	.4
**1	108,590	37	.3
2	99,673	33	.3
3	95,734	27	.2
4	94,239	24	.2
5	90,847	47	.5
6	90,112	86	.1
7	88,490	398	4.5
8	82,948	709	8.5
9	92,667	2,578	27.8
10	88,555	2,937	33.2
11	84,517	2,568	30.4
12	72,190	1,278	17.7
Handicapped	16,079	621	38.6
Total	1,216,968	11,392	9.4

* Total enrollments are those reported on September 30, 1963.

** Includes pre-first enrollment and dropout data.

TABLE III

DROPOUTS IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BY COUNTIES AND GRADES
1963-64

County	K	P-1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	H	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
Atlantic										6	18	18	11	9	1	63
Bergen	2	0	1	0	0	3	1	4	14	42	137	199	220	101	9	733
Burlington	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	5	13	76	72	54	40	3	267
Camden	21	0	2	8	4	8	12	23	88	103	204	180	157	80	103	993
Cape May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	18	14	21	6	1	66
Cumberland	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	18	39	83	81	82	52	37	396
Essex	11	0	16	9	8	7	9	6	52	122	470	537	376	191	285	2,099
Gloucester	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	10	17	83	71	74	35	7	303
Hudson	5	1	2	3	3	0	11	31	98	83	432	363	214	75	42	1,363
Hunterdon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	25	27	14	19	4	92
Mercer	0	0	3	0	1	1	2	0	5	14	37	148	142	87	6	446
Middlesex	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	33	55	153	211	201	101	11	773
Monmouth	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	2	15	35	229	216	228	104	9	842
Morris	4	0	4	8	6	0	1	0	3	21	110	108	95	56	8	424
Ocean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	15	51	92	67	28	7	266
Passaic	1	0	2	0	0	2	6	8	26	52	133	230	212	126	42	840
Salem	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	22	36	18	23	12	3	121
Somerset	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	6	52	46	65	25	4	202
Sussex	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	38	38	31	17	5	136
Union	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	3	13	42	147	232	246	92	23	803
Warren	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	11	46	36	35	22	11	164
Total	49	1	36	33	27	24	47	86	398	709	2,578	2,937	2,568	1,278	621	11,392

TABLE IV

DROPOUTS IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BY COUNTIES AND MONTH OF OCCURRENCE
1963-64

County	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Atlantic	7	12	0	4	10	8	4	12	5	1	63
Bergen	52	91	69	71	109	74	78	98	67	24	733
Burlington	28	41	22	23	36	30	22	30	26	9	267
Camden	60	118	108	69	153	112	110	137	113	13	993
Cape May	13	10	8	8	10	5	4	3	5	0	66
Cumberland	39	49	32	31	64	34	46	56	37	8	396
Essex	114	255	190	193	264	270	233	241	249	90	2,099
Gloucester	40	34	37	17	54	37	26	26	13	19	303
Hudson	178	226	135	99	169	149	125	116	104	62	1,363
Hunterdon	9	13	14	5	14	3	9	15	6	4	92
Mercer	20	71	21	58	66	48	61	47	48	6	446
Middlesex	54	88	77	63	119	90	79	85	67	51	773
Monmouth	76	101	65	74	136	102	85	104	79	20	842
Morris	32	56	50	39	69	32	36	57	41	12	424
Ocean	21	36	26	26	45	21	30	32	21	8	266
Passaic	57	97	66	47	114	115	83	115	101	45	840
Salem	6	18	11	12	11	18	20	15	10	0	121
Somerset	22	24	19	10	21	37	21	26	17	5	202
Sussex	18	11	13	15	30	7	10	15	11	6	136
Union	39	113	86	75	108	94	104	80	77	27	803
Warren	18	27	14	9	21	13	25	13	13	11	164
Total	903	1,491	1,063	948	1,623	1,299	1,211	1,323	1,110	421	11,392

TABLE V

INVOLUNTARY DROPOUTS IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BY COUNTIES AND REASON
1963-64

County	Physical, Social, Mental or Emotional Disability	Pro- longed Ill- ness	Adminis- trative Exclu- sion	Entered Correc- tional Institu- tion	Drafted into Military Service	De- ceased	Other	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Atlantic	2		3	2			3	10
Bergen	26	10	19	19		6	6	86
Burlington	9	4	4	13	3	5	3	41
Camden	47	13	34	131			10	235
Cape May	2			1		1		4
Cumberland	17	11	7	4		6	6	51
Essex	80	41	111	199		18	29	478
Gloucester	7	7	7	12		2	1	36
Hudson	14	14	6	19		3	15	71
Hunterdon	3	2	3	4			1	13
Mercer	8	3	43	16		9	4	83
Middlesex	26	20	13	32		12	8	111
Monmouth	32	11	89	34		4	8	178
Morris	12	6	24	8		5	2	57
Ocean	13	4	8	1		3	1	30
Passic	18	16	6	17	1	10	3	71
Salem	2	1	3	12				18
Somerset	6	4	3	10	1	2		26
Sussex	8	3	2	5		3	1	22
Union	30	11	6	54		10	9	120
Warren	1		4			2		7
Total	363	181	395	593	5	101	110	1,748

