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An investigation of the effectiveness of a Saturday School Program in reducing the rate of truancy among ninth and tenth grade habitually truant students

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A SATURDAY SCHOOL
PROGRAM IN REDUCING THE RATE OF TRUANCY AMONG NINTH AND
TENTH GRADE HABITUALLY TRUANT STUDENTS

by

Robert Howard Bell

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education
in the School of Education
The University of the Pacific
March, 1988

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Abstract of Dissertation

This study was undertaken as an empirical investigation to determine whether the rate of truancy, grade point averages and attitudes toward school of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students were affected after the student's participation in a mandatory Saturday School Program.

Subjects were habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students chosen from two selected schools within the Whittier Union High School District in Whittier, California. Of the total sample of 130 students, a total of 55 students participated in a traditional (control) Saturday School Program and 75 students participated in an experimental Saturday School Program. Comparisons were drawn between the traditional and experimental groups and between the two grade levels and genders. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was the statistical technique used to assess the effect of the Saturday School Program on the variables identified. A researcher designed student opinionnaire was used to assess student attitude toward school.

The main findings were: (1) habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students reduce their rate of truancy following participation in Saturday School. Ninth grade students showed a

greater reduction in rate of truancy than did tenth grade students. (2) The grade point averages of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students declined, as much as one-half a grade point in some cases, following participation in Saturday School. (3) The attitude toward school of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students was not noticeably affected following participation in Saturday School. (4) For the three variables studied, participation in Saturday School was found to have a greater effect on habitually truant male students than on habitually truant female students. (5) For the three variables studied, there was no appreciable difference between the students who participated in the traditional Saturday School Program as compared with the students who participated in the experimental Saturday School Program.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Increasing lack of attendance among students in secondary schools causes frustration for administrators, teachers, counselors and parents. While there are distinctions which may be drawn between the primary measures of attendance, specifically truancy and tardiness, the difficulties caused by either or both of these occurrences can be significant. Habitual and persistent patterns of poor attendance equate to a substantial loss of class time and instruction. Success in the educational setting requires continuity of instruction, classroom participation, guided study and other learning experiences. Students' interaction with each other and with competent and talented teachers is vital. Without question, the effects of increasingly high rates of non-attendance among students, due to truancy, disrupt the educational process on the secondary school campus.

When this lack of attendance is extended to the secondary school's ninth and tenth grade students, the effects of poor attendance behavior can be particularly damaging. It is during this period that students develop the patterns of punctuality in attendance important to success in school.

The ninth and tenth grade students, oftentimes, appear locked in a time warp from their older school peers. This difference is due in part to lower academic skill levels as well as low levels of maturity and self-esteem among ninth and tenth grade students. Reid (1983) reported that "among the critical periods in the onset of school absenteeism, . . . the first years of secondary education are particularly important." The author went on to report that there was a lowering of morale among certain at-risk pupils caused by segregation of students into academic and non-academic groups. The combination of low levels of self-esteem and maturity can potentially cause the younger students to feel uncomfortable at school and, in turn, may cause them to want to avoid school.

Extent of the Problem

Much of the funding for school district operations is based on student attendance. Secondary school districts feel the impact of high rates of absenteeism and truancy through the loss of funding as a result of decreased Average Daily Attendance (ADA). According to the California Educational Code, Section 46330, "the average daily attendance in the high schools of a district . . . is the quotient arising from dividing the total number of days of pupil attendance . . . during the fiscal year by the number of days school was actually taught . . ."

While the computation of ADA is important to the funding of secondary schools, Jacobson (1984) suggested that attendance accounting procedures encourage the documentation of absences in order to receive funding rather than the remediation of attendance problems.

Students whose absences are not excused, and can be considered trancies, pose a mounting concern for secondary educators. Under section 48260 of the California Education Code, truancy or a truant is defined as:

Any pupil . . . who is absent from school without valid excuse for more than three days or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on each of more than three days in a school year . . .

Compulsory school attendance laws are in force in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, yet rates of absenteeism in secondary schools are up nationwide.

Betty W. Nyangoni (1980), Chief Attendance Officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools, indicated that for each of the previous five years, school absenteeism (including truancy) ranked either first or among the top five concerns of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. In addition, the author indicated that during the same period, the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers refocused the goals and objectives of that body specifically on school attendance rather than on the broader expanse of pupil personnel services.

An in-house study from a four-year suburban high school with a large student enrollment investigated the connection between poor attendance and truancy, and the inclination for students to drop out of school. During the summer of 1984, the records of the freshman class of the 1983-84 school year (graduating class of 1987) were examined in order to generate a list of students who, by virtue of the deficiency of the total number of earned credits, were in danger of not graduating with their class. The hope was that these "potential dropouts" would be identified early and interventions initiated in order that they would remain in school and achieve graduation. This in-house study noted that 48.7 percent of the number of students who were freshmen during the 1981-82 academic year did not graduate in 1985. The rate of dropouts for the class of 1986 was projected to be above 40 percent (class size of 467 students when enrolled as freshmen in 1982). The dropout rate was projected to remain at least as high for the classes of 1987 and 1988 (class size of 493 and 548 students respectively, when enrolled as freshmen).

Evidence exists to suggest that secondary students who fail to attend school with regularity are likely to suffer academically. Di Scullo (1981) reported that students whose attendance patterns are acceptable have significantly higher satisfaction

with their school environment, and their performance on achievement and aptitude tests is at a higher level as well. Ramos (1980) studied student perceptions of absenteeism and found that low absentee students tend to achieve higher grades than do their high absentee counterparts. Additionally, Ramos found that if a high school as a whole has a high rate of absenteeism, those students who are frequently absent have a lower degree of achievement than do their high absentee counterparts in high schools said to have low absenteeism.

Truancy among secondary students is manifested in student attitudes as well as student achievement. Robinson (1975) indicated that truancy from school occurred frequently among bored students who also showed a general hostility toward school, felt their teachers did not take a great deal of interest in them, and rejected the authority of their teachers. Brown (1976) found that more than 50 percent of "attenders" in Washington D.C. high schools held more positive attitudes toward school than did non-attenders. The Carnegie Council on Policy Studies (1979) reported "nearly one-half of former high school students . . . consider their high school experience to have been of no value."

An interrelationship between truancy and subsequent behavior problems has been established. Fox (1976) stated that truancy

is one of the youngster's earliest delinquent acts and a precursor of later court appearances. Fox also found that for many of these delinquents, failure to attend school and violation of parental authority may be the only "crimes" resulting in legal adjudication.

Minicucci, Acosta, DeLapp, Hernandez and Margolis (1985) in their study identified that dropouts demonstrate certain characteristics which included the tendency to be overaged for their grade level, feeling alienated from school and failing district proficiency tests and graduation requirements. The authors also found that in 1983, for example, of 100,000 high school dropouts, 41,000 left school in the twelfth grade because of failed proficiency tests.

It has been revealed that disciplinary measures such as suspensions are not effective in reducing truancy or dropout rates. Litt (1977) indicated that students who are frequently truant are often suspended for a specific number of days as punishment for cutting school. While a 15 percent decrease in cutting school resulted from formal suspensions, the author noted that the effects felt were maintained only on a short term basis.

Teacher recognition of students has proved to have a positive effect on truant behavior. Combs (1978) found that "attendance rates of students working with teachers who make frequent interpersonal contacts with students are significantly

higher . . . than attendance rates of students working with 'low contact' teachers."

The ultimate consequences of patterns of truancy and dropping out of school among secondary students impact large numbers of individuals both directly and indirectly. Huling (1980) offered the following:

Dropouts pay a high price for the premature termination of their formal education; and . . . society pays a price for the dropout's decision. Low educational attainment and the functional illiteracy . . . endangers . . . the long-term economic growth and increases the public cost of welfare dependency.

Adams (1976) suggested that the outlook may not be bright for the high school dropout successfully securing and maintaining employment after leaving school. In a study of the relationship of attendance in school and employee attendance in industry, Adams found that employees who tended to be absent on the job and were dismissed as a result, had a history of school absenteeism.

The importance of education has strong roots in our society, and the effects of truancy can be seen in long term, damaging consequences for the individual student and society. These consequences carry with them a threat to the overall quality of education.

Implications of the Problem

The sense of the importance of education is founded on the

philosophy of the need for an enlightened, literate and productive citizenry in this society. In his 10th Annual Report to the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1864, Horace Mann, an early advocate of public education, indicated his belief in "the absolute right of every human being that comes into the world to an education . . . which, of course, proves the correlative duty of every government to see that the means of that education are provided for all."

This basic philosophical assertion of Mann has prevailed and influenced the enactment of many of the present day compulsory school attendance laws. Yet, as previously indicated, the number of students who are "non-attenders" continues to increase across the nation. The problems of absenteeism and truancy and their link to the problem of dropouts in secondary schools are of immense financial and social importance to all concerned with secondary education.

Absenteeism has become the focus of a national priority in education. Absenteeism, particular truancy, has led to the positions of "Attendance Coordinator", "Supervisor" and "Counselor" becoming integral parts of the secondary school staffing pattern.

One approach identified by secondary school administrators for working with habitually truant students is to require these students to make up time missed during the regular week through

attendance in a program of Saturday School. Under the provisions of California Assembly Bill 1615, in conjunction with other existing law, the governing board of a secondary school district may claim up to a maximum of five days attendance for students in Saturday classes. Students required to attend Saturday School are those students who have been truant during the previous week and this assignment entails mandatory attendance on the part of these students. Students in Saturday sessions must be involved in curriculum comparable to that offered during the week and must be supervised by certificated school personnel in order for the ADA credit to be claimed. While benefits can potentially be derived through the generation of increased revenue from a Saturday School Program, the adoption of such a program requires the need to determine its effect on the students involved.

As the effort to establish and expand programs aimed at impacting truancy in secondary schools gains increased momentum, attention must be paid to the issue of reintegrating the habitual truant back into school. Success in this endeavor may well depend on the approach taken by the school toward the truant. When the habitual truant returns to school, he/she may not be school oriented and may be more disruptive as a result. An effort must be made to reprogram the habitual truant to attend school on a regular basis.

Purpose of the Study

Programs of Saturday School are attractive to secondary school administrators because of the potential benefits to be derived from increased revenues through the reclamation of ADA credit. However, no empirical evidence exist to suggest whether placing habitually truant secondary students in a program of Saturday School affects the rate of truancy for those students. The philosophy underlying the establishment of a Saturday School Program is of little importance if there is a continued pattern of truancy among its participants.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the rate of truancy, grade point averages and attitudes toward school of habitually truant students were affected after the student's participation in a program of mandatory Saturday School.

