



1984

Factors affecting attendance of junior high school and middle school students

Albert F. Martinez
University of the Pacific

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/uop_etds



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Martinez, Albert F.. (1984). *Factors affecting attendance of junior high school and middle school students*. University of the Pacific, Dissertation. https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/uop_etds/3153

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of the Pacific Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact m gibney@pacific.edu.

FACTORS AFFECTING ATTENDANCE OF JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Albert F. Martinez

May 1984

This dissertation, written and submitted by

Albert F. Martinez

is approved for recommendation to the Committee
on Graduate Studies, University of the Pacific

Dean of the School or Department Chairman:

Edmund H. Clauson

Dissertation Committee:

Roger Sherman

Chairman

John W. Shippies

William P. Bacon

Augustine Garcia

Dated June 5, 1984

ABSTRACT

The study examines the effect that implementation of California State Law establishing School Attendance Review Boards has had on Junior High and Middle School Students in the Central Valley of California. The legislation deals with students who have problems of truancy and student misconduct. The study focused on the effect that referral to the School Attendance Review Board had on pupil attendance in the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Fresno, Kings, and Kern in the San Joaquin Valley of California.

A questionnaire was administered to principals of 36 junior high and middle schools in three geographical sections of the San Joaquin Valley. Part I of the questionnaire requested data on general attendance procedures; Part II elicited information on individual pupils referred to the School Attendance Review Board.

The test design utilized descriptive and correlational analyses to determine the effectiveness of referral to SARB. Computations were made to note differences in attendance due to sex and ethnicity. Data were further analyzed to determine whether attendance, counseling, class program changes, and alternative class assignments significantly alter the attendance patterns of truants, using an analysis

of variance. T-tests determined significant differences in attendance of students before and after referral to the School Attendance Review Board.

T-test analyses of the effectiveness of referral to SARB showed that all pupils as a group had significantly improved attendance in each of the regions studied as well as overall. Analyses by sex showed that male subjects as well as female subjects improved attendance significantly. Separate analyses by ethnicity indicated improvement regardless of this variable.

Regarding the rate of referral, Whites were referred in lower numbers than general pupil population would warrant, whereas Blacks and Hispanics were referred in larger numbers than their proportion to the general population. Males were referred at higher rates than females to the School Attendance Review Board.

Analysis of the data dealing with the question of post-SARB treatment (counseling, class program change, alternative schooling, and no treatment) indicated that there was no significant difference between treatments. There also was no difference between any treatment and no treatment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher would like to express his appreciation to Dr. Roger Reimer, Advisor to the Study, for the many hours he spent critiquing this study and counseling the author on research methods, analysis of data, and on style and expression of writing. Dr. Reimer offered many timely and valuable suggestions that were necessary to the completion of this work.

The writer is appreciative, also, of the time and efforts that the other members of the Dissertation Committee gave to this project. These members were: Dr. Augustine Garcia, Dr. William Bacon, and Dr. John Schippers.

Dr. Rodolfo Serrano was very helpful in providing the computer resources and expertise necessary to compilation and analysis of the data. Dr. Robert Aguilar, the author's supervisor, encouraged the writer and generously gave permission for time off from duty assignment to allow work on this project.

The writer also wishes to express thanks to the typist whose competence and assistance expedited completion of the work and provided it with quality of style and composition.

A final expression of appreciation is given to the wife of the author, Norma Martinez, for her understanding and help.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vii
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	6
FOCUS OF THE STUDY	8
QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED	9
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	10
OVERVIEW	11
Limitations and Assumptions	11
Definition of Terms	12
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	15
WHY TRUANCY EXISTS	16
Hispanics and School Attendance	23
Summary	26
POTENTIAL REMEDIES FOR TRUANCY	26
Summary	40
SARB: An Approach to Attendance Improvement	41
SUMMARY	42
3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	44
The Population	44
The Instrument	45
Response to the Questionnaire	47
Data Analysis	49
SUMMARY	50

	vi
Chapter	Page
4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	51
PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER	52
GENERAL ATTENDANCE DATA	53
5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	71
Findings from the General Data	76
Recommendations for School Districts	77
Recommendations for Further Study	79
BIBLIOGRAPHY	82
APPENDIX A	91
APPENDIX B	96

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. A Comparison of Attendance Levels Before and After Referral All Study Subjects	58
2. A Comparison of Attendance Levels Before and After Referral Middle Section Pupils	58
3. A Comparison of Attendance Levels Before and After Referral Northern Section Pupils	59
4. A Comparison of Attendance Levels Before and After Referral All Male Subjects	60
5. A Comparison of Attendance Levels Before and After Referral All Female Subjects	60
6. A Comparison of Attendance Levels Before and After Referral All Hispanics	61
7. A Comparison of Attendance Levels Before and After Referral All Blacks	62
8. A Comparison of Attendance Levels Before and After Referral All non-Hispanic Whites	62
9. Enrollment and Percentage Figures for Ethnic Groups in the Study Population by Section . .	65
10. A Comparison of SARB-Referred Pupils by Ethnicity as a Percentage of all Pupils Referred	65
11. Total Population, Number, and Percentage of Students Referred from Both Sections by Ethnicity	66
12. Totals and Percentage of SARB-Referred Pupils by Sex	68
13. Total Number of SARB-Referred Pupils by Sex and Ethnicity	68
14. An Analysis of Variance Showing the Effects of Four Post SARB-Referral Treatments	70

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Pupil absenteeism is usually defined as absence from school for any reason. This includes valid reasons such as illness and family emergencies. It also includes truancy, which is defined as unauthorized absence from school. Truancy takes several forms. It may involve "class-cutting" or "skipping class" in the middle of the day. It includes a deliberate failure to report to school, commonly referred to as "playing hooky" or "ditching." Truancy also occurs when a pupil feigns illness and forges notes with a parent's signature or obtains a false statement of illness for the school with the parent's cooperation.

Absenteeism in all forms, and particularly truancy, is causing much concern among educators, parent groups, and legislative bodies. In 1972, for example, public hearings were held in Cook County, Illinois to determine how many students were out of school because of truancy, suspension, or expulsion. Testimony at those hearings was given by 26 people, i.e., authorities from social and law enforcement officers, administrators, attendance officers, and juvenile court representatives.¹ As a result of these hearings and

¹Regional Education Service of Cook County, "Remarks and Excerpts from Public Hearings on Truancy and Expulsion," RIE, Cook County, Chicago, Illinois (1972), p. 25.

the subsequent public attention, the State sponsored a research study to gather information concerning truancy and absenteeism in Illinois schools. This report focused on attendance patterns and policies in various Illinois school districts, legal actions taken by the districts in response to truant behavior, ratings of assistance received from the judicial process, and legislative or administrative changes suggested by respondents.²

In 1973 and again in 1974, members of the National Association of School Administrators rated poor attendance of students as their most perplexing problem. Respondents to a survey cited absenteeism rates of 10 to 15 percent, and others suggested that in some urban schools, rates that exceed 30 percent are not uncommon.³ In a recent study, Boes concluded that the average absentee rate nationwide is approximately ten percent.⁴

In 1976, Wisconsin conducted a survey of administrators of 59 selected school districts to determine the extent of the truancy problem, procedures for dealing with truancy, and the impact of truancy on the school districts. The study

²Illinois State Office of Education, "Truancy and School Attendance in Illinois Schools," Springfield, Illinois (April 1977), p. 55.

³Scott Thomson and David Stanard, "Student Attendance and Absenteeism," The Practitioner, National Association of Secondary School Principals, v.1, n.1 (March, 1975), p. 2.

⁴Shirley Neill Boes, "Keeping Children in School: Problems and Solutions," Critical Issues Report, American Association of School Administrators (1979), Sacramento, California, p. 74.

sought to gather information that would assist in the formulation of laws to deal with the issue of absenteeism on a statewide basis.⁵

Typical reactions to the truancy problem are reflected in the following reports. In a report to the State Superintendent of Schools, the Illinois Problems Commission stated that critical problems exist for the schools in dealing with school absenteeism and truancy.⁶ In a 1979 survey of the American Association of School Administrators to which 95 percent of those surveyed responded, Boes found that school administrators viewed student absenteeism as a major problem for the schools, a problem which is caused by various factors.⁷ An example of concern among educators with this problem was reflected in 1981 by the California School Boards Association when they commissioned a study of 125 school trustees and administrators and 186 student dropouts and truants to determine the reasons for student absenteeism and to look for ways to deal with the problem.⁸ In addition, state departments of education throughout the country are

⁵Anne M. Huff, "Truancy in Wisconsin Public Schools, Research Bulletin 76-5, Wisconsin State Legislative Council, Madison, Wisconsin, (1976), p. 89.

⁶Illinois School Problems Commission, "Illinois School Problems: Report of the School Problems Commission No. 14, Springfield, Illinois (June, 1977), p. 89.

⁷Boes, loc. cit.

⁸California School Boards Association, "How to Keep Children in School . . . and Make Them Want to Stay There," CSBA Task Force (1981), p. 91.

being pressured by legislative groups to conduct studies and to make recommendations which will enable lawmakers to pass stronger attendance laws.

Laws are needed, say concerned administrators, which will place more responsibility for pupil attendance on parents and on the pupils themselves. In data gathered from 16 school principals and 30 other people representing schools, law enforcement agencies, the Department of Social Welfare, and the Probation Department of Yolo County, respondents cited parental ineffectiveness and lack of penalties by the school for truancy as major factors in contributing to unauthorized absences from school.⁹

Because state school funds are often allocated on the basis of average daily attendance, school districts are annually losing millions of dollars in state aid monies due to excessive absenteeism. When combined with the effects of a staggering economy and a cutback on property taxes initiated in several states by citizen-sponsored initiatives, the problems for school districts in managing their school finances become doubly difficult. In a 1979 study of problems facing modern schools, Boes stated:

Truancy is a \$72 million problem for New York City, the committee charged. It based its calculations on an average \$4 daily loss in state aid multiplied by 180 days and by the number of daily absences in the city schools (228,000). In its

⁹Barbara Sommer, "Truancy in Yolo County, California," Yolo County Department of Social Services, Woodland, California (1980), p. 6.

calculations, the committee allowed for an absentee rate of 10 percent because, it noted, this figure is considered a normal absentee rate by the New York State Department of Education. An improvement of one percent in the attendance rate of the city schools would result in \$55 million in additional state aid annually.

Loss of state aid impacts seriously in big city school budgets. Examples: Here's what missing students cost five city school systems in one year:

<u>City</u>	<u>Absentee Rate</u>	<u>Loss in State Aid</u>	
Atlanta	5%	\$1	Million
Chicago	11%	6.5	Million
Houston	10%	1	Million
Phoenix	14%	1.1	Million
San Francisco	9%	4.4	Million ¹⁰

The problem of student absenteeism exists nationwide, and the State of California is no exception. According to an audit conducted for the California State Legislature in 1978, student attendance averages 83.8 percent of the total school enrollment. This would put the absenteeism rate of California students at 16.2 percent.¹¹ This compares with a nationwide average of ten percent as cited by Boes. This points out a need for school officials to find ways of improving school attendance, and suggests that administrators must establish specific procedures for dealing with absenteeism and the problem of truancy. When a student is absent from school without a valid excuse, educators must know legal ways for dealing with that student. They should know what methods are likely to work and which ones offer little prospects for

¹⁰Boes, op. cit., p. 159.

¹¹California State Legislature, Report of the State Auditor General, 1978.

success. The problem of student absenteeism, particularly truancy, is one which school administrators must address.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

It is the purpose of this study to examine the effect that the implementation of recent California legislation is having on school attendance in the California Central Valley, and by extension, in the State of California. This legislation has been directed toward ameliorating the truancy problem, i.e., the problem of students who are absent from school without legal authorization.

The legislation which deals specifically with truancy in the State of California created the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) to address the needs of students with truancy problems and was enacted into law in 1974.¹² This law established county and local (district) SARBs and was designed to address the problems of truancy and student misconduct and sought to accomplish two purposes. These included the following:

1. To propose and promote the use of alternatives to the juvenile justice system.
2. To encourage communities and school districts to expand programs designed to assist pupils with school attendance problems through the development of counseling programs, modified courses of study, and broadened educational alternatives such as continuation schools and opportunity classes.¹³

¹²California State Legislature, Education Code, Sections 48320-48324, 1974.

¹³Ibid.

The law mandates that youth in the State of California must attend school up to the age of eighteen unless he/she has reached the age of sixteen and has become gainfully employed or has completed all requirements for graduation from high school.¹⁴ Under California law a pupil is considered a truant if he or she is absent from school without a valid excuse in excess of 30 minutes in one day. The pupil must be reported to the School Attendance Officer.¹⁵

School Attendance Review Boards (SARB) have been set up in every California county to review cases of chronic truancy. Among other things, a SARB may ask the school to provide counseling services, to modify the student's class schedule, or to place the student in an opportunity school. A School Attendance Review Board may also request that the District Attorney take legal action against the parent or legal guardian of the child to force compliance with compulsory attendance laws. The pupil's parents then become liable for fines under the law. It is clear that the SARB has important responsibilities under the law for school attendance. However, little evidence is now available regarding the effectiveness of these Boards. In the only study conducted to date, the State Auditor's Office of the State of California concluded;

The lack of effectiveness of many SARBs is due to weaknesses in the legislation, lack of inter-agency

¹⁴Ibid. ¹⁵Ibid., Section 48324.

cooperation, absence of financial resources, and lack of leadership by the State Department of Education.¹⁶

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the effect that referral to the School Attendance Review Board for reasons of truancy has on student school attendance in the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Fresno, Kings, and Kern in California. A questionnaire was sent to selected junior high schools in each of the counties. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine if attendance increased significantly as a result of referral to SARB. Because the literature on attendance and truancy indicates that minorities, particularly Hispanics and Blacks, have a higher degree of absenteeism than the average student population, the survey also contains questions regarding the rate of referral by ethnic background. The conclusions that Hispanics have rates of absenteeism from school higher than the general population are supported by a Census Bureau report in 1978, which stated that persons of Hispanic origin in the United States have not yet reached the educational attainment level of the non-Hispanic population.¹⁷ That report indicated that in 1977

¹⁶California State Legislature, State Auditor's Report, 1978.