TABLE VI

VOLUNTARY DROPOUTS IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BY COUNTIES AND REASON
1963-64

County	Dis- satisfied with School	Entering or Seeking Employment	Volun- teered for Military Service	Married or Pregnant	Other	No Infor- mation	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Atlantic	21	20	2	10	0	0	53
Bergen	127	375	63	46	29	7	640
Burlington	39	97	33	43	12	2	224
Camden	187	338	55	129	43	5	752
Cape May	24	14	3	17	0	4	58
Cumberland	91	113	35	58	48	0	345
Essex	351	760	111	249	133	17	1,604
Gloucester	36	108	42	54	21	6	261
Hudson	89	1,007	69	57	69	2	1,291
Hunterdon	7	40	8	22	2	0	79
Mercer	168	89	25	59	20	2	361
Middlesex	116	328	63	95	59	1	661
Monmouth	153	262	82	117	50	0	664
Morris	57	179	34	51	43	3	364
Ocean	65	105	21	41	4	0	236
Passaic	94	506	62	46	55	6	763
Salem	19	34	11	30	9	0	103
Somerset	45	79	12	30	8	2	174
Sussex	30	56	5	12	10	1	113
Union	98	369	75	100	32	9	674
Warren	28	67	7	39	15	1	156
Total	1,845	4,946	818	1,305	662	68	9,576

TABLE VII
DROPOUTS IN GRADES KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHT
NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BY AGE AND GRADE
1963-64

Age	K	P-1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
5	34			1							35
6	13		17	2							32
7			14	9							23
8	1		2	9	13						25
9	1		2	8	8	4					23
10			1	3	5	8	8	1			26
11				1	1	4	6	4			16
12						5	8	6	12		31
13						3	4	12	35	28	82
14							5	13	48	74	140
15							6	12	42	89	149
16		1					9	35	246	461	752
17							1	3	14	52	70
18									1	4	5
19										1	1
Total	49	1	36	33	27	24	47	86	398	709	1,410

Note: Horizontal solid lines in columns establish normal age ranges for grade.
Dotted line represents legal school leaving age.

TABLE VIII

DROPOUTS IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BY REASON, AGE GROUP AND SEX
1963-64

Reason (1)	Under Age 16			Over Age 16			Total (8)
	Boys (2)	Girls (3)	Total (4)	Boys (5)	Girls (6)	Total (7)	
Physical, social, mental or emotional disability	79	43	122	123	118	241	363
Prolonged illness	15	32	47	42	91	133	180
Administrative Exclusion	69	46	115	226	54	280	395
Entered Correctional Institution	336	103	439	135	19	154	593
Drafted into Military Service	—	—	—	5	—	5	5
Deceased	47	25	72	16	13	29	101
Dissatisfied with School	5	3	8	1,100	737	1,837	1,845
Entered or Seeking Employment	18	6	24	3,312	1,610	4,922	4,946
Volunteered for Military Service	1	—	1	810	7	817	818
Married or Pregnant	6	342	348	43	914	957	1,305
Other	59	57	116	299	358	657	773
No Information	7	13	20	26	22	48	68
Total	642	670	1,312	6,136	3,944	10,080	11,392

TABLE IX
DROPOUTS IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
UNDER AGE 16, BY REASON AND GRADE
1963-64

Reason (1)	K (2)	P-1 (3)	1 (4)	2 (5)	3 (6)	4 (7)	5 (8)	6 (9)	7 (10)	8 (11)	9 (12)	10 (13)	11 (14)	12 (15)	Handi- capped (16)	Total (17)
Involuntary:																
Physical, social, mental or emotional disability.	22		5	4	3	1	4	5	13	11	17	16	1		20	122
Prolonged illness.	1		3	2	1		1	1	1	4	16	15	1		1	47
Administrative exclusion.	1		3	4	1	4	3	3	12	15	34	11			24	115
Entered correctional institution.	1		1	4	5	9	16	28	71	80	106	25	1		92	439
Drafted into military service.																
Deceased.	3		11	7	2	6	7	1	3	4	14	10			4	72
Other.																
Voluntary:																
Dissatisfied with school.						2	1		1		1	1	1		1	8
Entered or seeking employment.									2	2	11	3	2		4	24
Volunteered for military service.												1				1
Married or pregnant.							2	6	27	69	116	92	8	1	27	348
Other.	18		8	9	11		3	4	6	6	30	9	1		11	116
No information.	3		5	3	4	2			1			2				20
Total	49		36	33	27	24	37	48	137	191	345	185	15	1	184	1,312