Statement of the Problem

In view of the information presented, the problem to be studied was stated: Does attendance in a program of mandatory Saturday School by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students affect the rate of truancy, grade point averages and attitudes toward school of these students?

The problem was investigated with emphasis given to the identified areas of concern:

- 1) Rate of truancy of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students as measured by school quarterly attendance records.
- 2) Recorded grade point averages of habitually ninth and tenth grade students as measured by the grade point average for the previous semester.
- 3) Attitude of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students toward school as measured by student survey.

The factors of the gender and grade level of the habitually truant students also were given consideration.

The following null hypotheses were tested for significance:

Hypothesis 1 - Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the quarterly attendance rate of these students is unrelated.

Hypothesis 2 - Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the quarterly grade point averages of these students is unrelated.

Hypothesis 3 - Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the attitude toward school of these students is unrelated.

Hypothesis 4 - Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the gender of these students is unrelated.

Hypothesis 5 - Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the grade level of these students is unrelated.

Significance of the Problem

The research data compiled through investigative studies have revealed that the dimensions of the truancy problem are enormous. The dropout figures for California and the nation's secondary schools are clear evidence of the extent of the problem. It has been suggested that some attendance accounting procedures employed by secondary schools may be focused primarily on financial considerations rather than on the eradication of truancy. The literature also reveals that punitive and/or disciplinary measures, in and of themselves, have no lasting effect in helping to reduce the incidence of truancy among habitual offenders.

Research has revealed that the habitual truant in secondary schools runs increased risks of limited academic achievement and ultimately, dropping out of school. The consequences of the decision to drop out of school have been revealed to be far reaching for the individual and society. Despite the presence of

the indicated facts and consequences specific to truancy and dropouts, the number of secondary students who continue to elect to make the choice to drop out of school remains high.

Studies concerned with programs of Saturday School and secondary students are present in the literature; however, they focus primarily on a description of the design of the Saturday School Program. As such, the present study was unique as an investigation of the effects of Saturday School as an alternative program for working with habitually truant secondary students. It would seem that an alternative program such as Saturday School which addresses a major area of concern among secondary educators is due an empirical investigation.

The focus of this study was to determine what, if any, effect a program of Saturday School had on changing the quarterly attendance rate, grade point average and attitude toward school of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students. For Saturday School or any educational program to merit continued use, an understanding of its effect on the students who participate in the program is essential. This investigation should provide information with which secondary school administrators can potentially improve one important approach of working with habitually truant students. Educators need to be aware of the ways in which programs, curriculum and practices used in the

schools affect students. The habitually truant student represents, perhaps, that segment of the student population which can best be characterized as being "high risk."

The school acts as an agency for both the education and socialization of its students and works to reinforce how students feel about the environment in which they must function on a daily basis. Students cannot function at their best in this environment if they are habitually truant from school.

It would seem that an improved understanding of an alternative program such as Saturday School, which is directed at impacting the lack of student attendance resulting from truancy, should assist secondary school administrators in making necessary adjustments in their schools which will promote positive and productive changes in the behaviors of habitually truant students.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

Absence (excused) - Any absence for which the school and school district may claim ADA as entitled by law.

Absence (unexcused) - Any absence for which the school and school district may not claim ADA as entitled by law.

Absenteeism - Any period of time spent by a student away from school and classes when in session; whether excused or not.

Alternative Program - A program designed to meet the needs of students outside of the traditional program offerings.

Dropout - A high school student who leaves school prior to obtaining a diploma.

Experimental Saturday School - A Saturday School Program incorporating guided study, audio-visual techniques of instruction and group discussion as its design.

Freshman - A high school student identified as being in the ninth grade.

Grade Level - A class placement determined by the school and not necessarily a product of the number of graduation credits earned by a high school student.

Grade Point Average - A numerical figure computed arithmetically at the end of an academic period by adding together the quality points assigned to a course, which are indicative of the degree of academic achievement attained, for each taken by a student and dividing the sum by the total number of courses taken.

Habitual Truant - Any student found to be truant from school for at least four class periods a day on each of six or more separate days.

High School - A school comprised of grades 9-12 or grades 10-12. Throughout the study the terms "high school" and "secondary school" will be used interchangeably.

Sophomore - A high school student identified as being in the tenth grade.

Traditional Saturday School - A Saturday School Program incorporating a "study hall" environment as its design.

Truancy - Any absence from school which after three days remains unexcused.

Truancy Rate - The number of days a student is determined to be truant from school divided by the number of days in an academic period or school year.

Scope of the Study

The samples for the study were habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students drawn from the schools in the Whittier Union High School District in Whittier, California. The district is comprised of five comprehensive high schools, enrolling grades 9-12, and one continuation high school. Enrollment in the continuation high school is limited to students who have reached the age of 16 years or older.

All subjects chosen for inclusion in the study were enrolled at one of the comprehensive high schools. The rationale and methodology for selection of the sample population will be discussed fully in Chapter III.

Limitations

This study focused exclusively on ninth and tenth grade students who had been identified as habitual truants. It is generally recognized by secondary school administrators that once a student reaches the junior year in high school, he/she should have progressed approximately one-half the way towards completion of high school graduation requirements. It is also recognized that patterns of habitual truancy will seriously inhibit this academic progress. Therefore, secondary schools provide alternative programs such as continuation high schools, expanded vocational courses, career education and the availability of courses through local community colleges and adult schools for those students who have reached the age of 16. No such alternative or opportunity programs exist for the 14 and 15 year old ninth and tenth grade student who may experience academic deficiency due to habitual truancy.

This study was therefore limited to consideration of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students. Upperclass junior (eleventh grade) and senior (twelfth grade) students were delimited from consideration due to the availability of additional educational programs worthwhile to these students. The factors of family demographics, race, class tardiness, methods of transportation to school and number of disciplinary referrals received by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students also

were delimited from this study. The potential importance of each of these variables was recognized and considered; however, their inclusion would serve to expand the scope of the study beyond its practical and reasonable limits.

Recognition also was afforded the potential influence of teacher attitude towards the habitual truant behavior of ninth and tenth grade students. However, this variable warrants separate consideration and, also, was beyond the scope of this study.

Additionally, recognition was given to the following factors because of their potential influence on the study being conducted:

- 1) The accessibility to the researcher of the required student data from school files and records for the sample population.
- 2) The willingness of the administration of the district and the comprehensive high schools, the faculty, parents and students to participate in a study of this nature.

Organization of the Study

This study of the effectiveness of a Saturday School Program on the rate of truancy, grade point average and attitude toward school of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students was organized in the following manner. Chapter I consisted of an

introduction to the problem and a presentation of the scope and limitations of the study. Chapter II concentrated on a review of the current literature related to the topics of truancy, absenteeism and attendance among secondary students. Additional related literature addressing the topics of dropouts, academic achievement and attitudes toward school among secondary students was reviewed to the extent that such literature was relevant and supported the hypotheses. Chapter III explained the methodology of the study including explanations of the sample selection, data collection processes, instrumentation used and the statistical procedures employed for analyzing the data. Chapter IV presented the analysis and explanation of the data as revealed through statistical treatment. Chapter V presented conclusions as supported by data analysis and included acceptance or rejection of the null hypotheses. Chapter V concluded with recommendations which included suggestions for future study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The educational literature reports on several remedial programs, including Saturday School, which have been employed to improve the non-attendance behavior of students as part of discussions of truancy and absenteeism. Specific to students in secondary schools, Saturday School Programs have been given only limited mention in the literature. The topics of truancy, absenteeism and dropouts appear in the literature to a far greater extent.

A review of pertinent literature to include studies and articles concerned with a discussion of programs of Saturday School will be treated in this chapter. Because of the paucity of literature dealing specifically with Saturday School and secondary students, this chapter also will serve as a review of the literature generated by other variables chosen for study, namely academic achievement and attitudes toward school as they tend to support the hypotheses presented in Chapter I. The topic of dropouts will be reviewed with emphasis given to its relationship to truancy and absenteeism among secondary students.

Truancy/Absenteeism

Thomas (1985) indicated that school absenteeism is a critical issue facing school administrators and added that, in recent years, student truancy has been ranked as the most serious of all educational problems by secondary school principals. Duke and Jones (1983) in a study of deviant behavior issues, identified truancy as the number one behavioral problem in the decade of the eighties. The problem of truancy is far reaching and difficult to overcome due to the many factors that contribute to its increase.

Indeed the literature identifies the need for the adoption of a comprehensive approach by administrators, parents and teachers when addressing the problem of truancy in secondary schools. Further, the literature concentrates on efforts to expand knowledge of the identification, characteristics and causes of habitual truancy as a means of better understanding and treating the problem. To this end, Reid and Kendall (1982) concluded:

Though particular characteristics have emerged which seem to be common among truants and persistent absentees, the typical absentee has not yet been identified. Indeed, such an identification is in some ways impossible . . . because of the many factors involved.

Despite the recognition and acceptance that truancy is a pervasive problem in secondary schools, no clear definition or explanation of truancy is present in the literature. Williams

(1974) indicated, "truancy is a phenomenon difficult to define and even more difficult to measure with any degree of accuracy." Hersov (1980) offered that truancy is "an unjustifiable absence from school without the parents knowledge or permission."

Robbins and Ratcliff (1980) presented an expanded definition which indicated truancy to be "an absence from school without an acceptable reason, whether or not the parents know and approve."

While citing the need for the establishment of a national priority for the eradication of truancy, Nyangoni (1985) suggested that the causes of truancy among students can be classified into two broad headings: external based causes and school related causes. The external based causes were those associated with financial and economic pressures, family obligations, peer group pressures and environmental influences. School related causes were identified as inflexible school schedules, insensitive and uncaring teachers, poor academic and/or social skills and listlessness or disinterest in school.

Similarly, Thomas (1985) identified socio-economic factors as causes and/or characteristics of chronic truants. Among the factors cited were undetected health problems, substance abuse, school phobia, pathology of failure and an increase in single parent families. Thomas suggested the need for the development of a "master plan" of identification and intervention with school truants as early as kindergarten. In an earlier study dealing with student absenteeism, Levanto (1976) found students in

single-parent families to have higher rates of absenteeism.

Reid (1983) reported the perceptions of 128 "persistent" school truants for their initial and continued truancy from school. The students studied were from deprived backgrounds. Reid identified family composition as the major criteria in the selection of the students in the study. Reid reported that over two-fifths, or 43.8 percent, of the students in the study came from domestic backgrounds "which had known disruption of one sort or another such as parental divorce, separation, death or a single parent household." Reid further identified that all students in the study had missed sixty-five percent of school time during the preceding academic period.