¹⁷United States Census Bureau Report, "Persons of Spanish-speaking Origin in the United States" (Washington: Government Printing Office, March, 1978), p. 2.

only 41 percent of the Hispanic-origin persons age 25 or over had completed four years of high school as compared with 67 percent of the non-Hispanic population. Levanto found, in a comparison of absenteeism by major ethnic groups (White, Black, Asian, and American Indian), that Blacks had the highest absence rate.¹⁸

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

Questions to be answered by this study include the following:

1. Are School Attendance Review Boards effective in dealing with truancy?
2. Is the rate of referral to the School Attendance Review Board different by ethnicity?
3. Is the rate of referral to the School Attendance Review Board different by sex?
4. Does the utilization of student auxiliary services (counseling, class program change, and/or referral to alternative school) improve attendance for SARB-referred students?

To arrive at answers to the above questions a survey questionnaire was administered to junior high school administrators. The questionnaire asked for the following data on

¹⁸Joseph Levanto, "The Problems of Attendance: Research Findings and Solutions," paper presented at the National Association of Secondary School Principals Annual Convention (February, 1975), p. 14.

individual pupils referred to the School Attendance Review Board:

1. The number of absences: a) 90 days prior to and, b) 90 days after referral to SARB.
2. Data related to the number of pupils referred to SARB by ethnic group (Hispanic, White, Black, Asian, and Other).
3. The number of students referred to SARB by sex.
4. The number and type of student auxiliary services provided to SARB-referred students (counseling, class program change, and/or referral to alternative school).
5. Data were also requested regarding the utilization of personnel and the manner in which absences and truancy were handled. (See attached questionnaire - Appendix A, page 91).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study provides data which allow school administrators to determine which are the most successful methods of dealing with truancy. It serves as a means of guiding school administrators, social service agencies, and other local agencies in the establishment of policies and procedures for dealing with truant pupils that are effective in keeping those students in school and in improving school attendance overall. This gives the students a better chance to learn the skills acquired in the general educational programs and enables school districts to increase their state funding as a result of improved attendance.

OVERVIEW

This study is designed to determine if current school attendance legislation, specifically the School Attendance Review Board legislation passed in 1974, has had an impact on school truancy. It also addresses the question of whether the utilization of student auxiliary services (attendance counseling, class program change, referral to alternative schools), has an effect on SARB-referred students. Also examined is whether numbers of referrals to SARB differ because of ethnicity or sex. Further, the study is intended to determine which school policies related to school attendance are more effective than others and why. This last is a key question addressed by the study.

Limitations and Assumptions

This study involved samplings from the Central Valley of California. It did not involve obtaining samplings from highly urbanized areas such as Los Angeles or San Francisco. What may be true for the inner-city schools may not be applicable in the basically agrarian environment of the more sparsely populated Central Valley. Nevertheless, because California truancy laws are applicable to all California pupils and also because research for the study tended to show that truants generally behave alike in similar circumstances, this writer believes that the conclusions reached in this study would be valid throughout the State of California.

Definition of Terms

Following is a list of terms that are commonly used in studies of pupil attendance at school. They are useful for the reader in becoming familiar with the text and conclusions of this study:

1. absenteeism - absence from school regardless of the reason for it.
2. attendance - pupil attendance at school.
3. class program change - a change in a pupil's schedule of classes designed to provide better learning opportunities for that pupil.
4. compulsory attendance - state mandated pupil attendance at school.
5. drop-outs - pupils who leave school with no intention of returning.
6. expulsion - permanent removal of a pupil from school because of misconduct or criminality.
7. junior high school - designation generally given to grades 7-8. However, some schools have a 6-8 and others have a 7-9 configuration. In this study a junior high school is a 7-8 school.
8. middle school - designation usually given to a 6-8 school, but some 7-9 schools are sometimes referred to as middle schools. In this study a middle school is a 6-8 school.
9. School Attendance Officer - A school official who

supervises pupil attendance and investigates truancy cases.

10. School Attendance Review Board (SARB) - A review board composed of parents and representatives from the schools, social agencies, and law enforcement officials to hear cases of truancy and misconduct.
11. student auxiliary services - In this study only, this refers to services to pupils by their school after referral to the School Attendance Review Board. These services include counseling, class program change, and referral to alternative (opportunity) schools.
12. suspension - temporary exclusion of a student from school because of misconduct or criminality.
13. truancy - absence from school without authorization, i.e., in violation of state attendance laws.
14. unauthorized absence from school - truancy (unlawful absence from school in violation of the state code of education).
15. valid excuse - a lawful reason according to state law for a pupil's absence from school.

In Chapter 1 the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study were presented. In Chapter 2 the literature is reviewed. Chapter 3 contains a description of the study, the procedures followed, sampling procedure, the

instrument used and procedures for analysis of the data.

Chapter 4 is devoted to an analysis of the data and Chapter 5 contains a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Truancy is a problem of national proportions. As has been previously noted, approximately 2.5 million public school students are absent from school each day. In addition, an estimated two million students that are eligible to attend school are not even enrolled. Many of those not enrolled could be returned to school with effective attendance programs. Thus, there are approximately 4.5 million youngsters that could be attending school but are not.

The problem of absenteeism is apparently greatest in the more highly urbanized areas: for example, Wright found that less urbanized areas had higher attendance rates.¹ In New York City truancy is a \$72 million a year problem, according to Neill.² This finding was based on calculations of \$4 per day per student loss in state aid multiplied by 180 school days and by the number of daily absentees in the city schools. The committee making the calculations figured that an improvement of one percent in the attendance rate of the students would result in \$5 million in additional state aid,

¹John S. Wright, "Factors in School Attendance," Phi Delta Kappan, vol. 58, no. 4 (December, 1976), p. 358.

²Shirley Boes Neill, Keeping Students in School: Problems and Solutions, American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Virginia, Education News Service, Sacramento, California, 1979, p. 16.

based on average daily attendance. In these times of tight budgets and cutbacks in government funding for education such an increase in funding has the potential of making a substantial difference in the quality of educational programs.

Much of the concern about high truancy rates centers on the large urban centers. Not only are the numbers much higher there than in rural centers, but also the rate of truancy is apparently higher. The National Association of Secondary School Principals reported: "Today, absentee rates of 10 to 15 percent are not uncommon. In some urban schools, the rate exceeds 30 percent."³

In view of the studies presented here it is quite apparent that school districts are losing large sums of money due to truancy. Since truancy is concentrated in the large urban centers, the biggest losers are the districts in the metropolitan areas. These districts could realize the largest savings by effective efforts to combat truancy.

WHY TRUANCY EXISTS

Some critics of education believe that irresponsible actions by school officials are keeping children out of school. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) of the Washington Research Project charged that students who are different are being pushed out of school because school staffs "will not

³The Practitioner, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March, 1975), p. 2.

adapt to their differences."⁴ The CDF further asserts that:

If a child is not White, or is White but not middle class, does not speak English, is poor, needs special help with seeing, hearing, walking, reading, learning, adjusting, growing up, is pregnant or married at age 15, is not smart enough or is too smart, then in too many places school officials decide school is not the place for that child.⁵

Research, however, tends to confirm the theory that there are many complex and interrelated factors which are correlated to poor attendance at school. Levanto listed several factors that either influence or are related to school attendance. He enumerated these as social forces, home and community relations, lack of appeal of school programs, boring or uncaring teachers, and peer pressures.⁶

There are certain conditions under which absenteeism increases significantly. Billington reported that attendance varies seasonally, with autumn being the best attended; and that absenteeism rises steadily during the week with Friday being the worst absence day.⁷ It was observed by White and Peddie that students who showed early patterns of truancy

⁴Children's Defense Fund, "Children Out of School," Washington Research Project (January, 1975), Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 66.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Joseph Levanto, "The Problems of Attendance: Research Findings and Solutions," (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Connecticut, 1973), p. 21.

⁷Brian J. Billington, "Patterns of Attendance and Truancy: A Study of Attendance and Truancy Amongst First Year Comprehensive School Pupils," Educational Review, Vol. 30, No. 3 (November, 1978), pp. 221-25.

could be expected to continue those patterns throughout their school careers.⁸ Lollie and Smith attributed much absenteeism by school children to a fear of violence caused by out-of-control youths loitering on or near the school campus.⁹

A survey sponsored by the Ontario Department of Education in Canada suggested that certain factors are related to attendance: satisfaction with school, perception of the effectiveness of school policy limiting truancy, success in school, perceived relevance of the school to student interests, and student and teacher attitudes toward absenteeism.¹⁰

Students who were surveyed about their reasons for dropping out of school said they did so because they found schools uninteresting, irrelevant to real life, and impersonal.¹¹ Some of the reasons for student truancy and other forms of absenteeism have to do with the way students view themselves and their relationship to the school situation. Students often have anxious and/or negative thoughts

⁸J. White and Martin Peddie, "Patterns of Absenteeism in Primary and Secondary Schools," Scottish Educational Review, Vol. 10, No. 2 (November, 1978), pp. 37-43.

⁹Michael Lollie and Leonard Smith, "The Fear of Crime in The School Enterprise and its Consequences," Education and Urban Society, Vol. 8, No. 4 (August, 1976), pp. 401-6.

¹⁰B. Sharples, "Patterns of School Attendance in Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools," Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada (1979), p. 310.

¹¹Shirley Boes Neill, op. cit., p. 17.

pertaining to the school atmosphere, curriculum, and personnel. Eaton administered a questionnaire to 190 children, ages 9-14, which revealed significantly high anxiety levels associated with school and their teachers.¹² Zieman and Benson examined the perceptions of truant boys and girls. They discovered that the girls showed persistently less negative perceptions and less asocial behavior than boys.¹³ In an earlier study the authors found that truants perceived schools as associated with authority, confrontations, discomfort, and lack of success.¹⁴ Neilson and Gerber also reported:

1. Seventy percent of the truants viewed school as the major cause of their truancy and 91% saw it as a significant cause (of truancy).
2. Students felt badly about their troubles at school; 73% disliked it, and 21% had mixed feelings.
3. Students generally viewed school as important to their futures and many regretted their truancy, however.
4. The majority of truants said that their most negative experiences at school were difficulties they encountered with school adults. When asked if there was anyone they admired at school, 85% said there was no one.

¹²M. J. Eaton, "A Study of Some Factors Associated with the Early Identification of Persistent Absenteeism," Educational Review, Vol. 31, No. 3 (November, 1979), pp. 233-42.

¹³Gayle L. Zieman and Gerald P. Benson, "School Perceptions of Truant Adolescent Girls," Behavioral Disorders, Vol. 6, No. 4 (August, 1981), pp. 197-205.

¹⁴Zieman and Benson, "School Perceptions of Truant Adolescent Boys," Behavioral Disorders Programs, Vol. 5, No. 4 (August, 1980), pp. 212-22.

5. Experiences with classroom teachers were the worst aspect of school for 75% of the sample. Only 21% of the students had positive feelings about their teachers.
6. Only 12% of the truants met with school adults in afterschool activities.
7. When asked what it was they disliked about the teachers, most of the responses related to the teachers' alleged unfriendliness, authoritarianism, and unresponsiveness to the students' learning needs.
8. Many of the conflicts with teachers related directly with school work. Almost half of the sample listed school work as the most disliked aspect of school; 73% chose teachers and 15% most disliked their peers. A frequent complaint was that teachers provided inadequate personal attention and help with school work.¹⁵

In a study of New York truants Jimmy, age 12, was interviewed while cruising the streets of that city. Asked about school, he said:

I only go because my mother makes me . . . I cut every time there's something going on--if somebody's got grass or something. . . . When a lot of kids are cutting, we all get together . . . and we all get caught together.¹⁶

Washington utilized the Mooney Problem Check List in a study of 1400 students with a racial mixture of 32 percent White American, 58 percent Black American, 6 percent Spanish American, 2 percent Puerto Rican, and 2 percent American Indian in order to determine the factors that lead to

¹⁵Arthur Nielson, M.D., and Dan Gerber, Ph.D., "Psychosocial Aspects of Truancy in Early Adolescence," Adolescence, Vol. 14, No. 54 (Summer, 1979), pp. 319-20.

¹⁶Gordon T. Morris, "The Truant," Today's Education, Vol. 61, No. 1 (January, 1972), pp. 41-2.

truancy.