Among the findings, Reid pointed out that despite the generally unfavorable social and educational backgrounds of the truants, a greater number of the students were inclined to blame their institutions rather than psychological or other social factors for their truant behavior.

Reid's findings in the aforementioned study suggest a marginal linkage of socially based factors to truancy as perceived by students. Additional research also has revealed the interrelationship between socio-economic/personal factors, school truancy and resulting behavioral problems. Walberg (1979) studied delinquency among adolescents. In the study, a wide variety of psychosocial factors were considered as possible

explanations for the deviant behavior of 430 students in three Chicago high schools. Truancy was found to have the highest correlation to delinquency among the students studied. Nielson and Gerber (1979) found that for the 33 chronic truants they interviewed, all the students were involved in some form of disruptive behavior on a consistent basis while in school. Among these disruptive acts were stealing, fighting, use of alcohol and drugs and vandalism.

Fox (1976) found truancy to be one of the earliest delinquent acts of youngsters. Stalden (1976) reported an interrelationship among truancy, delinquency, family problems and economic hardship, and Vedder and Thomas (1979) found that 89 percent of the inmates in a state penitentiary had a history of truancy when in school. Galloway (1985) found a relationship between social class and school non-attendance, with higher rates of non-attendance found among lower social class groups.

Birman and Natriello (1978) reported that the parents of truants are interested in the education of their children, regardless of social class affiliation. These authors warned against reaching faulty assumptions about truants merely on consideration of social class. However, Rist (1977) indicated that "lower social class youth are more likely to be . . . alienated from school processes." Rist cites the structure of schools rather than family background as the cause of this

alienation.

Robinson (1979) reported that the community in which a student lives has a major impact on school attendance. The author found that students living in urban settings had lower attendance rates than students residing in rural or suburban areas. Robinson found, as did Rist, that students from low income and working class backgrounds were to a significant degree more likely to exhibit poor attendance behavior than students from high income families.

Reid and Kendall (1982) viewed truancy as a problem resulting from "inadequate childhood socialization." The authors suggest that truancy is a behavior which is individual in nature and, as such, can be treated on an individual basis working directly with the truant student. Methods cited by the authors for working with truants included such strategies as individualized programs of study and an on-going program of increased home/parental contact. Birman and Natriello (1978), on the other hand, suggested that the causes for truancy are related more to the immediate environment of the student. Scherer and Bidmeade (1982) have suggested that school characteristics such as administrative organization and curriculum are linked to truancy. Robins and Ratcliff (1980) reported that men who were truant in elementary school tended to marry women who also were truant in elementary school. Truancy in either parent was associated with

an excessive rate of truancy for their children, both sons and daughters, although truancy for sons was more prevalent. Such research suggest that the negative attitude toward school leading to habitual truancy, in some students, is a learned behavior influenced by parental experiences. In a discussion of the role of the family, Robinson indicated that the lack of parental cooperation is often reported by school administrators as a major contributing factor in the increase of student truancy.

As indicated previously, Thomas suggested the need for early identification and intervention with school truants. Research indicates that for those students who are not identified as potential truants at an early age, and who later engage in truant behavioral patterns as secondary students, placement in continuation/alternative high schools has the effect of improving their attendance. Duke and Mazio (1978) found that students improve in two areas while attending alternative programs. First, there is a marked improvement in their attitude toward school leading to an improvement in attendance, and secondly, their self image is heightened. These authors concluded that the decrease in absenteeism for these students was attributed to the alternative program.

Secondary school administrators continue to impose coercive measures or punitive consequences on truant students. Often times this takes the form of referrals to administrative

hearings, such as School Attendance Review Boards (SARB), referrals for court action, detentions or suspensions. Kaeser (1984) reported, " . . . in 1979-80, 5.5 million American students were suspended for truancy." Despite the strong inclination for secondary administrators to utilize suspensions, certain evidence present in the literature would suggest that punitive attempts to treat the problem of truancy have proved ineffective. Litt (1977), for example, indicated that suspensions decreased truancy only on a short term basis. De Jung and Duckworth (1986) suggested penalties, such as suspensions, for unexcused school absences appear to have limited effect in reducing absences. The authors suggested that penalties serve to reenforce the student's sense of school being an unrewarding, invaluable place.

Some researchers, most notably Duke (1978) and Birman and Natriello (1978) have asserted that the effects of truancy can be relatively positive. Higher rates of truancy may work to relieve overcrowding in some schools and students who are otherwise disruptive when in school, no longer pose a problem. These authors suggest that this sense of the "positive" aspect of truancy may be a possible explanation for the continued use of suspensions and other punitive measures with truants by secondary administrators, despite the research evidence.

Administrators appear ill-prepared to adequately address

the problem of truancy. In a study conducted in two secondary schools in Los Angeles, Duke and Mechel (1980) found that 25 percent of the students enrolled in these schools were chronic truants. Duke and Mechel concluded that, "schools are not sufficiently prepared in either organization or knowledge about offending students and corrective strategies to effectively deal with the problem." Washington (1973) concluded that a school's response to deviancy often serves as a stimulus to more deviant behavior on the part of students. Haffez (1980) offered the following comments regarding the manner in which some secondary school administrators respond to truant students:

It is an unfortunate fact that . . . an administrator's effectiveness is oftentimes measured, not by the long term success rate and attendance of the students, but by the quietness of the halls and the school's average reading level. Sadly, it is these superficial standards of effectiveness which compel administrators to turn their backs on those students who need their help the most; those who are failing and those who never come to school.

The suggestion was offered in Chapter I that the school assumes the role of both an educational and socialization agency for its students. Reid (1982) elaborated on the potentialities of this role for the school when he indicated:

Absentee pupils will attempt and/or return to school when they see it as being relevant to their needs. When absentees regard institutions as irrelevant or as reinforcing outdated concepts and exacerbating their failures, then the institution may act as an agent which compounds the absentee's deviance rather than overcoming their unique difficulties.

Reid concluded, "we know too little about how to create favorable circumstances under which absentees can return and reintegrate within their institutions." Brown (1983) similarly indicated: "recent trends in . . . education have indicated that we need to know a lot more about what goes on inside schools."

Tinto (1978) held that truancy is due to incompatibility of commonly held goals of educational success and the legitimate means of attaining those goals. The suggestion was made, " . . . while official withdrawal from school may be a response available to older students, those of compulsory school age may regard truancy (or unofficial school withdrawal) as a rational option."

Duckworth and de Jung (1986) referred to Lawler's (1976) expectancy theory for participation in an organization in their discussion of student truancy. The authors noted:

According to the expectancy theory, attendance should . . . be a function of the student's feelings of efficacy, or belief that attendance will in fact lead to rewards . . . the school rewards of high schools include both rewards received while attending school, such as grades, and rewards received after graduation, such as higher education or further training. This theory implies that the differences among students in socialization to the value of school (student's education ambition) should predict differences in the regularity of attendance.

Habitual truancy on the part of secondary students may be an expression of boredom or, as Duckworth and de Jung suggested, truancy may be "an expression of socialization to the value of the quantitative, loss of attendance revenue, and the qualitative,

loss of classroom instruction, impact of truancy." One approach undertaken to begin to address these areas of impact is through the implementation of programs of Saturday School.

Saturday School

In a 1983 publication, the California State Department of Education reported results of a study designed to improve school attendance. Thirty-two different schools in 28 districts participated in a pilot study from 1981 through 1983. The report outlined four strategies for improving attendance: (1) school-to-home contacts, (2) rewards for good attendance, (3) preventive measures such as counseling, tutoring and independent study, and (4) negative consequences for poor attendance such as in-house suspension, truancy reduction programs and Saturday School programs. The Department of Education report suggested that "when consequences for unexcused absence or truancy are established and consistently applied, students improve their attendance."

The aforementioned California Department of Education report identified Saturday School as "a structured, supervised, minimum day program that includes tutorial assistance in completing classroom assignments missed because of excessive absences" Since the assignment to Saturday School infringes on the truant student's free time, the belief is that the behaviors which led to the assignment will be modified after Saturday School

attendance.

Gooding and Fitsko (1978) presented a comprehensive proposal for a Saturday School program to be used with students in lieu of suspensions. The provisions of the program provided for any student who had committed a "suspendable" offense to be given the option to select Saturday School as an alternative to an out-of-school suspension. Students were required to attend a four hour Saturday morning session for the same number of days as carried with the suspension. The authors noted several advantages to the Saturday School program they described. Among these advantages were, encouraging teacher/student relationships, encouraging cooperation between school and parents, providing the opportunity for instructional assistance to students and minimizing the legal risk entailed in out-of-school suspensions. Truancy was indicated to be a key student behavior targeted for improvement under the program.

It was previously stated that a comprehensive approach must be undertaken to address the problems of truancy. Saturday School is an important part of that approach, however other alternative programs aimed at the eradication of truancy have been employed by secondary schools.

Alternative Attendance Programs

Brokowski and Dempsey (1979) noted that many secondary school administrators have developed attendance policies which impose the holding back of credits or grades as penalties for absenteeism. The authors cited the results of a survey of administrators in secondary schools in Connecticut. Eighty percent of the principals responding to the survey reported the development of a formal attendance policy in their schools, and 85 percent of these policies were reported as being restrictive or punitive in some manner.

Suprina (1979) discussed an attendance policy where after the second unexcused absence from a class, a parent conference was scheduled. A discussion was held during the conference regarding the student's responsibility for remaining enrolled in the class, and an agreement was signed between the student, parent and the school. The student was withdrawn from the class if subsequent unexcused absences occurred. Suprina noted that truancy under this policy decreased by two-thirds.

Carruthers (1980) reported on an attendance policy which also involved withholding credit as the result of truancy. Students were withdrawn from classes after seven absences and were required to appeal to a school attendance board for course credit after that point. Carruthers further indicated that if students were withdrawn from 50 percent of their classes under

this policy, they were withdrawn from school for the academic quarter. The emphasis of such a policy, as noted by the author, was to shift accountability for unexcused absences to students and away from school administration.

Bryne (1981) reviewed another policy under which students were allowed six absences in semester classes and twelve absences in full-year classes. Any number of unexcused absences which exceeded the total number allowable caused the student to be withdrawn from the class. Students were entitled to request a hearing before a board of review to argue extreme circumstances. Average daily attendance increased to 95 percent and, again, the responsibility for attendance was placed on the student. Stacy (1986) expressed reservation regarding the philosophy of the withholding of credit as a deterrent to truancy, ". . . in my opinion, that . . . program is doomed to failure from the start, because it totally disregards the fact that most truants are already failing."

Teachman (1979) conducted a study of truancy in the Detroit School District. As a result of the study, Teachman recommended that the secondary school adopt attendance policies which caused students to accept "personal responsibility" for their attendance. The author suggested that to achieve this, administrators "must design and enforce an attendance policy which establishes strict penalties for students who decide to skip school."

The adoption of highly restrictive attendance policies by secondary schools brings with it an important consideration, e.g. the legality of such policies. Zirkel and Gluckman (1982) indicated that one student, who had credit withheld due to missing eight days of class, brought a class action suit against the school. The statutory claim was based compulsory attendance laws. The constitutional claim was based on the due process and equal protection clauses of the Constitution.

McKnight and Hines (1980) noted that the courts have given secondary schools the right to "establish reasonable criteria for graduation, and . . . allowed schools to include effort and conduct as part of a student's grade." These rulings by the courts allow for the establishment of restrictive or punitive attendance policies. However, the courts have warned that the punishment must not be unduly harsh or arbitrary. Duckworth and de Jung (1986) suggested that legal issues are compounded by "pragmatic considerations regarding the balance of the workload between teachers and administrators in applying penalties to students and the effectiveness of penalties in deterring or eliminating absenteeism."

Browski (1978) conducted a study with 66 secondary school students in Connecticut to measure the effects of a restrictive or punitive attendance policy on attendance, achievement and behavior. Following a two year study period, Browski found that

older students (juniors and seniors) with lower I.Q. scores showed the most improvement. The attendance for this group improved to 166 days out of 180 days in attendance from 161 days out of 180 days. Concurrently, Browksi found that the older group of students showed an increase in academic achievement. The number of courses failed by this older group of students decreased from .94 to .34 percent. The author indicated, "in no group of students did academic achievement significantly decrease." The implication is drawn from the findings by the author that the policy may have served as an effective deterrent by intimidating students. Browksi concluded that "most students did not push the limit and therefore did not suffer the penalties of the system."

Stacy (1986) reported on a program undertaken in the high schools in Newport News, Virginia. Those students who were frequently absent from class or consistently disruptive of school programs, were transferred from the regular program to an alternative afterschool program. The intended purpose was to deny the truant students the social aspects of school until their behavior showed improvement. Stacy reported a 1.9 percent increase in attendance, a 49 percent decrease in in-school suspensions, a decline in the dropout rate from 5.9 percent to 3.7 percent and a decline of 41 percent in out-of-school suspensions as a result of the alternative attendance program.

Grice (1986) summarized the results of the positive Alternative to School Suspensions (P.A.S.S.) program in operation in the secondary schools in Portland, Oregon. This program incorporated the use of isolation from the regular class for varying periods of time, preventative counseling and parental contact as alternatives to out of school suspensions. An improvement/reduction in suspension rates and a reduction in "violent" behavior, such as fights and assaults, were attributed to the P.A.S.S. program.

A recurring theme in the literature concerned with interventions to decrease truancy among secondary students is for schools to involve parents in the educational process to a greater extent. Grice (1986), Riles (1980), Suprina (1979), Duckworth and de Jung (1986), Brodow (1980), and Di Prete (1981) have all echoed this belief. Increased parental supervision of student behaviors combined with strict enforcement of attendance policies by schools have been shown to be related to decreases in student truancy.

In their study, Duckworth and de Jung (1980) revealed that ninth grade students indicated "parents would find out" as the biggest reason for the not to skip school. Tenth grade students indicated they would "miss too much work" most often as the reason not to skip school, but they also were concerned about their parents becoming aware of their truancy. From these and

other similar data, the authors found that parental supervision proved to have a stronger negative relationship to skipping school than school rule enforcement. The authors concluded "it is plausible that this finding means that parent-imposed penalties are more salient to students than school imposed-penalties."

Attendance programs which impose penalties as consequences for truant behavior have been shown to act as a deterrent. As was previously indicated, Browksi found that students were intimidated by these penalties. It would seem that this sense of intimidation could affect the attitude of habitually truant students and the manner in which they respond to school.

Attitudes Toward School/Academic Achievement

There are discussions in the educational literature of several varied approaches and programs designed to reduce the incidence of truancy among secondary students. An important concern to secondary administrators is with the damaging effect that prolong periods of truancy have on the academic preparation of students.

De Jung and Duckworth (1986) identified the impact of truancy on academic achievement in a study they conducted on secondary attendance. The authors reached the following conclusion:

. . . the relationship between absences and grades was espically striking. . . . Students with the fewest absences clearly have the highest grade averages. Furthermore, high-absence students received nearly all the low G.P.A.'s and very few low-absence students have G.P.A.'s below 1.5.

In a study of 10,378 students in school districts across the United States, Frymier, Bills, Russel and Finch (1975) found that attitudes of students toward there schools were basically positive. However, many students felt that the schools had an oppressive atmosphere. These feelings of oppressiveness were centered among males, non-whites and high school sophomores. The authors were of the opinion that school programs and policies tend to become increasingly restrictive as the grade level increases.

Cooper (1984) cited a study conducted by Morse involving elementary and secondary students. Morse found that 12 percent of third grade students felt uncertain of themselves, but by the time students reached the eleventh grade this level of uncertainty increased to 34 percent of the students. In the third grade, 84 percent of the students felt proud of thier work while only 53 percent of the students in the eleventh grade felt the same. In the lower grades, 93 percent of the students indicated they were doing the best they could. Among high school seniors, a mere 37 percent reported performing at peak levels. More than 40 percent of all the students in the Morse study reported

becoming discouraged in school and the rate of discouragement increased with the age of the student. Morse concluded that the "school self" appears to grow gradually less positive as the student progresses to higher grades.

Reid (1982) reported the findings of a study of self-concept and persistent absenteeism, in which he suggests that a conflict exists for the school when attempting to work with the persistent truant. The conflict Reid identifies results from the need of the absentee to "have his self-concept raised despite the fact that he is involved in an illegal action. Moreover, the responsibility for this process rests with the agents of the institution which the absentee has already rejected." Reid suggested,

If we wish to change school absentees' attitudes towards school and their education, then we will first have to raise their self-concepts. Alternately, if we wish to raise their self-concepts, then we will first have to change their attitudes toward schools and their education. If we are able to accomplish this, then fewer students will . . . become persistent absentees.

The literature suggests the students who are unsuccessful academically may continue to experience failure throughout the years of secondary education due to the preconceptions held by teachers. Pink (1982) suggested that teachers teach failing students less compared to other more successful students, and both teachers and schools fail to motivate the unsuccessful student.

Rist (1977) addressed the labeling of students who suffer

failure by teachers and schools as being academically deficient. A strong link between the effect of this labeling and truancy was shown. Rist indicated that truancy may reduce the chances for learning or, as the result of negative labeling, reinforce the likelihood of a student not being successful academically.

Cullen and Sreberny (1976) indicated that labeling students as "dumb" or a "troublemaker" can negatively impact their self-concept and lead to further truancy. Pink (1982) concluded:

Students successfully labeled inferior, treated as inferior, and internalizing the concepts of inferiors will, in fact, perform in an inferior fashion.

Lack of success academically coupled with a low self-concept can intensify the cycle of failure for the truant student. This cycle can be difficult for the habitual truant to break and can cause significant difficulties for the secondary student and the school.

Truancy and Dropping Out of School

Irregular attendance has oftentimes been cited as a precursor to dropping out of school. Bisman and Natriello (1978) noted that the student, school and society all suffer as the result of escalating absenteeism.

"A major result of school absenteeism can be academic failure; and this cycle, once started, may produce feelings of inferiority, frustration and disinterest in pupils, and in turn

lead to their eventually dropping out of school." This was a major finding of a special task force on attendance, absenteeism, truancy and dropouts established by the California School Boards Association during the 1980-81 academic year.

Upon survey of 5,799 secondary students over a two-year period, de Jung and Duckworth (1986) stated, "Most of our chronically absent students said that they expected to graduate. Probably their parents also believed this." The authors recommended that the relationship between continued poor attendance and non-graduation needs to be better advertised by secondary schools.

Chronic truants have been characterized as having low academic performance, poor self-concepts and low self-esteem. Various studies, Schrieber (1979), Rumberg (1981), and Sewell, Palmo and Manni (1981), have all shown that these are similar characteristics of high school dropouts. These studies point to the lack of relevancy of school as perceived by students who engage in truant behavior leading to dropping out of school. The effects of the failure of students to remain in school and achieve graduation due, in part, to truancy follows these students into adult life. Robins and Ratcliff (1980) suggested:

Since high school graduation . . . has substantial effects on job opportunities, not only in terms of prestige and salary, but also in terms of job security, any effect of truancy on occupational success can be expected to be mediated to some extent through its effect on high school graduation.

The literature suggests that low academic achievement and future career dissatisfaction are closely associated with truancy.

Conclusion

Truancy and its effect on secondary schooling is well documented in the educational literature. Research into this area identifies characteristics and causes leading to truancy among students, the relationship of family and society to truancy, the responses of secondary schools to truancy, the short-term and long-term effects of truancy and the psychological impact of truancy on the students involved. Much of the salient educational literature describes the causation of these societal, school and personal/psychological factors due to the incidence of truancy.

Despite these many and varied investigations and the broad ramifications on schools and society, truancy remains a misunderstood phenomenon. Evidence of this misunderstanding is illustrated by the fact that there is no consistent definition of truancy in the literature. Further, the problem of truancy continues to be on the increase as is evidenced by the identification of truancy as the single most important concern of secondary school administrators over the past two decades.

The literature clearly points out the complex and frustrating nature of truancy. Numerous strategies of intervention and reduction have been designed and undertaken with truant students with some measures of success. Saturday School is one approach which has been utilized with truant students in secondary schools. Programs of Saturday School require a higher level of parent/school participation and cooperation in the non-attendance behavior of students. When used as an alternative program to out-of-school suspensions, placing students who would otherwise be suspended in Saturday School allows the students to remain in the regular school session during the week.

The difficulties associated with truancy remain unresolved, suggesting the need for further research which should lead to an enhanced understanding of the problem. An appraisal of the prominent literature dealing with truancy tends to support the purpose stated for this study: further empirical investigation is needed to determine the effect of alternative programs, such as Saturday School, on the rate of truancy, academic achievement and school attitudes of habitually truant students. The results of such investigation should prove a worthwhile contribution to the present educational literature concerned with truancy.