The Mooney Problem Check List contains 330 problem statements from which the subject is to respond indicating whether he recognizes the statement as being indicative of a problem he faces, recognizes in himself, and/or feels is the result of his particular situation or set of circumstances.¹⁷

Washington promulgated the following assumptions from the results of his study:

1. Truants recognize their academic weaknesses such as their underdeveloped reading, writing, and speaking skills, disinterest in present course content, and frequent fear of and experience of frustration and failure in course work.
2. For the truant much of the curriculum is not relevant or meaningful and certainly not highly motivating.
3. Truants have a desire to learn but they have become frustrated, as indicated by their high frequency response of "losing my temper" and withdrawal as is indicated by their prevalence of a high frequency response to the daydreaming item.
4. The truant experiences a variety of personal psychological problems.¹⁸

Students who rank very low in achievement tend to have very high rates of absenteeism.¹⁹ Senna, et al., found that poor school attendance is significantly related to

¹⁷Roosevelt Washington, Jr., "A Survey-Analysis of Problems Faced by Inner-City High School Students Who Have Been Classified as Truants," High School Journal, Vol. 56, No. 5 (February, 1973), pp. 248-57.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 254-55.

¹⁹Nicholas St. John. "Thirty-six Teachers: Their Characteristics and Outcomes for Black and White Pupils," American Educational Research Journal (1975), Vol. 12, p. 265.

juvenile delinquency.²⁰ Therefore it is important to determine what specific steps need to be taken to improve student attendance. Rozelle found that students who attend class less regularly earn lower grades.²¹ It is likely that students who have high rates of absenteeism are having difficulty adjusting to the school situation. Research has indicated that intellectually challenging classrooms encourage student interest and motivation, leading to improved attendance.²²

Dropping out of school is usually preceded by high rates of absenteeism from school. Robins and Ratcliff stated: "Elementary school truancy often beginning in the first grade forecasts continued truancy in high school . . . excessive absences were almost always detectable in the very first year of school."²³ This finding suggests that truancy patterns can be identified quite early, enabling school officials to provide the children with the guidance needed to keep them in school.

²⁰John Senna, et al., "Delinquent Behavior and Academic Investment Among Suburban Youth," Adolescence (1975), Vol. 9, p. 481.

²¹Robert Rozelle, "The Relationship Between Absenteeism and Grades," Educational and Psychological Measurement (1968), Vol. 28, p. 1150.

²²Rudolf H., and Bernice S. Moos, "Classroom Social Climate and Student Absences and Grades," Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 70, No. 2 (1978), p. 263.

²³Lee N. Robins and Kathryn S. Ratcliff, "Long-range Outcomes Associated with School Truancy," Public Health Services, Washington, D.C. (1978), p. 28.

Rafky maintains that the school experience, in and of itself, is not a major factor in student rebellion and disaffection leading to truancy. He replicated earlier studies which examine self-reported school rebellion and disputed findings by Stinchome and others. He wrote: "The major implication is that school rebellion is not a response to the school experience itself."²⁴ He concluded that student rebellion against schools is thus not directed specifically against schools alone but that student rebels tend to transgress against other social institutions as well. He stated:

School rebellion is also part of a larger production staged in the community. That is, school rebellion expresses a general pattern of norm transgression, as school offenses are associated with law violation in the surrounding area. (Tables) show that students arrested for serious crimes--such as assault and robbery--report a greater number of rebellious acts against school than students who have never been arrested.²⁵

Hispanics and School Attendance

A study compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare showed that in 1977:

Approximately one out of every seven White youth, age 16-24 was not enrolled in school and was not a high school graduate. By contrast, the corresponding statistic for Blacks was one out of every five;

²⁴David M. Rafky, "School Rebellion: A Research Note," Adolescence, Vol. XIV, No. 55 (Fall, 1979), p. 460.

²⁵Ibid., p. 458.

for Hispanic youth the figure was highest; one in three.²⁶

Other data from that same study showed that in 1977, nine percent of Hispanics 14-17 years old were enrolled below their modal grade compared to 3.5 percent of all students in that age group.²⁷

According to the Census Bureau, Hispanics tend to have a disproportionately high dropout rate in school.²⁸ The Census Bureau also reported that persons of Hispanic origin in the United States have not achieved the same level of education as the general population.²⁹

Data on Hispanic students thus seems to indicate that their attendance in school is not as good as that of White pupils nor, in fact, as good as the general student population.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics:

Hispanic children enroll in school at rates lower than those for non-Hispanic children, they fall behind their classmates in progressing through school, and their attrition rates are higher than those of

²⁶Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics, Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Day Schools, 1977-78 School Year, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 36.

²⁷Ibid., p. 38.

²⁸U.S. Census Bureau Report, "Persons of Spanish-Speaking Origin in the United States," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, March, 1978), p. 2.

²⁹Ibid., p. 6.

non-Hispanic students.³⁰

Other data indicate that:

1. Graduation rates are lower for Hispanics than for the general population.
2. Only 41 percent of Hispanic adults hold a diploma, whereas 67 percent of the non-Hispanic adult population completed high school.
3. The median income for Hispanics in 1980 was \$5,564 compared with \$6,484 for non-Hispanics.³¹

A study authored by Carter showed that there is a dramatic difference between Mexican-American children and the general population in the dropout rate from school:

Mexican-Americans start school late and drop out or are forced out early and at substantially higher rates than the total population. There is a higher attrition rate in rural areas than urban. The disparity between Mexican-American enrollment and Anglo enrollment could be assumed to be greater than it is between Mexican-Americans and the total population.³²

The foregoing studies indicate that Mexican-American pupils must be more forcefully encouraged to remain in school. Otherwise they will continue to have poorer than average results in attendance, graduation rates and median income than the general population.

³⁰George H. Brown, et al., The Condition of Education for Hispanic Americans, National Center for Education Statistics (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, July, 1980), p. 4.

³¹Ibid., pp. 4-5.

³²Thomas P. Carter, Mexican-Americans in School: A History of Neglect, College Entrance Examination Board, New York, New York, 1970, pp. 25-26.

Summary

There are many factors which contribute to truancy; social forces, home and community relations, school programs, teachers, and peer pressures, among others. Students who dropped out or were chronically truant found school uninteresting, impersonal, and irrelevant to their needs. They associated schools with authoritarianism, confrontations, discomfort, and lack of success. Students who were having problems coping with the school environment were also more likely than their fellow students to be in trouble with the law.

Students tended to establish patterns of attendance early in their school careers'. This implies that if the pattern of attendance for truants is identified and changed at an early age through counseling then perhaps much greater gains in combatting truancy may be realized. Truancy prevention methods, should, therefore, be implemented at an early age.

Attention should focus on attendance patterns of minority students, particularly those of Hispanics and Blacks since it appears that these two groups seem to have poorer attendance records as a group than the general population.

POTENTIAL REMEDIES FOR TRUANCY

Critics of education believe that laws are needed

which will place more of a responsibility for pupil attendance on students and parents. In data gathered from school principals and thirty others representing schools, law enforcement agencies, the Department of Social Welfare, and the Probation Department in Yolo County, California, respondents cited parental ineffectiveness and lack of penalties for offenders as major factors in truancy cases.³³ Robins, et al., presented a paper at an international symposium which showed that mothers and fathers tend to pass on to their children their own likelihood to be truant, to obtain low grades, and to drop out of school.³⁴

Many states, as well as some government agencies, have begun programs and enacted legislation in efforts to reduce truancy as much as possible. One such agency is the United States Department of Justice. It developed the program Operation Stay in School (OSIS), to

. . . reduce truancy before it diminishes the value of the student's education, leads to other problems such as increased burglary, vandalism and drug abuse, and reduces the school district's revenue.³⁵

The OSIS Program has been credited with reducing

³³Barbara Sommer, "Truancy in Yolo County, California," Yolo County Department of Social Services, Woodland, California (March, 1981), p. 69.

³⁴Lee Robins, et al., "School Achievement in Two Generations: A Study of 88 Urban Black Families," a paper presented at the Thistledown International Symposium, Toronto, Canada (1977), pp. 1-39.

³⁵National Resources Network, "Operation Stay in School," United States Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.: (1975), p. 215.

unauthorized pupil absences and has also been correlated with lower incidences of juvenile crimes in those districts in which it has been implemented.³⁶

Daniels and Robinson reported on a school truancy prevention program which concentrated on improving student self-awareness and in helping students set goals as a means of combating truancy and misconduct; and found that positive results were obtained by such techniques.³⁷ Braden reported on the relationship that exists between compulsory attendance laws and the juvenile justice system. She concluded that alternatives to compulsory schooling and correctional intervention with truants are needed, and suggested more parental and community involvement, particularly with regard to providing more intensive counseling for truant pupils.³⁸

The Iowa State Department of Public Instruction commissioned a study which suggested that guidelines for school districts to deal with truancy must be flexible enough to adapt to different individuals and their needs.³⁹ In 1977

³⁶Ibid., p. 216.

³⁷Lorraine M. Daniels and Andrew A. Robinson, "Project Hold: A Way to Hold Them," Negro Educational Review, Vol. 30, No. 4 (October, 1979), pp. 253-60.

³⁸Lorraine Braden, "Compulsory School Attendance Laws and the Juvenile Justice System," Criminal Justice Monograph, Vol. III, No. 3, Sam Houston State University (1978), p. 33.

³⁹Larry Bartlett, et al., "Absences: A Model Policy and Rules, Iowa State Department of Education, Des Moines, Iowa (1978), pp. 1-17.

the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) of the United States Department of Justice released a report which analyzed the scope of juvenile court jurisdiction over non-criminal acts by juveniles, including truancy and disobedience. The goal of the sponsoring agency was to promulgate different legal means of dealing with such acts.⁴⁰ Splaine reviewed school laws in all 50 states and found that forced incarceration for truants is practiced in all but three. He concluded that were it not for the current laws mandating incarceration for truants, the monetary savings would be more than enough to "achieve the American dream of free public education for all."⁴¹ The author was convinced that it was costing the school districts and the states far too much money to keep such a law on the books.

Pupil personnel directors, administrators, and school social workers have begun to exchange information on truants in an attempt to reduce unauthorized absences from school. In Rockford, Illinois, administrators developed an attendance policy to deal with truants which calls for intensive monitoring of attendance and involves parents as well as school officials. The author suggested it was

⁴⁰ The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, "A Comparative Analysis of Standards and Practices: Jurisdiction," The National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Superintendent of Documents (Washington, D.C.: 1977), p. 189.

⁴¹ John Splaine, "Compulsory Schooling: The Legal Issue," Research in Education (1976), p. 9.

successful because there was strong, consistent enforcement of attendance policies and parents shouldered some of the responsibility for their children's attendance.⁴² Birdsong wrote that there is a strong relationship between attendance problems and eventual withdrawal from school.⁴³ Writing in the same publication, Acker suggested that pupil personnel workers should become more aware of the perceived needs of students and more sympathetic in dealing with those students.⁴⁴

Some school social workers view the truancy problem as having reached alarming proportions and are taking steps to do something about it. Polivka, et al., reported on an experiment in Florida in which runaways or incorrigibles were transferred from the juvenile justice system to the child welfare system.⁴⁵ The authors discovered that improved attendance resulted from this experiment.

The Crisis Intervention Mode was viewed by Stenson

⁴²Lauri J. Hakanin, "Combating Truancy: A Working Plan," Illinois School Journal, Vol. 59, No. 4 (1980), pp. 25-28.

⁴³Scott Birdsong, "Truancy: A Review of the Literature," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 24, No. 2 (March, 1980), pp. 121-26.

⁴⁴Daniel Acker and Barbara Stembridge, "Pupil Personnel Workers as Change Agents in the Reduction of Truancy Among Inner-City Students," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 24, No. 2 (March, 1980), pp. 113-19.

⁴⁵Larry Polivka, et al., "Removal of Status Offenders from the Juvenile Justice System: The Florida Experience," Child Welfare, Vol. 58, No. 3 (March, 1979), pp. 177-86.

as the most promising method of combating truancy, provided it occurred in planned sequential events and enough trained personnel were available to direct it.⁴⁶ The crisis intervention mode deals with situations in which information regarding the pupil's attendance record is provided for the parents and pupils. Miles discovered that by visiting families of truants and providing redirection, values examination, and counseling, school personnel were able to obtain many positive gains in improved attendance by truants.⁴⁷

In Maryland, the addition of an attendance clerk and the implementation of a system that stresses the importance of attendance have worked to reduce absenteeism at North Hartford Senior High School. Truants undergo attendance counseling and the attendance clerk contacts parents of pupils to obtain their cooperation in getting their children to attend school regularly.⁴⁸ Reynolds reported that an intensive school counseling program was effective in getting middle/junior high school pupils to understand the importance of good attendance, resulting in the substantial reduction of

⁴⁶Victor J. Stenson, "Crisis Theory: A United Approach to Truancy," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 24 (January, 1980), pp. 54-62.

⁴⁷Roosevelt Miles, "A Study of Families in Need of Restoration," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 22, No. 2 (March, 1978), pp. 78-84.

⁴⁸Daniel L. Jett, "Pupil Attendance: The Bottom Line," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 63, No. 424 (February, 1979), pp. 32-38.

pupil absenteeism.⁴⁹

Some authors viewed the problem of truancy as requiring close cooperation between school officials and social agencies. Johnson prescribed a program devised to combine the efforts of a child welfare agency and a public school system in controlling truancy. This included intensive counseling for parents and pupils and the close monitoring of school attendance of truant pupils.⁵⁰

Authors from the various disciplines in social service work suggest different approaches they consider useful in dealing with the truancy problem. Some of these methods are verified with statistical data, some by personal observation, others as a result of successfully implemented techniques or policies. Still other suggestions come from writers who are convinced that certain rewards are the most effective means of curbing truancy and thereby improving attendance at school. Zweig cited the use of trading stamps as having reduced one subject's truancy from four days a week to one day a week.⁵¹

Teachers believe increased attendance regulation and

⁴⁹Carol Reynolds, "Buddy System Improves Attendance," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, Vol. 11, No. 4 (April, 1977), pp. 305-6.