The nature of this study was to provide an empirical review of the effects of Saturday School on habitually truant secondary

students. The methodology used in this study is explained in chapter III.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine what effect attendance in Saturday School Programs had on habitually truant secondary students specific to their rate of truancy, grade point average and attitude toward school. Measurement of the rate of truancy and grade point averages was gathered from examination of school records. Data for the measurement of attitude toward school were obtained from the administration of a student opinionnaire.

Chapter III will discuss the Saturday School Programs investigated, the selection of school samples, the selection of student samples drawn from these schools, and the instrument used to measure attitude toward school. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the method of data gathering and the statistical procedures employed to analyze these data.

Saturday School Programs Investigated

In order to better determine the potential effect of a Saturday School Program on the variables chosen for study, two

methods of conducting Saturday School Programs were investigated. The first method involved assigning habitually truant students to a four hour "study hall" environment where they were expected to remain seated, quiet and on task for the entire period of the Saturday session. The students were supervised by a certificated member of the school staff and were instructed to bring materials with them sufficient to insure that they were continually working. All materials brought into Saturday School by students were to be related to school and any other materials, such as newspapers or magazines, were not allowed. No additional school materials other than those brought by the students were made available for use in Saturday School. This method of conducting Saturday School was identified as being traditional.

The second method investigated differed from the traditional Saturday School in several ways. Among these differences were: 1) the utilization of guided study practice for the students in Saturday School with curriculum which was parallel in scope and content to the curriculum in the regular school program; 2) the presentation of films and video tapes to students which addressed the topics of truancy, delinquency and high school dropouts; 3) group discussions with students during the Saturday School sessions stressing decision making skills and value clarification exercises; and 4) advance notification given to parents advising them of the Saturday School assignment for their son/daughter.

The students were assigned to a four hour session and were supervised by certificated school personnel as in the traditional Saturday School. This method of conducting a Saturday School Program was identified as experimental.

As previously stated, the curriculum utilized in the experimental Saturday School was parallel to the curriculum in the regular program. This was accomplished through the use of self-paced instructional packets for various subjects from the "alternative study" program. Alternative study was a separate program in use in the Whittier Union High School District designed to assist students who were experiencing academic difficulties due to personal/family reasons. Since the curriculum from the alternative study program had received prior faculty approval, the hope was that through its use with the habitually truant students in the experimental Saturday School these students could perhaps "bridge" the gap in academics created by their absenteeism when they returned to regular classes.

Selection of Schools

The subjects were chosen from selected schools in the Whittier Union High School District. The district is comprised of five comprehensive high schools and one continuation/alternative high school. The attendance area served by the schools

spanned a range of socio-economic and ethnic groups. Anglo and Hispanic students comprised the percentage majority of the student enrollments with Hispanic students comprising the numeric majority.

The study was explained to both the administration of the district and to the administration of the comprehensive high schools to assure their understanding and cooperation. Letters were sent to the Superintendent of Schools, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, and the five principals of the comprehensive high schools requesting permission for the research to be carried out.

Table 1 shows the enrollment figures for the comprehensive high schools at the beginning of the 1986-87 school year:

TABLE 1
TOTAL ENROLLMENT AT THE COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

California High School	1,960
La Serna High School	1,621
Pioneer High School	1,901
Santa Fe High School	1,804
Whittier High School	2,041

Total student enrollment for the district, including the continuation high school, at the beginning of the 1986-87 school year

was 9,289. Table 2 shows the distribution of enrollment for ninth and tenth grade students at the comprehensive high schools.

TABLE 2
NINTH AND TENTH GRADE ENROLLMENTS AT THE COMPREHENSIVE
HIGH SCHOOLS

	<u>Ninth Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
California High School	477	523
La Serna High School	389	433
Pioneer High School	520	515
Santa Fe High School	441	494
Whittier High School	488	555

The effort was made to select from among the comprehensive high schools the two schools which were the most alike to effectively compare the two Saturday School Programs investigated. Specific criteria were applied in reaching the final selections. One consideration was school size. There was the need to select two schools whose enrollments of ninth and tenth grade students were large enough to allow for generalization of the study's findings. While student enrollment was a primary consideration, it also was important that the schools be as

similar as possible in other ways.

Each of the schools was studied in terms of the following characteristics: 1) the number of reported days of truancy among ninth and tenth grade students during the previous school year and 2) the specific demographics for each school. As seen in tables 1 and 2, the comprehensive high schools in the district compare favorably to each other in terms of enrollment. However, the intent of the selection process was to identify the two schools which were the most similar.

After reviewing student enrollment figures, both for total enrollment and enrollment in the ninth and tenth grade classes, a comparison was made of the recorded scores for each school on the California Assessment Test (CAT). This comparison was made to narrow the selection to the final two schools to be used in the study. Table 3 shows the CAT scores for each of the comprehensive high schools.

TABLE 3
CALIFORNIA ASSESSMENT TEST SCORES FOR EACH OF THE COMPREHENSIVE
HIGH SCHOOLS

<u>School</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Written</u>	<u>Spelling</u>	<u>Math</u>
California High School	65.9	64.3	68.3	68.2
La Serna High School	60.4	62.1	70.3	68.0
Pioneer High School	58.1	57.5	67.0	64.6
Santa Fe High School	60.0	62.4	69.2	67.1
Whittier High School	62.4	63.2	68.7	68.6

Upon review of the recorded CAT scores as shown in table 3, California High School and Whittier High School were selected as the final two schools for inclusion in the study. California High School was selected as the location of the traditional Saturday School Program and while the experimental Saturday School Program was conducted at Whittier High School.

Selection of Subjects

The subjects selected to participate in the study were ninth and tenth grade students chosen on the basis of their record of truancy for the second academic quarter of the 1986-87 school year. Selection was limited to those ninth and tenth grade students who demonstrated a "habitual" pattern of truancy.

All students who fit the identified criteria were included in the study for a total sample of 130 students. Of this

number, 28 were ninth grade male students, 37 were ninth grade female students, 32 were tenth grade male students and 33 were tenth grade female students. Tables 4 and 5 display the percentages of the population that participated in each of the Saturday School Programs involved in the study.

TABLE 4
PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRADITIONAL SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM
(CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL)

	<u>9th Male</u>	<u>9th Female</u>	<u>10th Male</u>	<u>10th Female</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Population by Grade	333	144	370	153	1,000
Number of Students					
Participating in Study	13	17	11	14	55
Percentage of Class					
Population	3.9	11.8	2.9	9.1	5.5

TABLE 5
PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM
(WHITTIER HIGH SCHOOL)

	<u>9th Male</u>	<u>9th Female</u>	<u>10th Male</u>	<u>10th Female</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Population by Grade	249	239	277	278	1,043
Number of Students					
Participating in Study	15	20	21	19	75
Percentage of Class					
Population	6.0	8.3	7.5	6.8	7.1

The total sample of 130 students represented approximately 6.4 percent of the total number of students enrolled in the ninth and tenth grades at the two comprehensive high school involved in the study. Each subject was assigned an identification number to allow for the matching of quantitative data. No other identifying information was used and confidentiality of information was assured to all students in the study.

Instruments

A researcher designed opinionnaire was employed to assess the attitudes toward school of the students who participated in the study. The opinionnaire was patterned after the "Likert" attitudinal scale. Students were asked to respond to 30 specific statements by indicating: strong agreement, agreement, disagreement or strong disagreement with each statement. Point values of 4-1 were assigned to each statement for scoring purposes. The opinionnaire was formatted to gather information in three general areas: 1) student attitude toward classes; 2) student attitude toward teachers; and 3) student attitude toward the environment of the school, including administration, student leaders, activities and the physical appearance of the school. The Student Opinionnaire was field tested during the first quarter of the 1986-87 school year with a group of students assigned to a traditional Saturday School Program in a large comprehensive

high school outside of the Whittier Union High School District, but comparable in terms of size and demographics. The students were asked to indicate any areas of vagueness, inaccuracy and/or misunderstanding of the statements. On the basis of their responses, the opinionnaire was revised and used in the study in its present form (see Appendix). The opinionnaire was administered to all students in the sample in both the traditional and the experimental Saturday School Programs during the initial and concluding sessions of Saturday School during the six week period of the study.

Data Gathering

Data for the study were gathered during the second and third academic quarters of the 1986-87 school year, encompassing the months of mid-November to mid-April. The principals of each of the sample comprehensive high schools involved in the study were contacted immediately prior to the start of the data gathering period. Baseline data for the study were gathered at the end of the second quarter in January, and compiled in the following manner:

- 1) Truancy Rate - was the record of all unexcused absences which contributed to the truancy rate for each student in the sample and was obtained from school attendance records.

- 2) Grade Point Average - was that which was recorded in the student's file at the conclusion of the second quarter.

Students in the sample were assigned attendance in six consecutive Saturday sessions of the respective Saturday School Programs at the beginning of the third quarter in February of 1987. All subjects were administered the student opinionnaire and a 100 percent return on the instrument was obtained. Data for truancy rate and grade point average for all students in the study were again drawn from the student records at the conclusion of the third quarter in mid-April of 1987.

The opinionnaire was hand scored for the three areas and the results, along with data for truancy rate and grade point average retrieved from the student files, were prepared for computer analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was the computer program used for the data analyses.

Data Analyses

Data collected during the second and third quarters were subjected to computer analysis. Since the study sought to determine what, if any, effect the Saturday School Program(s) had on the variables of truancy rate, grade point average and attitude toward school, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was chosen as the statistical technique to be used. ANOVA assesses the effects of one or more categorically independent variables,

measured at any level, upon a continuous dependent variable. The level of significance for acceptance or rejection of the null hypotheses was set at .05. The description of the data and the discussion of the analyses of the data findings will be presented in chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The findings for truancy rate, grade point averages and attitude toward school will be analyzed and presented in this chapter. Comparisons will be drawn between grade levels and genders for both the total student sample and sub-populations of the sample. Data findings for the experimental and traditional Saturday School Programs also will be presented with comparisons drawn between grade levels and genders.

Description of Truancy Data

The truancy rate (TR) among the student sample varied for both grade level and gender after the student's participation in Saturday School. The truancy rate for each student was determined by dividing the number of days each student had been truant during the academic quarter by the number of days of instruction during that quarter. For example, a student truant from school for 14 days during a 48 day academic quarter would have a computed TR of .2916.

The mean for truancy rate for the total sample of 130 students was .2938, or approximately 14.1 days of truancy based

on the 48 day academic quarter used in the study. Table 6 shows the means for truancy rate for the sample population.

TABLE 6
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR TRUANCY RATE FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
9th Grade	65	.2920	.2258	-.0662
10th Grade	65	.2957	.2626	-.0331
Total	130	.2938	.2442	-.0496

Male	60	.2643	.2452	-.0191
Female	70	.3191	.2434	-.0757
Total	130	.2938	.2442	-.0496

Note: Means represent the combined totals of both Saturday School Programs

When data for the total sample were examined, a similar pattern of truancy emerged after Saturday School participation for both grade levels and gender as revealed by the means for truancy. Specifically, the data indicate that the rate of truancy declined. These declines for TR were sharpest among 1) female students and 2) ninth grade students.

When the statistical technique of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to the data, the results were P values as shown in table 7.

TABLE 7
ANNOVA FOR TRUANCY RATE FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

N = 130						
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>P (2 Tailed)</u>
Male	60	-.0192	.165	.021	128	.046*
Female	70	-.0757	.153	.018		
9th Grade	65	-.0662	.148	.018	128	.241
10th Grade	65	-.0331	.171	.021		

* $P \leq .05$

Table 8 shows the data comparsion for TR means across individual grade levels and genders.

TABLE 8
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR TRUANCY RATE FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE
BY GRADE LEVEL AND GENDER

N = 130				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	28	.1975	.1921	-.0054
10th Grade	32	.3228	.2916	-.0313
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	37	.3635	.2514	-.1122
10th Grade	33	.2694	.2345	-.0348

Note: Means represent the combined totals of both Saturday School Programs

Again, the TR means declined for all groups in the sample. The mean difference for ninth grade female students was more than three times as large as the TR mean decline for any other grade/gender sub-population among the sample and more than one-third the TR mean decline for all female students. ANOVA for this truancy data revealed the comparative P values for TR mean differences shown in table 9.

TABLE 9
ANNOVA FOR TRUANCY RATE FOR BY GRADE LEVEL AND GENDER

N = 130						
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>P (2 Tailed)</u>
<u>Males</u>						
9th Grade	28	-.0054	.124	.021	58	.538
10th Grade	32	-.0313	.195	.035		
<u>Females</u>						
9th Grade	37	-.1122	.150	.025	68	.033*
10th Grade	33	-.0348	.147	.026		

<u>9th Grade</u>						
Male	28	-.0054	.124	.023	63	.003*
Female	37	-.1122	.150	.025		
<u>10th Grade</u>						
Male	32	-.0313	.195	.035	63	.934
Female	33	-.0348	.147	.026		
* P ≤ .05						

* $P \leq .05$

The P values of .033 and .003 for the TR mean differences between ninth grade females vs. tenth grade females and ninth grade females vs. ninth grade males respectively, were statistically significant at .05. The truancy data suggest that participation in Saturday School effects the truancy rate of habitually truant ninth grade female students as evidenced by the sharp decline in TR mean difference for these students after their participation in either of the experimental or traditional

Saturday School.

Description of Grade Point Average Data

Participation in Saturday School was shown to be related to a decline in the truancy rate of the total student sample. A similar relationship between participation in Saturday School and the grade point averages of the student sample was shown. Table 10 shows the means for grade point averages for the student sample. Grade point average (GPA) was based on a scale ranging from a low value of 0.00 to a high value of 4.00.

TABLE 10
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

N = 130				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
9th Grade	65	.6178	.5708	-.0471
10th Grade	65	.8531	.5574	-.2957
Total	130	.7355	.5641	-.0714

Male	60	.7882	.4750	-.3312
Female	70	.6903	.6559	-.0344
Total	130	.7355	.5641	-.0714

Note: Means represent the combined totals of both Saturday School Programs

The grade point averages for the students in the sample were severely depressed. The grade point averages shown for the student sample in table 10 were those recorded in the students' school file at the conclusion of the first academic quarter, and are the actual grade point averages earned by the habitually truant students in the sample.

GPA declined the sharpest for 1) 10 tenth grade students and 2) male students. Table 11 shows the results of ANOVA treatment of the data for grade point averages of the sample across grade levels and genders.

TABLE 11
ANOVA FOR GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

N = 130						
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>P (2 Tailed)</u>
Male	60	-.3312	.632	.080	128	.006*
Female	70	-.0344	.589	.070		
9th Grade	65	-.0471	.587	.073	128	.022*
10th Grade	65	-.0295	.633	.079		

* $P \leq .05$

ANOVA for grade point average revealed a P value of .022 between the difference for the GPA means of ninth grade students

vs. tenth grade students and a P value of .006 between the difference of the GPA means for males vs. female students. These values for P proved to be statistically significant at the .05 level.

Such data as was revealed for GPA for the student sample would suggest that there is no improvement in the academic achievement of the habitually truant students in the sample following their participation in Saturday School. In fact, these data would suggest a resulting reduction in the academic achievement of the habitually truant students in the sample following Saturday School participation.

Table 12 shows the data for the four student sample sub-populations with respect to grade point average.

TABLE 12
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR TOTAL SAMPLE BY
GRADE LEVEL AND GENDER

N = 130				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	28	.6732	.5618	-.1114
10th Grade	32	.8888	.3653	-.5234
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	37	.5769	.5776	.0007
10th Grade	33	.8185	.7436	.0748

Note: Means represent combined totals of both Saturday School Programs

Greater extremes among the mean differences were present for grade point averages as compared with the mean differences for truancy rate among the student sample. Sharp declines were found in the mean differences for male students, most noticeably tenth grade males. Additionally, one sub-population among the student sample, ninth grade females, showed a slight increase in GPA following Saturday School participation. ANOVA for the data for GPA revealed the P values between the mean differences for the student sample as shown in table 13.

TABLE 13
ANOVA FOR GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

N = 130						
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>P (2 Tailed)</u>
<u>Males</u>						
9th Grade	28	-.1114	.619	.117	58	.010
10th Grade	32	-.5234	.569	.101		
<u>Females</u>						
9th Grade	37	.0016	.565	.093	68	.593
10th Grade	33	-.0748	.621	.108		

<u>9th Grade</u>						
Males	28	-.1114	.619	.117	63	.065
Females	37	.0016	.565	.093		
<u>10th Grade</u>						
Males	32	-.5234	.569	.101	63	.003*
Females	33	-.0748	.621	.108		
* P ≤ .05						

* $P \leq .05$

The P values of .010 and .003 were statistically significant at the .05 level and involved comparisons of GPA mean declines of the other sub-populations with the GPA mean decline of tenth grade male students. This data suggest that while the academic performance of all habitually truant students in the sample was low, tenth grade male students among the sample performed at a substantially lower level of academic achievement.

With the exception of ninth grade female students, a decrease in academic achievement occurred for habitually truant students in the sample following participation in Saturday School, either experimental or traditional. This finding suggests that academic achievement, as measured by grade point average, is negatively affected following participation in Saturday School by habitually truant students, particularly ninth and tenth grade male students.

Description of Data for Attitude Toward School

Data for attitude toward school for the student sample were gathered from the administration of the student opinionnaire. Student attitudes were measured in three specific areas: 1) classes, 2) teachers and 3) school environment and the data for each of these areas are shown in table 14.

TABLE 14

MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

N = 130				
<u>CLASSES</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
9th Grade	65	2.7615	2.6200	-.1415
10th Grade	65	2.6815	2.6154	-.0662
Male	60	2.7300	2.5800	-.1500
Female	70	2.7143	2.6500	-.0643

<u>TEACHERS</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
9th Grade	65	2.6092	2.6215	.0123
10th Grade	65	2.5169	2.4892	-.0277
Male	60	2.6800	2.5667	-.1133
Female	70	2.4629	2.5457	.0829

<u>ENVIRONMENT</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
9th Grade	65	2.5905	2.6169	.0254
10th Grade	65	2.2985	2.7183	.1215
Male	60	2.5467	2.7183	.1717
Female	70	2.5412	2.5329	-.0118

Note: Means represent combined totals of both Saturday School Programs

TABLE 15 (Con't)

TEACHERS

	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>P (2 Tailed)</u>
Males	60	-.1133	.389	.050	128	.019*
Females	70	.0829	.551	.066		
9th Grade	65	.0123	.497	.062	128	.644
10th Grade	65	-.0277	.488	.061		

* $P \leq .05$ ENVIRONMENT

	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>P (2 Tailed)</u>
Males	60	.1717	.497	.064	128	.047*
Females	70	-.0118	.540	.065		
9th Grade	65	.0254	.500	.063	128	.302
10th Grade	65	.1215	.550	.068		

* $P \leq .05$

None of the values for P shown in table 14 were proven to be statistically significant at the .05 level.

Among the data for attitude toward school respective to classes, the mean difference between ninth and tenth grade students of .032 was statistically significant at the .05 level. The P value revealed through ANOVA for the mean difference between male students and female students was .019, which was statistically significant at the .05 level.

Only female students among the sample showed a decline in the mean difference for attitude toward environment following participation in Saturday School. The P value of .047 for the mean difference between male and female students specific to attitude toward environment proved statistically significant at .05. Among the remaining sub-populations of the total sample, male students were shown to have the largest increase in the mean difference for attitude toward school environment. Interestingly, these data findings are in exact opposition to the findings for male and female students specific to attitude toward teachers, as revealed in table 15.

The data for the means for attitude toward school across grade levels and gender sets for the three areas of concern are shown in table 16.

TABLE 16
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE
BY GRADE LEVEL AND GENDER

N = 130				
<u>CLASSES</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	28	2.7643	2.5821	-.1821
10th Grade	32	2.7000	2.5781	-.1108
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	37	2.7595	2.6486	-.1219
10th Grade	33	2.6636	2.6515	-.0121

TABLE 16 (Con't)

TEACHERS

	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	28	2.7000	2.6464	-.0536
10th Grade	32	2.6625	2.4969	-.1656
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	37	2.5404	2.6027	.0622
10th Grade	33	2.3785	2.4818	.1061

ENVIRONMENT

	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	28	2.6036	2.7393	.1357
10th Grade	32	2.4964	2.7000	.2031
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	37	2.5800	2.5243	-.0629
10th Grade	33	2.5000	2.5424	.0424

Note: Means represent combined totals of both Saturday School Programs

Among these sets of data for attitude toward school for the various sub-populations of the student sample, only the value for P for the difference between the means respective to teachers for tenth grade females vs. tenth grade males of .023 was shown to be statistically significant at the .05 level. No sub-population of the student sample showed a decrease in the difference for the

means for attitude toward school in all three categorical areas investigated. Student attitude toward the school environment showed the greatest increase overall.