⁵⁰Janis T. Johnson, "A Truancy Program: The Child Welfare Agency and the School," Child Welfare, Vol. 55, No. 8 (September/October, 1976), pp. 573-80.

⁵¹John T. Zweig, et al., "The Contingent Use of Trading Stamps in Reducing Truancy," The Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Spring, 1979), p. 232.

a clear definition and enforcement of attendance policies are needed to reduce truancy, whereas, students consider a more open school environment and academic relevance to student needs as more effective measures.⁵² Unger argues that diagnosis and correction of pupil skill deficiencies are important first steps in improving truants' attendance.⁵³ In Tennessee a separate program with one teacher keeps some high school students from dropping out and helps to improve their attendance.

Contingency contracting (the use of special incentives) was successful in reducing habitual truancy among a group of high school special education students when that treatment was combined with non-direct counseling methods.⁵⁴ Another example of contingency contracting was reported by Brooks, who noted that the behavior modification approach was successful in improving school attendance.⁵⁵ Another type of incentive or external reward is a system for dealing with truancy which gives the students "instant credit" for work

⁵²John V. Robinson, "Project Probe: A Student Conducted Study of Truancy" (Washington, D.C., United States Government Printing Office, June, 1979), p. 31.

⁵³Karen V. Unger, et al., "A Truancy Prevention Project," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 60, No. 4 (December, 1978), p. 317.

⁵⁴Sam P. Sentelle, "A Helping Hand for the Chronic Truant," Educational Leadership, Vol. 37, No. 6 (March, 1980), pp. 471-72.

⁵⁵David B. Brooks, "Contingency Contracts with Truants," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 52, No. 5 (January, 1974), p. 319.

completed at the end of each marking period.⁵⁶

Nyangoni suggested using the media to promote school attendance by using posters, bumper stickers, billboards, leaflets and flyers, handouts, buttons, T-shirts, newspapers, and so forth "to get the message across to truants to return to school." She stated: "The electronic media, including radio, television, tapes and records, could be employed in the form of talk shows, interviews, spot announcements, news, and public service announcements."⁵⁷

Rodell discovered that when schools incorporate programs of strong interest to students who are truant into the curriculum there is a significant improvement in their school attendance records. In one example, an experimental group of students was allowed to bring a car to the school shop to work on during and after school. The school principal was then persuaded to allow the students release time to obtain the necessary repair parts during school hours.⁵⁸

Although some school districts rely on material and extrinsic rewards for truants who improve their attendance,

⁵⁶Elio J. Garcia, "Instant Quarter-Credit Concept--An Answer to Class-Cutting?" NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 63, No. 4, p. 424.

⁵⁷Betty Nyangoni, "The Media is the Message: Using the Media to Improve School Attendance," paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers (October 18, 1978), St. Louis, Missouri.

⁵⁸Daniel E. Rodell, "Taking a Ride on a Merry-Go-Round: An Attempt at Systems Change in a Public School," High School Journal, Vol. 56, No. 5 (March, 1979), p. 259.

other districts are equally insistent in their reliance on and support for punitive measures as acceptable methods for dealing with truants. In Maryland, pupil personnel workers arrived at a consensus that "a problem exists in the area of enforcement of attendance within a small minority of pupils in the school systems of Maryland."⁵⁹ They recommended stiff penalties for the parents of non-attending students in the form of legal citations and fines.

After conducting a study of truancy in the Detroit high schools, Teachmann offered three recommendations centering on the adoption and enforcement of attendance policies aimed at obtaining student acceptance of responsibility for his or her attendance.⁶⁰ De Leonibus found that a strong stand on absenteeism could result in only partial success, but a permissive policy often produces many more absences.⁶¹ In California, Napa High School officials implemented a strong attendance program in which credit was withheld from students who had excessive unexcused absences. This resulted in a 4.6 percent decrease in the absentee rate at the

⁵⁹Samuel A. Saltsman, "School Attendance in the State of Maryland," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 56, No. 5 (January, 1980), p. 53.

⁶⁰Gerard W. Teachmann, "In-School Truancy in Urban Schools: The Problem and a Solution," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 61, No. 3 (November, 1979), pp. 203-5.

⁶¹Nancy De Leonibus, "Absenteeism: The Perpetual Problem," The Practitioner, Vol. V, No. 1, National Association of Secondary School Principals (October, 1978), p. 13.

school.⁶² In Iowa, Robinson, et al., found that while students and teachers are generally in agreement on the causes of truancy, they differ on solutions, with teachers favoring increased structure and discipline as a means of combating truancy.⁶³ Graha and McCauley, however, conducted a survey of thirty-two chronic truants from a low-income, inner-city area of Philadelphia. The authors discovered that supportive instruction in the form of a tutor to help with school work was a more important factor than either threat appeal (fear of punishment) or optimistic appeal (recognition of achievement).⁶⁴

Shelton suggested that a non-graded or pass-fail system be implemented in the early grades to reduce the negative impact of failure on student performance.⁶⁵ Bolds suggested the utilization of student aides in the school attendance office in locating students, contacting parents

⁶²Ronald L. Feist, "Development and Implementation of a New Attendance Policy at Napa High School," Introductory Practicum submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the National Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders, Nova University (September, 1976), pp. 1-83.

⁶³John V. Robinson, "Project Probe: A Student Conducted Study of Truancy," Research Report, RIE (May, 1980), p. 31.

⁶⁴Christopher Graha and Clark McCauley, "Counseling Truants Back to School Motivation Combined with a Program for Action," Journal of Counseling Psychology, Vol. 23, No. 2 (1976), pp. 166-69.

⁶⁵Jeffrey Shelton, "A Comparison of Attending and Non-Attending Junior High School Students," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 24, No. 3 (September, 1980), pp. 326-32.

whose children are absent, and providing the necessary feedback to both teachers and parents.⁶⁶ Hawke recommended school objectives which focus on helping students develop a positive attitude toward school, helping students and teachers develop improved interpersonal relations, and improving academic achievement.⁶⁷

Some authors believe that the best solutions are those which include comprehensive methods involving parents, students, parents, and public agencies. De Leonibus stated:

The best attendance policies involve administrators, teachers, students, and parents in policy-making. The most successful policies are strong, specify expectations and outcomes clearly, are well-publicized and are consistently enforced.⁶⁸

Washington recommended more intensive psychological counseling for truants, a more relevant curriculum from the standpoint of the students, and a systematic program of inservice for teachers to make them more aware of the needs of disaffected students.⁶⁹

Brimm, et al., suggested that school officials often do not know the answers to the problem of truancy because they do not keep abreast of the current literature on that

⁶⁶Gloria S. Bolds, "Reducing Truancy by Using Student Aides in the Attendance Office," RIE (April, 1978), pp. 1-39.

⁶⁷Sharryl Hawke, "The School of Urban Studies: A School Within a School," National Institute of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C.: (1974), pp. 1-5.

⁶⁸De Leonibus, op. cit., p. 12.

⁶⁹Washington, op. cit., pp. 255-56.

problem. The authors state:

Student absenteeism is a serious problem for educators and indeed for society. There are no easy solutions to the problem. Suggestions for combating the problem often seem both simplistic and naive. However, educators would do well to heed some of the literature. For example, numerous writers have advocated a firm, but fair, well-publicized system that keeps parents apprised of their child's attendance record; and some type of alternative curricula for the chronic absentee. It is questionable whether these suggestions have received the careful attention and study that they deserve.⁷⁰

The authors further suggest that schools implement more innovative programs that are relative to the needs of the students and that will make students feel that they are an important part of the school.⁷¹ A similar viewpoint was expressed by Duke and Meckel, who asserted:

Better coordination among school personnel responsible for attendance problems, more thoughtful approaches to problem definition, greater rewards, more systematic policy-making, and improved training are but a few of the suggestions out of our field-work that might lead to reductions in school attendance problems.⁷²

Morris offered the following suggestions:

1. Teachers should make every possible effort to build personal relationships with the student who is habitually truant.
2. Teachers should recognize early danger signs of truancy and initiate referral to the school's counseling program.

⁷⁰Jack L. Brimm, et al., "Student Absenteeism: A Survey Report," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 62, No. 415 (February, 1978), pp. 65-69.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 66.

⁷²Daniel L. Duke and Adrienne Meckel, "Student Absenteeism: A Survey Report," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 62, No. 415 (February, 1978), pp. 65-69.

3. Schools must offer varied curriculum and new approaches to make students feel that schools are "worth attending."
4. Inservices should be held for teachers, counselors, and school officials so that they can recognize the truancy problem, react to it swiftly and sympathetically, and provide the counseling to prevent it from happening again.
5. Educational offerings should be provided for the community, to spur individuals and organizations into first recognizing the problem and then sponsoring programs to cure it and its related effects.
6. Education should be given to parents so that they determine their responsibilities and deal with the problem effectively.⁷³

Suprina recommended enriched educational programs, stronger disciplinary measures against unauthorized absences, and increased parental involvement as vital factors in improving school attendance.⁷⁴

The London Times, in its Educational Supplement, described successful methods of dealing with truancy:

In some areas out-of-school programmes have been established, and in others home tutors are employed. Judging by their ability to get children to attend, many such schemes are a success. The schools run an alternative education programme as part of a project for teenagers in Hammersmith.⁷⁵

In a special report to the Fresno Bee (California), Rafferty

⁷³Gordon T. Morris, "The Truant," Today's Education, Vol. 61, No. 1 (January, 1972), pp. 41-2.

⁷⁴Richard N. Suprina, "Cutting Down on Student Cutting," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 63, No. 424 (February, 1979), pp. 27-29.

⁷⁵The London Times, Educational Supplement, 3184, 19, June 11, 1976.

described a program in San Jose which is termed successful:

The . . . school offers its students many things they didn't find in public high schools: small classes, individual attention, bilingualism among almost the entire student body and staff, and a number of Hispanic instructors who serve as all-important role models.

The effectiveness of the school's supportive learning environment is demonstrated by the nearly 90 percent of its graduates who receive jobs in their fields and the large percentage of students who also receive the equivalent of a high school degree. Cost effectiveness studies have shown that it is less expensive to support the school than to pay the social costs of allowing the dropouts to remain uneducated and jobless.⁷⁶

Summary

School officials have met with varying degrees of success in the implementation of school policies. Generally speaking, the schools which demonstrated the most success found the following elements to be present:

1. Administrators, teachers, parents, and students were all involved in the process of improving and maintaining student attendance.
2. Attendance policies were strong; expectations and outcomes were clearly spelled out and well-publicized, and the policies were consistently enforced.
3. Truants were given intensive psychological counseling, usually at school, but often at home by social service or school personnel.
4. Curriculum was made more relevant to the perceived needs of the students, and teachers were more sensitive and sympathetic to student needs.

⁷⁶Elizabeth Rafferty, "The Dropout Crisis," The Fresno Bee, Section G., p. 1, Sunday, September 26, 1982.

It is apparent that there are a variety of factors which bear on reducing student truancy. Unless schools, parents, students, and social and community agencies make a concerted effort to work together on the problem, the situation will not improve greatly. Educators must not only educate themselves better to the problem but they must also be willing to help students and parents to maintain an interest in regular attendance. Also, they must make an honest effort to write clear attendance guidelines and enforce them consistently and equally. Greater responsibility must be shared by the pupils and their parents. The needs of students must constantly be reexamined to make sure that student attraction to school improves. Schools must be associated with positive relationships between school adults and students rather than with negative attitudes.

SARB: An Approach to Attendance Improvement

If School Attendance Review Boards are to be the major force in California for bringing back to the educational mainstream the truants, dropouts, and other disaffected students, then they must address the main factors in truancy and the root causes of why students stay away from school unlawfully. A review of the literature indicated the following:

1. Truants consider school irrelevant to their needs. The law creating SARB in California prescribes the establishment of relevant programs for non-attending youths (see Chapter 1).

2. Truants and their parents are not being held accountable for unauthorized student absences. SARB Education Code provisions specifically require referral to the courts in cases where cooperation with SARB by parents and children is lacking.
3. Attendance policies are often not written out. Student expectations and outcomes are often not clearly spelled out. SARB legislation does not specifically address this issue.
4. Truants often associate school with failure, confrontation, authoritarianism, and discomfort. SARB legislation deals indirectly with this problem by exhorting districts to modify their curriculum offerings to address the needs of disaffected students (see Chapter 1).
5. There is no systematic counseling either at school or in the community for truants and their parents. SARB legislation prescribes counseling for students with attendance problems but does not address the need for parental counseling.

When SARBs address these matters in a comprehensive way and treat it as a multi-faceted problem, some progress may result in resolving the truancy problem. It will require the combined efforts of parents, community agencies including law enforcement and social services, school personnel, and the potential truants themselves. They must also address the special needs of minority pupils, which tend to have abnormal rates of absenteeism, especially Blacks and Hispanics.

SUMMARY

It is evident from a review of the literature that truancy is a very serious problem in our society. The writers have suggested that there is a high correlation between juvenile delinquency and truancy. Schools annually

lose hundreds of millions of dollars in state attendance monies because of high absenteeism. This absenteeism is particularly acute among minorities, especially Hispanics and Blacks. The loss in skilled manpower and brainpower which would be available to the country were these absentees from school to have been trained is incalculable. Many become burdens on society because they lack the necessary skills to obtain work.

Schools must make the curriculum more meaningful to potential truants. They must identify the potential truant early and begin programs aimed at counseling him or her to remain in school and enable the truant to succeed in the school situation.

School Attendance Review Boards may not be the total answer to improved attendance in California, but they must be evaluated as a means of improving student attendance. Only with proper evaluation, analysis, and refinement can they become instruments of improved attendance.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The basic purpose of this study was to determine if 1) School Attendance Review Boards are effective in improving student attendance, and 2) if schools which impose and enforce specific attendance standards and/or follow certain attendance accounting procedures have higher rates of attendance than schools which do not. Additionally, data were gathered to provide information as to the ethnicity and sex of the student population of the SARB-referred students which were subjects of Part II of the study.

The Population

The area studied is the San Joaquin Valley, Southern section of the Central Valley of California. It was determined that the most efficient way to proceed was to identify county programs and to obtain samples from these areas. The following counties were selected: San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties (North area); Fresno County (Central area); and Kern County (South area).

A listing of school districts was obtained by writing to the offices of the County Superintendents of Schools in each of the counties and obtaining county school directories from them. The questionnaires were then mailed to the principal of every junior high and middle school listed in the

county directory. Although 7-8 grade schools are commonly referred to as junior high schools and 6-8 schools are usually known as middle schools, those terms are used interchangeably in the county directories. The study made no distinction between the two types of schools since the age level of all participants is nearly identical. This designation, junior high schools and middle schools, generally included grades 6-8 in varying configurations.

All schools involved in the study were separate schools from other schools in the districts of which they were a part. That is, no other grade levels were assigned to a specific site.

A list of the junior high and middle schools from each county was compiled; the list is attached as Appendix II. The list contains the following information: name of the school, address of the school, name of the school principal, area code, school telephone number, and the home telephone of the principal. This was done for the purpose of obtaining data by administering the questionnaire directly to the site administrators (principals). The telephone numbers and addresses were recorded so as to have a means of following up the questionnaires in cases of incomplete answers, failure to respond, or for the purpose of clarifying or verifying responses.

The Instrument

The instrument used was a questionnaire administered

to each of the principals of all junior high and middle schools in each of the three areas in Central California: San Joaquin and Stanislaus, representing the Northern area; Fresno and Kings, representing the Central area; and Kern, representing the Southern area.

The questionnaire was divided up into two parts:

Part I requested general attendance information about:

1. System of rewards (if any) for good attendance.
2. Procedures for contacting the home on student absences and school follow-up activities on student truants.
3. Identification by job description of personnel involved with truancy policing, attendance reporting, and with home contact.
4. Statistics on the daily absentee rate of the school.
5. School utilization of community agencies for counseling of truants and chronic absentees.
6. Information needed to determine if the school has written, publicized attendance policies.
7. Statistical information about the ethnic composition of the pupil population.

Part II of the questionnaire elicited information related to the number of students referred to the School Attendance Review Board, and requested individual student data on SARB-referred pupils. The data in Part II were requested in order to analyze the number of students referred to the School Attendance Review Board by sex and ethnic group. The data regarding gender were needed in order to determine if there was a significant difference in the number of girls and boys referred to SARB. Likewise, data were

requested on the number of students referred on the basis of ethnicity; White, Hispanic, Black, Asian, and Other. All non-Hispanic Whites were counted in one category, Spanish-surnamed students were counted as Hispanics, Blacks constituted another category, and pupils with Oriental surnames were placed in the Asian category. Those not belonging in any of the first four categories enumerated above were placed in the Other category. This category included ethnic groups such as American Indian and Eskimo.

The Individual Student Data Sheet (Part II of the questionnaire) also asked the schools to provide attendance data on students ninety school days prior to referral to SARB and ninety days after referral. Additionally, the questionnaire asked the schools to provide data as to the number of students referred to courts by sex and ethnicity and the type of counseling services provided to SARB-referred students.

Response to the Questionnaire

The questionnaires (Appendix I) gave instructions for filling out the questionnaire and requesting the recipients' cooperation in the efforts of the author. The cover letter accompanying each questionnaire requested information from each school site and gave instructions for filling it out. It was stated in the cover letter that a follow-up telephone call would be made to recipients of questionnaires who failed to return them. The questionnaire was constructed in two parts: Part I requested general attendance data from each

school and Part II requested individual data on each SARB-referred student.

A total of fifty questionnaires were mailed out: twelve to the North area; twenty to the Central area; and eighteen to the Southern area. The number of questionnaires sent out corresponded to the number of junior high and middle schools listed in the school directory of each county.

It was determined that in order to obtain sufficient representation throughout the study area (the Central Valley) at least twelve responses were necessary from each area. Thus follow-up telephone calls were made to schools that failed to respond from each area until needed representation was achieved. Contact was achieved by telephone calls to schools in alphabetical order.

Calls to some schools yielded unsatisfactory results. Sometimes the principal was unavailable. Some stated that they were too busy or did not have the personnel available to assist them in retrieving and reporting the data requested. As a result, San Joaquin provided information from nine of twelve; Fresno County from ten of twenty; and Kern County from twelve of eighteen.

When information was received from twelve schools in an area then data gathering was complete. Kern County provided sufficient data to make it unnecessary to obtain data from outside the County. Fresno lacked two and Kings County schools were contacted in alphabetical order until two schools became participants, Woodrow Wilson of Hanford and

John Muir of Corcoran. In the North three schools from Stanislaus County were contacted: Denair Middle School of Denair, Mae Hensley Junior High School of Ceres, and Empire Senior Elementary School of Empire.

Data for Part II of the questionnaire (individual student data) were assembled by area and analyzed on that basis. From the North Area fifty-two students were reported as referred to SARB for the 1981-82 school year. In the Central area forty-eight students were referred during the year. None were reported from the Southern area because the County was not committed to SARB utilization.

Data Analysis

The statistical procedures included descriptive and correlational analyses to determine the effectiveness of referral to SARB. The experimental treatment to which the group was exposed was referral to the School Attendance Review Board and the subsequent process, i.e., counseling, alternative classes, and program changes. The attendance of the subjects was calculated for ninety days preceding the treatment (referral to SARB) and ninety days after the treatment.

Also obtained were data about services truants received after referral to SARB (counseling, program change, alternative classes) that impact most on absentee rates.

These data were measured and analyzed with the analysis of variance. The intent of this analysis was to determine if

any of the services produced a greater level of success in terms of school attendance improvement.

SUMMARY

The test design utilized descriptive and correlational analyses to determine the effectiveness of referral to SARB. The data also was analyzed to determine if there were significant differences in attendance due to sex and ethnicity. This was arrived at through an analysis of variance. Data was further analyzed to determine whether attendance, counseling, class program changes, and alternative class assignments significantly alter the attendance patterns of truants. T-tests were used to determine if there were any significant differences in the mean response scores to sections of the data derived from the questionnaire.

In Chapter 4 the results of the survey are reported and the findings are analyzed. Chapter 4 further presents the conclusions of the writer and discusses the implications for further study.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken to examine the effects that School Attendance Review Boards have on student attendance in San Joaquin Valley junior high and middle schools. As noted In Chapter 1 the State of California passed legislation in 1974 creating School Attencance Review Boards (SARB). The specific intent of the legislation was to address the needs of students with attendance and behavior problems through other than the judicial process (law enforcement and the courts).

This study focused on the effect that utilization of SARB had on school attendance in junior and middle schools. The survey included a total of 36 schools, twelve schools from each of three geographical areas in the Central Valley. Schools involved in the survey are listed in Appendix C. A total of 52 students representing five schools were reported as having been referred to the School Attendance Review Board from the Northern Section which included San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties. Four schools from this area did not list information on individual students because they were not authorized by the district to do so and/or did not have the information on hand.

In the Middle Section of the Valley, comprising

Fresno and Kings Counties, a total of 48 students were reported as having been referred to the School Attendance Review Board from seven different schools; two schools did not list the students they referred, and three schools said they had no referrals during the 1981-82 school year.

None of the schools from the Southern Section, Kern County, reported any students as having been referred to the School Attendance Review Board. It was suggested that because state reimbursement for SARB funding ended with the 1980-81 school year, districts were no longer utilizing it. It is likely that SARB continues to exist in Kern County, but that its use was restricted to the high school level.

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to present findings obtained from an analysis of the data, arrive at conclusions as to the significance of the data, and to make recommendations as to techniques, systems, and procedures schools may utilize to bring about higher attendance levels and thus raise the level of achievement of their pupil populations.

In order to organize and present the material in a systematic fashion, the analysis will proceed in the following sequence.

1. Presentation of the General Attendance Data. The first section of the questionnaire dealt with general attendance procedures involving accounting for pupil absences, methods and techniques utilized by districts to improve attendance and data requested from schools that would aid in analyzing differences in rates of attendance

among schools. This comprises the first segment of the analysis.

2. Addressing the first major question of the study. The first major question of the study to be analyzed is: Are School Attendance Review Boards effective in dealing with truancy? The data are subjected to T-test analyses to determine whether pupils referred to SARB have improved attendance after referral.
3. Addressing the second major question of the study. The second major question of the study is: Is the rate of referral to the School Attendance Review Board different by ethnicity? The data are examined to note whether the percentage of non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks, or Hispanics referred to SARB differs from their percentage in the study population.
4. Addressing the third major question of the study. Is the rate of referral to the School Attendance Review Board different by sex? The data are analyzed to determine if girls or boys are referred at rates different from their percentage in the school population.
5. Addressing the fourth major question of the study. Does the utilization of student auxiliary services (counseling, class program change, and/or referral to alternative school improve attendance for SARB-referred students? This question is subjected to an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The analysis will determine if utilization of such services is helpful and if any one is more helpful in improving attendance.

In summary, general attendance data will be examined first, followed by a T-test analysis to determine SARB effectiveness. The T-test analysis is followed by presentation of data to determine differences in SARB referral by ethnicity and sex, after which a description is given of post-SARB services and an analysis of variance performed.

GENERAL ATTENDANCE DATA

The first part of the study considered data gathered

through the utilization of the general information section of the questionnaire (Part I). Section I of the questionnaire was analyzed to determine which practices and procedures used by school districts appear to provide the best results in maintaining high student attendance in general. In all, 36 schools were involved in the survey, 12 each from the Northern, Middle, and Southern Sections of the San Joaquin Valley in California. The data obtained from this section of the questionnaire revealed some interesting information.

General attendance data derived from the questionnaire suggests that the lowest rates of absenteeism are obtained by the schools that implement the attendance measures listed in the questionnaire. These measures include: (1) rewards for good attendance; (2) home visits; (3) punishment and make-up for truancies; (4) immediate contact with home; (5) doctor's verification of illness; (6) consistently applied and publicized attendance policies, and (7) referral to the School Attendance Review Board of truant pupils.

The data also showed that higher incidences of absenteeism were reported by schools with high (40 percent or more) minority pupil populations (Hispanic and Black). Results further showed that the schools with the lowest rates of absenteeism consistently and frequently employed numerous measures to raise the pupil attendance level. The most striking difference extracted from the survey was noted in the amount of time that the school attendance supervisor

devoted to pupil attendance instead of other duties. Schools reporting that their attendance supervisor spent 50 percent or more of his time on attendance matters represented 71 percent of the schools with an absence rate of 5 percent or less; by contrast, schools with 11 to 15 percent absentee rates all reported that their attendance supervisor spent less than 50 percent of his/her time on attendance related matters.

In the matter of utilization of School Attendance Review Boards, 86 percent of schools with absentee rates of 5 percent or less referred pupils to SARB, whereas only 29 percent of those schools with the highest absentee rates (11 to 15 percent) referred pupils to SARB.

Data revealed that schools with the lowest absentee rates had the highest average amount of attendance improvement measures, whereas schools with the highest rate of absenteeism showed the least amount of such measures. Thus, it appears that a multiplicity of efforts will result in better attendance than utilization of only one or two measures. Put another way, schools with the lowest rates of absenteeism by and large implemented the attendance measures listed in the questionnaire.

This part of the chapter has dealt with descriptive data, which resulted from the General Data section (Part I) of the questionnaire. This is intended as supportive data to the individual student data so as to give a clearer picture of the total situation of absenteeism in the schools.

Generally speaking, the Schools that are successful in attacking and reducing absenteeism, particularly truancy, will not only address the specific pupil absences, but will institute policies of systematic review of conditions causing absenteeism. They will concentrate on not only apprehending individual truants, but will provide incentives for the pupil populations in general to improve attendance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SARB

Question 1: Are School Attendance Review Boards Effective?

The data source for the question of whether or not School Attendance Review Boards are effective in dealing with truancy is Part II of the Questionnaire. The Questionnaire may be found in Appendix A.

The survey was conducted in three regions of the San Joaquin Valley which was divided into North (San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties); Middle (Fresno and Kings Counties); and South (Kern County). Only the North and Middle Sections are represented in the Individual Data because the South (Kern County) schools surveyed did not refer pupils to SARB during the 1981-82 school year, citing lack of state funding as the overriding reason. The South Section did participate in the General Data part of the Questionnaire (Part I).