The data for the student sample suggest that participation in Saturday School is related to an overall decrease in the students' attitude toward their classes. With the singular exception found for the value for P of .023 for attitude toward teachers for tenth grade female students vs. tenth grade male students noted previously, the relationship between the attitude toward school of the student sample and their participation in Saturday School proved to be negative in nature.

Description of Data for Saturday School Programs Investigated

Tables 17 and 18 show the data for the individual sub-populations following participation in both the experimental and traditional Saturday School Programs.

TABLE 17
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR TRUANCY RATE FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL
SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

N = 75				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	15	.1875	.1900	.0025
10th Grade	21	.3243	.3038	-.0205
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	20	.3400	.2320	-.1080
10th Grade	19	.3242	.2674	-.0568
<u>Total</u>	75	.3011	.2527	-.0484

TABLE 18
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR TRUANCY RATE FOR THE TRADITIONAL
SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

N = 55				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	13	.2092	.1946	-.0146
10th Grade	11	.3200	.2682	-.0518
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	17	.3912	.2741	-.1171
10th Grade	14	.1950	.1900	-.0050
<u>Total</u>	55	.2840	.2327	-.0513

Rates of truancy for the student sample declined overall following participation in both the experimental and traditional Saturday School Programs. Data for individual sub-populations indicated that the truancy rate for ninth grade male students in the experimental Saturday School increased by a slight margin following participation in that program. This was the only grade/gender grouping that showed an increase in rate of truancy in either the experimental or traditional Saturday School.

Comparisons of ANOVA values for P for TR mean differences for the student sample in both Saturday School Programs showed no statistical significance, with one exception. The value for P for the TR mean difference for ninth grade males vs. ninth grade females in the experimental Saturday School was shown to be .016 which was statistically significant at .05. The data suggest that the strength of this value for P was likely resultant from the increase in TR for ninth grade males in the experimental Saturday School.

Comparisons of the data for the variables studied showed that participation in both Saturday School Programs resulted in a decline in the truancy rate for the student sample overall. Those students in the traditional Saturday School Program showed a TR mean decline of .0513 which was equivalent to 2.56 increased days of school attendance. Tenth grade female students showed the greatest improvement in attendance with a gain of 2.59

increased days school attendance resulting from a .0518 TR mean decline following participation in the traditional Saturday School.

Those students who participated in the experimental Saturday School Program realized an increase of 2.42 days of school attendance as the result of a TR mean decline of .0484. Specifically, tenth grade female students increased their school attendance by 2.84 days following participation in the experimental Saturday School.

Table 19 shows the cross comparsion data for truancy rate between the traditional and the experimental Saturday School Programs.

TABLE 19
ANOVA FOR TRUANCY RATE FOR THE TRADITIONAL AND THE EXPERIMENTAL
SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>P (2 Tailed</u>
Traditional	55	-.0513	.161	.022	128	.920
Experimental	75	-.0484	.161	.019		

While a decline in truancy rate was realized by the student samples in both Saturday School Programs, the data as revealed in table 19 show that there is no statistical significance present.

These data for truancy suggest that no one of the Saturday School Programs proved to have a greater effect on the rate of truancy of the student sample versus the other.

Tables 20 and 21 show the data for the means for grade point average for the student sample participating in the experimental and traditional Saturday School Programs.

TABLE 20
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL
SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

N = 75				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	15	.5953	.5933	-.0020
10th Grade	21	.7910	.2576	-.5333
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	20	.5495	.6536	.1040
10th Grade	19	.7679	.6832	-.0847
<u>Total</u>	75	.6816	.5381	-.1435

TABLE 21
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR THE TRADITIONAL
SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

N = 55				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	13	.7631	.5254	-.2377
10th Grade	11	1.0755	.5709	-.5045
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	17	.6071	.4882	-.1189
10th Grade	14	.8871	.8257	-.0614
<u>Total</u>	55	.8089	.5995	-.2095

Academic achievement, as measured by grade point average, with the exception of ninth grade female students declined for the entire student sample who participated in the traditional Saturday School Program. For the student sample who participated in the experimental Saturday School Program, grade point averages declined for all groups, again with the exception of ninth grade female students. Tenth grade male students experienced significant drops in grade point average in both Saturday School Programs.

Values for P revealed through ANOVA for GPA mean differences for the experimental Saturday School Program were as follows: ninth grade females vs. tenth grade females (.349); ninth grade females vs. ninth grade males (.652); ninth grade males vs. tenth

grade males (.025); and tenth grade males vs. tenth grade females (.022). The values of .025 and .022 for P were proven to be statistically significant at .05. In both incidences where statistical significance was revealed for GPA mean differences, the mean comparisons were drawn between tenth grade male students and other sub-populations, suggesting that the strength of significance is likely due to the substantial GPA lost for tenth grade male students.

Data for students who participated in the traditional Saturday School Program showed a level of decline in the mean difference for GPA which was greater than the overall decline in the mean for GPA of students in the experimental Saturday School Program. Values for P for GPA mean differences for the traditional Saturday School were revealed to be: ninth grade females vs tenth grade females (.783); ninth grade females vs. ninth grade males (.504); ninth grade males vs. tenth grade males (.281); and tenth grade males vs. tenth grade females (.107).

Table 22 shows the cross-comparison data for grade point average between the traditional Saturday School and the experimental Saturday School.

TABLE 22
ANOVA FOR GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR THE TRADITIONAL AND THE
EXPERIMENTAL SATURDAY SCHOOL

	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>P (2 Tailed</u>
Traditional	55	-.2095	.657	.076	128	.543
Experimental	75	-.1435	.571	.077		

As previously indicated, grade point averages declined for the student sample in both the traditional and experimental Saturday School Programs. However, no strength of statistical significance was shown for the comparison of the data between the two Saturday School Programs.

Attitude Toward School

Tables 23 and 24 show the data for the attitudes toward school among the student sample.

TABLE 23
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL
SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

N = 75				
<u>CLASSES</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	13	2.7846	2.5932	-.1923
10th Grade	11	2.7545	2.5182	-.2364
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	17	2.8176	2.5588	-.2588
10th Grade	14	2.5925	2.4529	-.0500

<u>TEACHERS</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	13	2.7769	2.6692	-.1077
10th Grade	11	2.6455	2.5364	-.1019
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	17	2.5294	2.6235	.0941
10th Grade	14	2.3571	2.5500	.1929

<u>ENVIRONMENT</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	13	2.5692	2.8615	.2923
10th Grade	11	2.4091	2.8818	.4727
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	17	2.5250	2.4824	-.0375
10th Grade	14	2.5286	2.5786	.0500

TABLE 24
MEAN DIFFERENCE FOR ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL FOR THE TRADITIONAL
SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

N = 55				
<u>CLASSES</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	15	2.7467	2.5733	-.1734
10th Grade	21	2.6714	2.6095	-.0619
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	20	2.7100	2.7250	.0150
10th Grade	19	2.7158	2.7316	.0158

<u>TEACHERS</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	15	2.6333	2.6267	-.0067
10th Grade	21	2.6714	2.4762	-.1952
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	20	2.5500	2.5850	.0350
10th Grade	19	2.3895	2.3416	.0421

<u>ENVIRONMENT</u>				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Prior to Saturday School</u>	<u>Following Saturday School</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>
<u>Males</u>				
9th Grade	15	2.6333	2.6333	.0000
10th Grade	21	2.5429	2.6048	.0619
<u>Females</u>				
9th Grade	20	2.6263	2.5600	-.0842
10th Grade	19	2.4789	2.5158	.0368

Tenth grade female students who participated in the experimental Saturday School Program showed an increase in the mean for attitude toward school in all areas investigated, with the exception of attitude toward classes. These mean increases were small in value, however this trend of an increase in the measures of attitude toward school was present only among tenth grade females students from the sample.

The attitude of male students in the traditional Saturday School toward classes proved to be more negative than the attitude toward classes of male students in the experimental Saturday School. Female students who participated in the experimental Saturday School Program also showed a decline in the mean for attitude toward classes however, their counterparts in the traditional Saturday School showed an increase in this attitude mean.

Following participation in either the experimental or traditional Saturday School Program, male students showed a decline in means respective to attitude toward teachers while the mean for female students in this area of measure increased. Ninth grade females were the only sub-population of the student sample to show a decrease in the measure of attitude toward school environment. A decline in attitude toward environment for ninth grade females was present following participation in both the experimental and traditional Saturday School Programs.

The data gathered for attitude toward school for the student sample suggest that participation in either the experimental or traditional Saturday School Program has little effect on the attitude toward school of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students. All changes in the mean values for the three measures of attitude, whether positive or negative in direction, were small in size and treatment of the data through ANOVA revealed no values for P which were statistically significant at the .05 level.

Analyses of the data for the student sample have revealed that the truancy rate and grade point averages of habitually truant students declined following their attendance in either the traditional or experimental Saturday School. It was also shown that following attendance in Saturday School there was little change in attitudes toward school of the habitually truant students in the sample. The conclusions and recommendations drawn from these data will be presented in chapter v.

CHAPTER V
ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF THE HYPOTHESES,
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Acceptance or Rejection of the Hypotheses

The variables of rate of truancy, grade point average and attitude toward school which were proposed as predictors of the effectiveness of the experimental and traditional Saturday School Programs have been observed, described and analyzed. For purposes of this study, these variables were examined across two grade levels and gender sets for the total student sample and various sub-populations within the sample for each of the Saturday School Programs investigated. Conclusions of the analyses of the data were related through comparisons drawn within and across grade levels and genders. Acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses at the .05 level follow.

Hypothesis 1: Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the quarterly attendance rate of these students is unrelated.

The hypothesis was accepted for the total sample, for all male ninth and tenth grade students and for all tenth grade

female students in both the traditional and experimental Saturday School Programs.

The hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level for ninth grade female students. Habitually truant ninth grade female students experienced a significant increase in quarterly attendance rate following attendance in either mandatory Saturday School Program. The relationship between quarterly attendance rate and attendance in Saturday School was found to be positive for habitually truant ninth grade female students. The nature of this relationship was consistent regardless of the method of Saturday School attended by the students, e.g. traditional or experimental.

Hypothesis 2: Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the quarterly grade point average of these students is unrelated.

The hypothesis was accepted for all ninth grade students and all female students for the total sample, and for the sub-populations of ninth grade male students and ninth and tenth grade female students.