Fifty-two pupils from the Northern Section were reported as referred to SARB during the 1981-82 school year compared to forty-eight from the Middle Section. These data

were used to determine the effectiveness of SARB as a treatment.

In order to answer the question regarding the effectiveness of SARB referrals in terms of impact on absenteeism, it was decided to compare the subjects' rates of absenteeism pre- and post-referral in the following groupings:

1. All pupils in the survey (100 subjects).
2. All pupils in the Northern Section (52 subjects).
3. All pupils in the Middle Section (48 subjects)
4. All males in the survey (60 subjects).
5. All females in the survey (40 subjects).
6. All Whites (non-Hispanic) in the survey (46 subjects).
7. All Hispanics in the survey (40 subjects).
8. All Blacks in the survey (14 subjects).

A T-test was performed on subjects in eight separate analyses in the aforementioned categories. It utilized their attendance records 90 school days prior to and 90 days after referral to SARB. Data derived from these analyses were reviewed to arrive at conclusions regarding the effectiveness of referral to the School Attendance Review Board.

The Effect of SARB Referral: All Students. A two-tailed test of probability was performed on all pupils referred to the School Attendance Review Board from both the Northern and Middle Sections. Total subjects involved in this analysis was one-hundred. Results revealed that there was a significant improvement in the overall attendance of the group. The statistical significance was $t = 6.29$ at .05 alpha. This is revealed in Table 1.

Table 1

A Comparison of Attendance Levels
Before and After Referral
All Study Subjects

	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Before Referral	100	25.231	23.033
After Referral	100	15.442	11.303

The Effects of SARB Referral: Middle Section Pupils.

An analysis of the data for all Middle Section pupils reveals a significant drop in the number of unexcused absences after SARB referral. A two-tailed test of probability revealed a statistical significance of 7.09 at .05 alpha. (See Table 2).

Table 2

A Comparison of Attendance Levels
Before and After Referral
Middle Section Pupils

	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Before Referral	48	22.333	15.1482
After Referral	48	10.444	10.4999

The Effect of SARB Referral: Northern Section Pupils.

In the Northern Section 52 pupils were referred to the school Attendance Review Board, as compared to 49 pupils in the Middle Section. Statistical data for those pupils revealed

that there was an appreciable reduction of absentee levels. Statistical probability was $t = 2.750$ at .05 alpha level of significance. Refer to Table 3.

Table 3
A Comparison of Attendance Levels
Before and After Referral
Northern Section Pupils

	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Before Referral	52	24.111	15.6
After Referral	52	11.333	9.94

The Effect of SARB Referral on Male Subjects. Table 4 shows the treatment of all boys in the survey, taken as a group. The purpose of this particular treatment was to determine if referral to SARB was effective as a treatment for male pupils. Statistical evidence is that it is an effective treatment for male pupils. Sixty subjects out of a total of 100 were boys. There is a significant difference, before and after referral for this group ($t = 7.36$ at .05 alpha).

The Effects of SARB Referral on Female Subjects. Female subjects numbered a total of 40 pupils from both Northern and Middle Sections. A two-tailed test of probability revealed that there was also a significant improvement in attendance of female pupils after referral to the School Attendance Review Board ($t = 6.389$ at .05 alpha level).

Table 4
A Comparison of Attendance Levels
Before and After Referral
All Male Subjects

	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Before Referral	60	22.2667	13.89
After Referral	60	12.9667	14.3967

Table 5
A Comparison of Attendance Levels
Before and After Referral
All Female Subjects

	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Before Referral	40	23.875	13.89
After Referral	40	13.1	14.3967

Table 5 shows the data for this particular treatment. As can be noted, both males and females showed significant levels of improvement in school attendance, as did pupils from each of the two sections reporting.

The Effects of SARB Referral on Hispanics. There were forty Hispanics in the study. Results of statistical analysis showed a positive difference between pre- and post-test attendance patterns. A two-tailed test of probability showed significance at the .05 alpha level ($t = 6.97$). Results are revealed in Table 6.

Table 6
A Comparison of Attendance Levels
Before and After Referral
All Hispanics

	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Before Referral	40	20.325	11.8435
After Referral	40	12.125	10.8678

The Effects of SARB Referral on Blacks. After referral to SARB Blacks showed significant improvement as revealed by Table 7. Although only fourteen Blacks were referred from the study schools it was decided to ascertain if SARB referral was beneficial. The tow-tailed test of probability indicated that it was significant (T-test at .05 alpha was 4.04).

Table 7
A Comparison of Attendance Levels
Before and After Referral
All Blacks

	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Before Referral	14	26.5714	19.0665
After Referral	14	15.5	16.9821

The Effects of SARB Referral on Whites. There were forty-six non-Hispanic Whites referred to SARB, the largest ethnic group of subjects in the study. This group also had a significant improvement in attendance when comparing their pre-test performance to their post-test attendance. The significance statistically was $t = 6.09$ at .05 alpha, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8
A Comparison of Attendance Levels
Before and After Referral
All non-Hispanic Whites

	N	Mean	St. Dev.
Before Referral	46	24.0435	12.2917
After Referral	46	13.2174	12.2402

Summary

The statistics from the analyses all reveal a significant improvement not only for all students as a group,

but also in each of the two regions studied. Further, male subjects as a group showed significant improvement. This was also true of female subjects. Separate analyses by ethnicity also indicated that there was improvement regardless of this variable. Thus it can be stated that referral to the School Attendance Review Board can result in better attendance at school without regard to sex or ethnicity.

Question 2: Is There a Difference by Ethnicity of Students Referred to the School Attendance Review Board?

This portion of the study deals with the question of whether or not one or more ethnic groups are referred to the School Attendance Review at greater or lower numbers than their numbers relative to other ethnic groups in the population.

Procedures

In order to ascertain if the rate of referral to the School Attendance Review Board was different for one ethnic group than for others it was necessary to determine the percentage of each within the total population. Of the 100 pupils referred to the School Attendance Review Board all were members of three ethnic groups: Blacks, non-Hispanic Whites, and Hispanics. Some schools reported the percentage of the Asian-Americans in their school population, but most schools included them in the Other category (see Appendix A).

Item 18 from the Questionnaire requested a breakdown of the school population by ethnicity from each reporting

school. A calculation was made of the number of pupils in each ethnic category and totals were added up for the two Sections reporting SARB-referred pupils (North and Middle Sections). The following steps were taken to arrive at ethnic percentages among the pupil populations of the study schools.

1. The 1981-82 County School Directories for the counties encompassing the study schools were consulted to obtain enrollment figures for each of the study schools.
2. Calculations were made using the information contained in Item 18 of the Questionnaire to determine the number of pupils from each ethnic group in each study school.
3. Computations were made to add totals in enrollment from each Section (Northern and Middle). Columns for Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, and Other were also totaled.
4. An aggregate was arrived at for both Sections by adding totals for both sections.
5. Percentages for each ethnic group were calculated by dividing the total population by each ethnic category.

The results of the computations to obtain percentages of each ethnic group in the populations of the study schools resulted in the figures revealed in Table 9. The figures are given for each Section as well as for the totals from both Sections. Percentages for each ethnic category are shown on the bottom line.

In Table 10, a comparison is made of the difference in the percentage of each group referred to the School Attendance Review Board. One-hundred pupils were involved in the study. Of this number, the largest number referred

Table 9
Enrollment and Percentage Figures for
Ethnic Groups in the Study Population
by Section

Section	Enroll- ment	Blacks	Whites	Hispanics	Other
Northern	8,536	746	4,993	2,256	541
Middle	7,697	445	3,888	2,979	393
Totals	16,133	1,191	8,873	5,235	834
Percent	100	7.4	55.0	32.4	5.2

Table 10
A Comparison of SARB-Referred Pupils
by Ethnicity as a Percentage
of All Pupils Referred

	Blacks	Whites	Hispanics	Others	Totals
Number	14	46	40	0	100
Percent	14	46	40	0	100

was from the non-Hispanic White ethnic group. From that group forty-six were referred, compared to forty Hispanics and fourteen Blacks. None were reported as referred from the Other category.

Table 11 shows the difference between the rate (percentage) of referred students for each ethnic group as compared to their numbers in the study population. As can be seen from the table Whites comprised 55 percent of the total study population but were only 46 percent of the referred pupils. Hispanics and Blacks were found to have larger percentages in the referred group than in their numbers in the total population. None of the students referred came from the Other category. Some schools reported Asian-American populations in their schools but not in significant percentages. The Other category, which included Asian-Americans, comprised 5.2 of the study population.

Table 11

Total Population, Number, and Percentage of Students
Referred from Both Sections by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total Population	% of Total Population	Total Referred	% of All Referred
Whites	8,873	55.0	46	46
Hispanics	5,235	32.4	40	40
Blacks	1,191	7.4	14	14
Other	834	5.2	0	0
Total	16,133	100.0	100	100

Summary

Results of the analysis of the rates of referral seem to indicate that there is a substantial difference in the rate of Black pupils referred as compared to their numbers in the pupil population studied. The Hispanic population showed a larger percentage of pupils referred than their percentage of the overall population but the disparity was not as high as for the Blacks in the study. The White pupils referred comprised 55 percent of the population but made up only 46 percent of the referrals. There seems to be a significant difference. In general, it can be stated that Whites were referred in lower numbers than their numbers in the population would seem to warrant, whereas Blacks and Hispanics were referred in larger numbers. No positive conclusion can be made about the pupils in the other category other than to state that based on their numbers no positive or negative statements can be made. There is insufficient evidence since none were referred to SARB.

Question 3: Is There a Difference by Sex of Students Referred to the School Attendance Review Board?

In order to answer the question of whether there was a difference in the rate of referral to the School Attendance Review Board by sex the total number of pupils referred was counted, as were the figures for all males and all females in the study. No figures were obtained from the schools in the study as to population differences by sex. However, in

most population studies males and females tend to be distributed in almost equal numbers, although some demographers might suggest slight variations in certain instances. Nevertheless, an equal distribution between males and females is a reasonable assumption to make. Assuming, therefore, that one-half of the study population of 16,133 in both Sections is male and the other one-half is female, then males were referred in significantly larger numbers than females, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12
Totals and Percentage of SARB-Referred
Pupils by Sex

Totals	Males	Females
100 Pupils	60	40
100% (of Population)	50%	50%

Males were referred in larger numbers than females not only in total referrals but also in referrals by ethnic category, as revealed in Table 13. Results for this table were obtained by counting the number of subjects by ethnicity as well as sex.

Table 13
Total Number of SARB-Referred
Pupils by Sex and Ethnicity

Blacks		Whites		Hispanic	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
10	4	27	19	23	17

Summary

The foregoing statistics seem to indicate that there are significantly more boys than girls referred to the School Attendance Review Board. Sixty boys were referred to SARB as compared to forty girls. There were more males referred in each of the ethnic categories than there were females referred. Although the figures are not large, enough participants in each of the ethnic categories to extend the comparison to the general student population of California, there does appear to be a significant difference when the total figures from the 100 pupils studied to state that in general males are referred more frequently than females.

Study Question 4: Does the utilization of student auxiliary services (counseling, class program change, and/or referral to alternative school) improve attendance for SARB-referred pupils?

In order to determine if any of the above auxiliary services was more helpful in enhancing the attendance of SARB-referred pupils, an analysis of variance was performed on each of the treatments (counseling, class program change, referral to alternative school, and no services. A one by four ANOVA showed that there were no significant differences among the four auxiliary services in improving attendance of SARB-referred pupils. Table 14 shows that it did not matter if there were auxiliary services or not. None was more effective than the other. Thus, the SARB-referral

itself was significant, but additional treatment did not produce any significant difference in attendance patterns.

Table 14
An Analysis of Variance Showing The
Effects of Four Post SARB-Referral
Treatments

Analysis of Variance:				
Source	df	SS	MS	F
C ₂	11	440.6	40.1	1.20*
Error	4	133.2	33.3	
TOTAL	15	573.7		

*P .05, not significant

Summary

Data analyzed from the descriptive portion of the study indicated that schools with the lowest rates of absenteeism implemented most of the attendance measures in the questionnaire. T-test analyses revealed that SARBs are effective in dealing with truancy. Males are most frequently referred to SARB for truancy than females and Hispanics and Blacks are referred more frequently than Whites. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) data revealed that post-SARB referral interventions are not likely to be effective.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was divided into five parts. A description of each of the five chapters follows.

Chapter 1 explained the reason for the study. The author presented data which supported the thesis that there was a need for research in the area focused on by the study. Additionally, the statement of the problem was made. The literature was reviewed and terms used in the study were described.

In Chapter 2 a comprehensive review of the literature was made in order to acquaint the reader with the study problem and its ramifications. The review of the literature enabled the researcher to determine if the results of the study supported or contradicted the literature.

Chapter 3 described the methods used and procedures followed in the study. The population involved in the study and the subjects were described. Information was given as to the contents of the questionnaire and the description of how the data from that questionnaire was utilized.

In Chapter 4 the data were analyzed so as to answer the questions posed by the researcher. Included in the analyses were the general descriptive data contained in Part I of the questionnaire. The analysis of the data on the

effectiveness of SARB was conducted through T-tests based on information about the absentee records of subjects prior to and after SARB referral. Descriptive data was presented which analyzed differences in referral to SARB due to sex or ethnicity. The final analyses performed in Chapter 4 was an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to measure whether or not Post-SARB intervention was effective as a means of improving attendance in SARB-referred pupils.

In Chapter 5 findings were revealed and conclusions of the researcher were expressed. The researcher also presented his recommendations for further study.

The study focused on the effect that utilization of School Attendance Review Boards had on school attendance in junior high schools and middle schools in five counties in the Central Valley of California. There were four specific study questions to be answered by an analysis of the data examined. A description of the questions and the findings follows:

Study Question 1: Are School Attendance Review Boards
Effective in Reducing Pupil
Absenteeism?

For the portion of the study dealing with the effectiveness of School Attendance Review Boards eight separate analyses were made using a T-test to measure the differences in the means between pre-referral absences and post-referral absences. The attendance periods of 90 days prior to referral and 90 days after referral were measured. In all

eight analyses the results conclusively showed that there was a significant difference in attendance after the study subjects were referred to SARB. The data were analyzed on the basis of: (1) all pupils in the study; (2) all pupils from the Northern Section; (3) all pupils in the Middle Section; (4) all females in the study; (5) all males in the study; (6) all Blacks in the study; (7) all Hispanics in the study; and (8) all non-Hispanic Whites in the study. Thus, there appears to be significant improvement in all groups regardless of ethnicity or sex. These results show that Hakanin's findings that strong, consistent enforcement of attendance policies and parental accountability result in improved attendance among truant pupils. (See Chapter 4.)

Study Question 2: Is There a Difference by Ethnicity of Students Referred to the School Attendance Review Board?

For this portion of the study the 1981-82 County School Directories were consulted to obtain enrollment figures for the study schools. Using these data and other data from the Questionnaire, a determination was made of the number of pupils from each of the three major ethnic groups in the study (Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites). Figures from these calculations produced aggregates for the total study population.

The results indicated that generally speaking Hispanics and Blacks tend to be referred to the School Attendance Review Board at a higher rate than their numbers

in the general student population would seem to warrant. Conversely, the data indicated that Whites are referred at a lower rate than would be expected, based on their relative numbers. No other ethnic groups were among those referred to SARB in the subject group of 100 pupils from the Northern and Middle Sections. No pupils were referred at all in the Southern Section. These findings are in agreement with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare study, Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Day Schools which revealed that disproportionately lesser numbers of Hispanics and Blacks were enrolled in school as compared to Whites (see Chapter 4). It is also in concert with Carter's findings that there is a large disparity between Anglo-American and Mexican-American attendance at school (see Chapter 4).

Study Question 3: Is There a Difference by Sex of Students Referred to the School Attendance Review Board?

An analysis of the data revealed that 60 percent of the pupils referred to the School Attendance Review Board were males and only 40 percent were females. When these data were analyzed by ethnic group, the results showed that in all three ethnic groups (Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites) fewer females were referred to the School Attendance Review Board than males. Thus, it appears that boys are more likely to be referred than girls. The researcher did not find any data in the literature regarding differential rates

of attendance at school or truancy referral to public agencies. This is an area which might prove fruitful for future studies on attendance.

Study Question 4: Does the Utilization of Student Auxiliary Services (counseling, class program change, and/or referral to alternative school) Improve Attendance for SARB-referred students?

The data from Part II of the Questionnaire were subjected to an ANOVA analysis in order to determine if the utilization of student auxiliary services was productive in producing additional improvement in attendance levels. The analysis revealed that there were no significant differences among the four auxiliary services (counseling, school placement, referral to alternative school, or no referral). None seemed more effective than others. It differs from findings of the review of the literature. One of the most recommended methods of attendance improvement was in the area of individual counseling for truant pupils, together with family contacts and family counseling. According to Stenson, the Crisis Intervention Mode, a form of intensive family counseling is one of the most promising methods of combating truancy (refer to Chapter 4). Miles stated that counseling with families of truants and redirecting them toward school-oriented activities improved school attendance among the subjects (see Chapter 4); and Reynolds reported that intensive school counseling programs showed impressive

effects in getting truants back into the classroom (see Chapter 4).

It appears to the researcher that the effectiveness of referral to the School attendance Review Board improved attendance of truants initially to such a degree that other attendance improvement efforts by the schools did not result in additional significant gains under post-SARB treatment.

Findings from the General Data

An analysis of the descriptive data from Part I of the questionnaire indicated that schools which utilize multiple attendance-improvement activities tend to have lower rates of absenteeism than those which implement few or no such activities. These activities include: 1) rewards for good attendance; 2) home visits; 3) punishment and make-up time for truancy; 4) same day contact with the home; 5) a requirement for a doctor's verification or excuses for illness; 6) widely publicized and consistently applied attendance policies, and 7) referral of truants to the School Attendance Review Board.

A review of the literature (Chapter 2) revealed that many of the attendance improvement activities listed in the above paragraph are utilized by schools throughout the country as having been proven beneficial and effective in reducing incidences of pupil truancy and improving overall attendance in school. For this reason these attendance

improvement activities were incorporated in the questionnaire.

How much time the attendance supervisor spends on attendance related matters as opposed to other duties apparently has a very significant bearing on attendance rates for a particular school. The data showed that attendance supervisors who spent fifty percent or more of their time on attendance worked at most of the schools that had an absence rate of five percent or less. By contrast, schools with absentee rates above ten percent all reported that their attendance supervisors spent less than fifty percent of their time on attendance matters.

Also significant was the finding that 86 percent of schools with absentee rates of 5 percent or less referred pupils to SARB, whereas only 29 percent of those schools with the highest absentee rates referred pupils to SARB. This tends to support the statistical data obtained from the individual student data. That data, subjected to T-test analysis, showed that SARB-referred pupils did show improvement in attendance.

Recommendations for School Districts

Following are some recommendations of practical methods school districts should employ in order to improve attendance by the general pupil population in general and truants in particular:

1. A strong attendance review board should be established by schools to monitor cases of excessive truancy and review these cases for corrective action, including court action where warranted. This board should involve the schools, law enforcement, social agencies, and parents from throughout the community.
2. Schools must streamline their attendance accounting procedures so that they can identify absentees immediately and make contact with the home as soon and as frequently as possible. Daily checks on absentees is a strong deterrent to truancy.
3. Schools must set up strong, well-written and fully publicized attendance policies. These policies must be consistently enforced and they should have the support of the community as well.
4. Schools must set up a system of rewards for good attendance. Individual examples of outstanding attendance records among individual pupils and also by classroom and school building should be recognized and rewarded frequently.
5. Schools should set up staff in-serving among ~~their employees related to attendance improve-~~ment. School officials should publicize the

savings that can be generated or have been obtained in state funding as a result of improved overall attendance.

6. Early identification of truants is critical as a means of dealing with truancy in a concerted and systematic manner. A program of counseling should be established for chronic truants.

Reommendations for Further Study

The results of this study show that the School Attendance Review Board structure is a strong vehicle for dealing with pupil truancy. Vigorous adherence to laws dealing with pupil truancy is a good way to insure that truant pupils and their parents are brought to account for their transgressions and that the pupils are required to maintain regular attendance. Schools should adhere to SARB requirements. It can pay dividends in several ways: better attendance; improved results in pupil achievement; and higher attendance-based state monetary reimbursement for the school districts.

Schools desirous of improving attendance in their pupil populations also should benefit from considering implementation of the types of measures that would be most compatible with their systems and that will prove the most effective in dealing with their specific situations.

Results in better pupil attendance and in school performance

are likely. The descriptive data in this study as well as the literature indicated this.

A review of the literature, as presented in Chapter 2 of the study, can be helpful in obtaining an overview of the types of attendance improvement activities which other districts have used successfully and effectively to combat truancy and high absenteeism. The more commonly utilized methods were incorporated into the study as Part I of the questionnaire. They were then presented as descriptive data in Chapter 4. Most of the attendance-improvement activities are used in varying degrees and combinations throughout the country, as shown from the research undertaken for Chapter 2.

It is likely that improved attendance is also linked to such factors as better grades and high achievement on standardized test scores. Some studies revealed this, as reported in the review of the literature. More studies in these areas would provide a stronger argument for focus on attendance as a vital factor in school success.

There was evidence gathered in the descriptive data that schools with high percentages of Blacks and Hispanics also show high rates of absenteeism despite utilization of multiple attendance-improvement activities. This is an area worthy of consideration for further study to analyze the reasons for this condition. There is also some evidence that the proportion of time spent by the school attendance

officer solely on attendance-related tasks as opposed to his/her other tasks may be crucial in obtaining success in increasing attendance rates in school. Conclusive evidence is needed in this area.

The final conclusion that must be expressed here is that a multiplicity of approaches to attendance improvement are likely to produce the best prospects for success in attaining high levels of attendance. These should include referral to the School Attendance Review Boards in California and to similarly structured attendance review systems in other states. Perhaps SARB can serve as a model for other school systems in the country. Individual counseling is also very important. Pupils with a tendency to be truant should undergo intensive counseling and support from the school and family structure. This should help significantly in substantially reducing pupil truancy and hence absenteeism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acker, Daniel, and Barbara Stembridge. "Pupil Personnel Workers as Change Agents in the Reduction of Truancy Among Inner-City Students," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 24, No. 2 (March, 1980).
- Bartlett, Larry, et al. "Absences: A Model Policy and Rules," Iowa State Department of Education, Des Moines, Iowa, 1978.
- Billington, Brian J. "Patterns of Attendance and Truancy: A Study of Attendance and Truancy Amongst First Year Comprehensive School Pupils," Educational Review, Vol. 30, No. 3, November, 1978.
- Birdsong, Scott. "Truancy: A Review of the Literature," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 24, No. 2, March, 1980.
- Boes, Shirley Neill. Keeping Students in School: Problems and Solutions, American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Virginia, Education News Service, Sacramento, California, 1979.
- Bolds, Gloria S. "Reducing Truancy by Using Student Aides in the Attendance Office," Regional Institute for Education, Chicago, Illinois, April, 1978.
- Braden, Lorraine. "Compulsory School Attendance Laws and the Juvenile Justice System" Criminal Justice Monograph, Vol. III, No. 3, Sam Houston State University, 1978.
- Brimm, Jack L., et al. "Student Absenteeism: A Survey Report," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 62, No. 415, February 1978.
- Brooks, David B. "Contingency Contracts with Truants," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 52, No. 5, January, 1974.
- Brown, George H., et al. The Condition of Education for Hispanic Americans, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, July, 1980.

- California Association of Welfare and Attendance. San Joaquin Section, SARB Workbook, Stockton, California, April/May, 1978.
- California Public Schools Directory, 1981. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Department of Education, Sacramento, California.
- California School Boards Association. A Survey of Problems and Practices Regarding Ethnic Imbalance in California Schools. Vallejo, California: Vallejo Unified School District, June 1965.
- _____. California School Boards Association. "How to Keep Children in School . . . and Make Them Want to Stay There," CSBA Task Force, 1981.
- California State Department of Education. Racial and Ethnic Survey of California Public Schools, Part One: Distribution of Pupils, Sacramento, California, Fall 1966.
- California State Legislature. Education Code, Sections 48320-48324, 1974.
- _____. California State Auditor's Report, 1978.
- Carruthers, R. L., and James Driver. National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Vol. 64, December, 1980.
- Carter, Thomas P. Mexican Americans in School: A History of Educational Neglect, College Entrance Examination Board, New York, New York, 1970.
- Children's Defense Fund. "Children out of School," Washington Research Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts: January, 1975.
- Childs, M. L. "Making Students Accountable for Absences," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Vol. 63, April, 1974.
- Daniels, Lorraine M., and Andrew A. Robinson. "Project Hold: A Way to Hold Them," Negro Educational Review, Vol. 30, No. 4, October, 1979.
- De Leonibus, Nancy. "Absenteeism: The Perpetual Problem," The Practitioner, Vol. V, No. 1, National Association of Secondary School Principals, October, 1978.
- Dempsey, R. A. "Attendance Policies and Student Performance," Clearinghouse, Vol. 53, November, 1979.

- Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics, Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Day Schools, 1977-78 School Year. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979.
- Duke, Daniel L., and Adrienne Meckel. "Student Absenteeism: A Survey Report," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 62, No. 415, February, 1978.
- Eaton, M. J. "A Study of Some Factors Associated with the Early Identification of Persistent Absenteeism," Educational Review, Vol. 31, No. 3, November, 1979.
- Feist, Ronald L. "Development and Implementation of a New Attendance Policy at Napa High School," Introductory Practicum submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the National Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders, Nova University, September, 1976.
- Fresno County Public Schools Directory, 1981-82. Fresno, Ca.: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Office.
- Fresno InterAgency Committee. Report of the InterAgency Task Force, Fresno, California, July, 1981.
- Furst, Lyundon G. "An Educational Alternative to Schooling," Urban Review, Vol. 3, Fall 1979.
- Garcia, Elio J. "Instant Quarter-Credit Concept--An Answer to Class-Cutting?" NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 63, No. 4.
- Graha, Christopher, and Clark McCauley. "Counseling Truants Back to School Motivation Combined with a Program for Action," Journal of Counseling Psychology, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1976.
- Hakanin, Lauri J. "Combating Truancy: A Working Plan," Illinois School Journal, Vol. 59, No. 4, 1980.
- Hawke, Sharryl. "The School of Urban Studies: A School Within a School," Washington: National Institute of Education, Department of Health Education, and Welfare, 1974.
- Henley, Richard, and John Pampallis. "The Campaign for Compulsory Education in Manitoba," Canadian Journal, Vol. 7, 1982.
- Huff, Anne M. "Truancy in Wisconsin Public Schools," Research Bulletin 76-5, Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin State Legislative Council, 1976.