The hypothesis was rejected for tenth grade students and male students for the total sample at .05. Across grade levels and genders, the hypothesis was rejected for tenth grade male students at the .05 level in both the Saturday School Programs investigated. The direction movement of the grade point averages for tenth grade male students, and the total sample, was negative. While the strength of statistical significance was not

shown for other comparisons among the sample as it was for the comparisons for tenth grade male students, these negative findings indicate an inverse relationship between attendance in mandatory Saturday School, whether experimental or traditional, and the quarterly grade point average of habitually truant students.

Hypothesis 3: Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the attitude toward school of these students is unrelated.

Data for the variable of attitude toward school were gathered and analyzed in three specific categories: classes, teachers and environment.

The hypothesis was accepted, specific to classes, for all students for the total sample and for all students across grade levels and genders. Specific to teachers, the hypothesis was accepted for all female students for the total sample, for all ninth and tenth grade female students and all ninth grade male students across grade levels and genders. The hypothesis was accepted for all ninth grade students for the total sample and for all students across grade levels and genders specific to environment. The hypothesis was rejected for tenth grade male students specific to teachers at the .05 level. The hypothesis also was rejected for male students specific to teachers and school environment at the .05 level.

Attitudes of habitually truant male students toward their classes declined following attendance in both the mandatory Saturday School Programs. A similar trend was shown to exist between attendance in mandatory Saturday School and the attitude toward school environment among habitually truant male students.

Hypothesis 4: Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the gender of these students is unrelated.

Specific to female students, the hypothesis was accepted for the variables of truancy rate, grade point average and all three categories of attitude toward school. The hypothesis was accepted for the variable of truancy rate and the single category of attitude toward classes specific to male students.

The hypothesis was rejected for the variable of grade point average at the .05 level and for the categories of attitude toward teachers and school environment at the .05 level for habitually truant male students.

Hypothesis 5: Attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students and the grade level of these students is unrelated.

The hypothesis was accepted for all ninth grade students for all variables. The hypothesis was accepted for tenth grade students for the variables of truancy rate and all three categories of attitude toward school.

The hypothesis was rejected for tenth grade students for the variable of grade point average at the .05 level.

Summary and Conclusions

Results of the analyses of the data for the variables studied have revealed that attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program does effect the habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students. Because the sample selected for this study included only habitually truant students, care should be taken before the findings are generalized to extend to those students who are occasionally truant or miss school infrequently.

While certain statistical significance has been demonstrated for the comparisons of the findings among the total sample and across grade levels and genders, the comparison of the findings between the two Saturday School Programs studied, i.e. experimental vs. traditional, failed to demonstrate any significant relationships. The implication of this fact is that it is of lesser importance which approach is emphasized in Saturday School, rather that the habitually truant ninth and tenth grade student attend a mandatory Saturday School Program.

Analyses of the data for the total student sample and the various sub-populations lead to the following conclusions regarding the effects of a mandatory Saturday School Program on

habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students.

Truancy Rate

Habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students reduce their rate of truancy following attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program. This fact remains constant for these students when consideration is extended across grade levels and genders. Only in the experimental Saturday School Program did any single sub-population, ninth grade male students, show an increase in their rate of truancy after attendance in Saturday School. The total increase in rate of truancy for this sub-population was so small in size that it can be considered inconsequential for all practical purposes. The increase in the rate of truancy for ninth grade male students in the experimental Saturday School was revealed to be .0025 which equates to less than one class period of truancy over an entire 48 day academic quarter.

The overall conclusion is that habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students will attend school during the week with greater regularity following attendance in mandatory Saturday School, with ninth grade students demonstrating the greatest level of improvement in the attendance.

Grade Point Average

It has been shown that improved school attendance by

habitually truant students following their attendance in mandatory Saturday School does not result in improved academic achievement, as measured by grade point average. The direction movement of the rate of truancy and the grade point average for the students in the sample was revealed to be in opposite directions. In general, when habitually truant students attend school more regularly, as was the case following their attendance in mandatory Saturday School, their academic performance, as measured by grade point averages, declined. All students in the total sample experienced a decline in grade point average following attendance in Saturday School. For some students in the sample, this decline in grade point average was as much as one-half a grade point.

Attitude Toward School

Overall, the way in which habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students view school was not noticeably affected by their attendance in mandatory Saturday School. The general trend was for most students to view classes more negatively and the school environment more positively. Attitudes toward teachers varied only slightly among these students with no specific direction of movement.

Generally, it can be concluded that attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program and the resulting increase in

attendance during regular class sessions by habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students is not related to strong attitudes toward school, either positive or negative.

Summary

The findings of this study indicate that Saturday School Programs can be effective in reducing the rate of truancy among ninth and tenth grade habitually truant students. An increase in the number of days of attendance during regular class sessions carries with it an increase in classroom instruction. It is reasonable to suspect that many secondary educators believe that the habitually truant student will benefit from this increased instruction and likely show improvement academically.

The findings of this study clearly indicate that academic achievement, e.g. grade point average, of habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students declines upon their returning to school with increased regularity. Correspondingly, these students demonstrated a decline in their overall attitude toward their classes during this period as well. Although not proven to be statistically significant for the total sample, the direct relationship between the decline in the attitude toward classes and the decline in academic achievement of the habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students is important.

The trends of the declines in truancy rate and grade point average for the habitually truant students in the study sample were comparable and revealed no clear trend in either the experimental or traditional Saturday School Programs. The actual amounts of the declines for each of these variables were greater among the students who participated in the traditional Saturday School as compared with the experimental Saturday School. Given that the differences in the means for the three variables studied in the experimental vs. the traditional Saturday School Programs were so small in size, it is difficult to suggest the advantages of one mandatory Saturday School Program over the other.

Recommendations

This study was undertaken as exploratory research designed to determine if attendance in a mandatory Saturday School Program had an effect on habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students. The study has provided findings which show that attendance in an experimental or traditional Saturday School Program does effect the rate of truancy, academic achievement and, to a limited extent, the attitude toward school of habitually truant students.

Since the topic of this study had not been given empirical investigation previously, the obvious recommendation is to suggest that further research in this area be conducted.

1. Since significant findings resulted from this study indicating that habitually truant students lower their rate of truancy following attendance in either the experimental or traditional mandatory Saturday School, further research should be undertaken to determine why this improvement in attendance is realized. Specifically, the research should seek to determine how the habitually truant student views attendance in these mandatory Saturday School Programs and whether their improved attendance in regular classes is a result of their views.

2. Since it was shown that the increased attendance in regular classes resulted in a subsequent decrease in grade point averages earned by habitually truant students following their attendance in Saturday School, further research needs to be conducted to determine why this is true. Such research might well investigate the level of acceptance and the attitudes of classroom teachers and other students towards habitually truant students when these students return to regular classes.

3. An examination of the attitudes of classroom teachers toward habitually truant students needs to be conducted to determine 1) what the attitudes of classroom teachers are and 2) whether the identified teacher attitudes have any effect on the academic performance, i.e. grade point average, of habitually truant students when they return to regular classes.

4. Longitudinal studies would be valuable to determine if habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students who have attended sessions in a mandatory Saturday School Program 1) continue to attend school with increased patterns of regularity during the eleventh and twelfth grade years and 2) achieve high school graduation or its equivalent.

5. Since truancy is identified as one measure of punctuality for secondary students, research to determine the incidence of tardiness for habitually truant students when they return to regular classes would prove valuable. Additionally, research to determine the number of disciplinary referrals habitually truant students receive for truancy and/or tardiness upon their return to regular classes also would be of value.

Secondary administrators are concerned and interested in habitually truant students. These students represent an important segment of the student population in secondary schools which clearly is at risk. Habitual truancy may be indicative of something that is wrong in the student's life outside of school. Depressed academic performance and negative attitudes toward classes on the part of the habitual truant upon returning to school may, in turn, be indicative of something wrong in the student's life inside school.

Simply opening school doors and providing textbooks and competent teachers might not be sufficient for secondary schools

to increase their effectiveness with the habitual truant. Secondary administrators must become better aware of the factors which contribute to the growing number of students who choose to deal with school through patterns of avoidance.

This study has shown that programs of mandatory Saturday School, whether experimental or traditional in design, have an effect when employed as approaches to return habitually truant ninth and tenth grade students to school. Additional and expanded efforts must be made to continue to correct problems in secondary schools which lead to habitual truancy among certain students and, in turn, encourage these students to attend school, not avoid it.

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APPENDIX

STUDENT OPINIONNAIRE

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. I only want to know what your opinion is about your school. All your answers will be kept confidential and no one at your school will know what you say. Please be as fair and honest as possible!

DIRECTIONS: Read each statement and indicate what your true feeling is for each one by circling one of the following choices:

SA = You strongly agree with what is said

A = You agree with what is said

D = You disagree with what is said

SD = You strongly disagree with what is said

- | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. I am learning things that will help me now | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. It is easy to get to know people at school | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. I like the way the school is run | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. My teachers usually make me feel important | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. My teachers are fair in how they grade my work | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6. I get a "fair deal" at school | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. My teachers are interested in me | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. The amount of homework assigned in my classes is unreasonable | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9. Some of my teachers are lazy | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. Some teachers want students to be afraid of them | SA | A | D | SD |
| 11. Some of my classes are extremely boring | SA | A | D | SD |
| 12. There are too many rules at school | SA | A | D | SD |
| 13. I like most of the classes I have taken | SA | A | D | SD |
| 14. The work in my classes is interesting | SA | A | D | SD |
| 15. I know who the principal of the school is and I can go and talk to him/her if I need to | SA | A | D | SD |

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|--|----|---|---|----|
| 16. I know what is happening at school | SA | A | D | SD |
| 17. I like the school activities and think they are interesting | SA | A | D | SD |
| 18. Some of my classes are so uninteresting that it is difficult for me to do my best work | SA | A | D | SD |
| 19. Teachers pay attention to what I am interested in | SA | A | D | SD |
| 20. Most teachers like what they do | SA | A | D | SD |
| 21. I am not given enough freedom in choosing my classes | SA | A | D | SD |
| 22. I wouldn't be going to school if I didn't have to | SA | A | D | SD |
| 23. My teachers try to understand me | SA | A | D | SD |
| 24. I think the student body officers do a good job | SA | A | D | SD |
| 25. I am learning things that will help me in the future | SA | A | D | SD |
| 26. My teachers are honest with me | SA | A | D | SD |
| 27. There are too many graduation requirements for this school | SA | A | D | SD |
| 28. I like the way my teachers treat me | SA | A | D | SD |
| 29. My textbooks are up to date | SA | A | D | SD |
| 30. I think the school looks good | SA | A | D | SD |

THANK YOU !