- Illinois School Problems Commission. "Illinois School Problems: Report of the School Problems Commission No. 14," Springfield, Ill.: June, 1977.
- Illinois State Office of Education. "Truancy and School Attendance in Illinois Schools," Springfield, Ill.: April, 1977.
- Jett, Daniel L. "Pupil Attendance: The Bottom Line," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 63, No. 424, February, 1979.
- Johnson, Janis T. "A Truancy Program: The Child Welfare Agency and the School," Child Welfare, Vol. 55, No. 8, September/October, 1976.
- Journal of International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers. "Attendance and Absenteeism in California Schools," Vol. 23, No. 4, September, 1982.
- Kern County Public Schools Directory, 1981-82. Bakersfield, Ca.: Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office.
- Kings County Public Schools Directory, 1981-82. Hanford, Ca.: Kings County Superintendent of Schools Office.
- Levanto, Joseph. "The Problems of Attendance: Research Findings and Solutions." Paper presented at the National Association of Secondary School Principals Annual Convention, February, 1975.
- Lollie, Michael, and Leonard Smith. "The Fear of Crime in the School Enterprise and its Consequences," Education and Urban Society, Vol. 8, No. 4, August, 1976.
- Marcos, Leon. "Wanted: A New Educational Philosophy for the Mexican-Americans," California Journal of Secondary Education, Vol. 34, November, 1979.
- Meckel, H. M. "Student Attendance Problems and School Organization: A Case Study," Urban Education, Vol. 15, October, 1980.
- Miles, Roosevelt. "A Study of Families in Need of Restoration," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 22, No. 2, March, 1978.
- Minkler, Robert. "Humanizing Attendance Procedures," Clearinghouse, Vol. 53, Fall 1980.

- Moos, Rudolf H., and Bernice S. "Classroom Social Climate and Student Absences and Grades," Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 70, No. 2, 1978.
- Morgan, R. "An Exploratory Study of Three Procedures to Encourage School Attendance," Psychology in the Schools, Vol. 12.
- Morris, Gordon T. "The Truant," Today's Education, Vol. 61, No. 1, January, 1972.
- National Resources Network. "Operation Stay in School." United States Department of Justice, Washington: 1975.
- Nielsen, Arthur, M.D., and Dan Gerber, Ph.D. "Psychosocial Aspects of Truancy in Early Adolescence," Adolescence, Vol. 14, No. 54, Summer, 1979.
- Nyangoni, Betty. "The Media is the Message: Using the Media to Improve School Attendance." Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, St. Louis, Missouri, October 18, 1978.
- "Persons of Spanish-speaking Origin in the United States," U.S. Census Bureau Report, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, March, 1978.
- Polivka, Larry, et al., "Removal of Status Offenders from the Juvenile Justice System: The Florida Experience," Child Welfare, Vol. 58, No. 3, March, 1979.
- Rafky, David M. "School Rebellion: A Research Note," Adolescence, Vol. XIV, No. 55, Fall, 1979.
- Rafferty, Elizabeth. "The Dropout Crisis," The Fresno Bee, Section G., p. 1, Sunday, September 26, 1982.
- Regional Education Service of Cook County. "Remarks and Excerpts from Public Hearings on Truancy and Expulsion," Regional Institute for Education, Cook County, Chicago, Ill.: 1972.
- Reynolds, Carol. "Buddy System Improves Attendance," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, Vol. 11, No. 4, April, 1977.
-

- Robins, Lee, et al. "School Achievement in Two Generations: A Study of 88 Urban Black Families." Paper presented at the Thistledown International Symposium, Toronto, Canada, 1977.
- Robinson, John V. "Project Probe: A Student Conducted Study of Truancy." Washington: United States Government Printing Office, June, 1979.
- Robins, Lee N., and Kathryn S. Ratcliff. "Long-range Outcomes Associated with School Truancy," Public Health Service, Washington: 1978.
- Rodell, Daniel E. "Taking a Ride on a Merry-Go-Round: An Attempt at Systems Change in a Public School," High School Journal, Vol. 56, No. 5, March, 1979.
- Rodgers, D. C. "Stepping up School Attendance," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Vol. 64, December, 1980.
- Rozell, Robert. "The Relationship Between Absenteeism and Grades," Educational and Psychological Measurement, Vol. 23, 1968.
- Saltsman, Samuel A. "School Attendance in the State of Maryland," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 56, No. 5, January, 1980.
- San Joaquin County Public Schools Directory, 1981-82.
San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools Office, Stockton, Ca.
- Senna, John, et al., "Delinquent Behavior and Academic Investment Among Suburban Youth," Adolescence., Vol. 9, 1975.
- Sentelle, Sam P. "A Helping Hand for the Chronic Truant," Educational Leadership, Vol. 37, No. 6, March, 1980.
- Sharples, B. "Patterns of School Attendance in Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools," Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 1979.
- Shelton, Jeffrey. "A Comparison of Attending and Non-Attending Junior High School Students," Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 24, No. 3, September, 1980.

- Sommer, Barbara. "Truancy in Yolo County, California,"
Yolo County Department of Social Services, Woodland,
Ca.: March, 1981.
- Splaine, John. "Compulsory Schooling: The Legal Issue,"
Research in Education, 1976.
- Stanislaus County Public Schools Directory, 1981-82.
Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools Office,
Modesto, California.
- Stenson, Victor J. "Crisis Theory: A United Approach to
Truancy," Journal of the International Association of
Pupil Personnel Workers, Vol. 24, January, 1980.
- St. John, Nicholas. "Thirty-six Teachers: Their Character-
istics and Outcomes for Black and White Pupils,"
American Educational Research Journal, Vol. 12,
1975.
- Suprina, Richard N. "Cutting Down on Student Cutting," NASSP
Bulletin, Vol. 63, No. 424, February, 1979.
- Teachmann, Gerard W. "In-School Truancy in Urban Schools:
The Problem and a Solution," Phi Delta Kappan,
Vol. 61, No. 3, November, 1979.
- The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. "A Compar-
ative Analysis of Standards and Practices: Jurisdiction,"
Washington: The National Institute for Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention, Superintendent of Documents,
1977.
- The London Times. Educational Supplement, 3184, 19,
June 11, 1976.
- The Practitioner. National Association of Secondary
School Principals, Vol. 1, No. 1, March, 1975.
- Thomson, Scott, and David Stanard. "Student Attendance and
Absenteeism," The Practitioner, National Association
of Secondary School Principals, Vol. 1, No. 1, March,
1975.
- Tulare County Public Schools Directory, 1981-82. Tulare
County Superintendent of Schools Office, Visalia,
California.
- Unger, Karen V., et al. "A Truancy Prevention Project,"
Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 60, No. 4, December, 1978.

- Washington, Roosevelt, Jr. "A Survey-Analysis of Problems Faced by Inner-City High School Students who Have Been Classified as Truants," High School Journal, Vol. 56, No. 5, February, 1973.
- White, J., and Martin Peddie. "Patterns of Absenteeism in Primary and Secondary Schools," Scottish Educational Review, Vol. 10, No. 2, November, 1978.
- Wright, John S. "Factors in School Attendance," Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 58, No. 4, December, 1976.
- Zieman, Gayle L. "School Perceptions of Truant Adolescent Boys," Behavioral Disorders Programs, Vol. 5, No. 4, August, 1980.
- _____, and Gerald P. Benson. "School Perceptions of Truant Adolescent Girls," Behavioral Disorders, Vol. 6, No. 4, August, 1981.
- Zweig, John T., et al. "The Contingent Use of Trading Stamps in Reducing Truancy," The Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 47, No. 3, Spring, 1979.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

TO: The Principal

Dear Sir:

I am writing a doctoral dissertation on truancy at the junior high school level and I would greatly appreciate it if you would kindly take the time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. It is extremely important for me that I obtain as close to 100% return of the questionnaires as soon as possible. Your cooperation is vital and I am deeply indebted to you for it.

There are two parts to the questionnaire: Part I deals with general attendance data. Part II deals with individual students in your school who have been referred to the School Attendance Review Board. PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ANY NAMES OF STUDENTS. Simply assign a student to each number consecutively until all referred students have been accounted for.

If you have any questions or difficulties in complying with this request, please do not hesitate to call me collect at (209) 582-0503 (home), or (805) 849-2611 (work). I shall be making follow-up telephone calls to schools I fail to hear from. Should you desire a synopsis of my findings I shall be glad to provide it free to you upon completion of the study. Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Al Martinez, Principal
Earlimart Junior High School
Earlimart, Ca. 93219

8. Who makes the calls to the homes of absentee students?
- community contact person
 - attendance officer
 - counselor
 - student office assistant
 - other (specify) _____
9. Who is primarily responsible in your school for the supervision of attendance and for compliance with the laws, rules, and policies related to attendance and truancy?
- Principal
 - Attendance Officer
 - Vice Principal
 - Director of Pupil Personnel
 - Dean of Students
 - Counselor
 - Other (specify) _____
10. What percentage of the attendance supervisor's time is devoted to attendance duties specifically?
- 75% to 100%
 - 50% to 75%
 - 25% to 50%
 - less than 25%
 - there is no attendance supervisor
11. What is the average daily absentee rate at your school? (all absences).
- less than 5%
 - 6% to 7%
 - 8% to 10%
 - 11% to 15%
 - over 15%
12. Is a file kept on each student found to be truant?
- yes
 - no
13. When absences become chronic, does the school request a doctor's verification if the excuse is illness or an appointment?
- yes
 - no
14. After how many consecutive days of absence for illness does the school require a doctor's verification?
- after 2 days
 - after 3 days
 - after 4 or 5 days
 - after more than 2 weeks
 - no verification is required.
15. Are chronic absentees referred to other community agencies for psychological (counseling) services?
- yes
 - no
16. To what agency or agencies are chronic absentees referred to for psychological services? (Circle more than one if appropriate.)
- Welfare Department
 - Probation Department

- c. Community counseling
(mental health clinic)
 - d. law enforcement
 - e. none
 - f. other (specify) _____
17. Which of the following procedures are in effect at your school? (Circle more than one if appropriate.)
- a. Written governing board policies dealing with attendance and truancy.
 - b. Notices sent to parents each year informing them of attendance policies at your school.
 - c. Attendance policy published in the student handbook.
 - d. None of the above.
18. What percent of your school's pupil population is composed from the following ethnic groups?
- a. White (non-Hispanic) _____
 - b. Hispanic _____
 - c. Black _____
 - d. Asian _____
 - e. Other _____
-

PART II. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT DATA (PAGE 5)

This part of the study requires data for each student from your school referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) for the 1981-82 school year. Check your attendance cards for each referred student 90 days prior to and 90 days after referral. Records for each student referred early in the year may require checking during the latter part of the 1980-81 year. Students referred during the latter part of the year will likewise require checking into the 82-83 school year. If a student dropped out or transferred after referral, indicate the date the school dropped him/her from the school rolls. DO NOT GIVE ANY STUDENT NAMES. SIMPLY ASSIGN THEM A NUMBER ON THE DATA SHEET IN ORDER OF REFERRAL.

In the Sex column write M or F for male or female. In the Ethnicity column use the symbols indicated on the Individual Student Data Sheet. Under the column heading Psychological Services (Psych Svc.) use numbers indicated. Students receiving more than one type of service should be assigned all the appropriate numbers. If the student was referred to the courts after referral indicate in proper column.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

List of Schools Surveyed

NORTH SECTION:

1. Alfred H. Clover (Tracy)
2. Marshall Middle School (Stockton)
3. Fremont Middle School (Stockton)
4. Senior Elementary (Lodi)
5. Hamilton Middle School (Stockton)
6. Woodbridge School (Woodbridge)
7. Webster Middle School (Stockton)
8. Monte Vista Middle School (Tracy)
9. Denair Middle School (Denair)
10. Empire Senior Elementary (Empire)
11. Mae Hensley Elementary (Ceres)
12. Lincoln Senior Elementary (Stockton)

MIDDLE SECTION:

1. Mendocino Junior High School (Parlier)
2. Citrus Junior High School (Orange Cove)
3. Kings Canyon Junior High School (Fresno)
4. Navelencia Junior High School (Reedley)
5. Kastner Intermediate School (Clovis)
6. Washington Junior High School (Sanger)
7. General Grant Junior High School (Reedley)
8. Clark Intermediate School (Clovis)
9. Scandinavian Middle School (Fresno)
10. Divisadero Junior High School (Visalia)
11. Woodrow Wilson Junior High School (Hanford)
12. John Muir Junior High School (Corcoran)

SOUTH SECTION:

1. Mountain View Junior High School (Lamont)
2. Gephart Middle School (Boron)
3. Forbes Avenue Elementary School (Edwards Air Force Base)
4. Fred Thompson Junior High School (Bakersfield)
5. Emerson Elementary School (Bakersfield)
6. Joshua Junior High School (Mohave)
7. Washington Elementary (Bakersfield)
8. Hamilton Junior High School (Rosemead)
9. Richland Senior Elementary (Shafter)
10. Curran Elementary School (Bakersfield)
11. Edison Senior Elementary (Bakersfield)
12. Compton Elementary (Bakersfield)