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ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO DROP-OUTS AT  
ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP UNION FREE HIGH SCHOOL  
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR, 1954-1955

by

KENNETH EARL RIPPLE

B. S. La Crosse State College, 1952

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1956

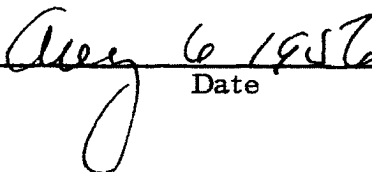
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
The problem . . . . .	1
Importance of the problem . . . . .	1
Purpose of this study . . . . .	3
Definitions of terms used . . . . .	4
Attendance . . . . .	4
Drop-outs . . . . .	4
Attendance Procedures . . . . .	4
Limitations of the study . . . . .	5
Assumptions of the study . . . . .	5
II. PROCEDURES . . . . .	6
Use of related literature . . . . .	6
Relation of literature to the	
Adams-Friendship study . . . . .	6
Collection of data . . . . .	8
Daily absentee sheets used	
as a focal point . . . . .	8
Teacher judgments used for	
judging drop-out . . . . .	8
Final data gathered in the exit interview . . . . .	9

CHAPTER	PAGE
Interviews held with superintendents	
of Mauston and Westfield . . . . .	9
Local superintendents classified	
reasons for drop-outs . . . . .	10
Treatment of data . . . . .	10
Data from daily absentee sheets . . . . .	10
Teacher judgments compared with	
the Dillon study . . . . .	11
Analysis made of Dillon study	
with exit interview . . . . .	11
Parental interviews used to check	
contrast in Seymour study . . . . .	11
Mauston and Westfield data	
compared with local study . . . . .	12
Seven County superintendents name	
four categories for drop-outs . . . . .	12
III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	13
Background Statistics . . . . .	13
Reasons for school leaving	
in the Dillon study . . . . .	13
Limitations to data collected	
from pupils . . . . .	14

CHAPTER	PAGE
School progress and personality	
factors important . . . . .	15
Financial reasons secondary	
to general disinterest . . . . .	17
Wisconsin compulsory attendance	
law a factor in retaining pupils . . . . .	17
IV. DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA . . . . .	19
Various studies used to make	
comparisons . . . . .	19
Analysis made of data from	
Mauston and Westfield . . . . .	20
Valid data obtained from	
student absentee card . . . . .	21
V. FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS . . . . .	22
Teacher judgments . . . . .	22
Frequently assigned characteristics . . . . .	22
Infrequently assigned characteristics . . . . .	24
Students decisions to leave school . . . . .	24
Frequently designated reasons . . . . .	24
Infrequently designated reasons . . . . .	25
Parental reasons for school leaving . . . . .	27
Frequently named reasons . . . . .	27
Infrequently named reasons . . . . .	27

CHAPTER	PAGE
Suggested changes . . . . .	29
Frequently suggested changes . . . . .	29
Infrequently suggested changes . . . . .	31
Items relating to attendance . . . . .	31
Agreement of named items . . . . .	31
Disagreement of named items . . . . .	32
Adams-Friendship attendance data . . . . .	34
Findings for 1954-1955 . . . . .	34
Administrative reasons for drop-outs . . . . .	36
Frequently assigned reasons . . . . .	36
VI. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	37
Summary of the compared study . . . . .	37
Curriculum, guidance, and instruction as reasons for school leaving . . . . .	37
Socio-economic status and student immaturity as reasons for school leaving . . . . .	37
Transient workers as reasons for school leaving . . . . .	38
Recommendations for Adams-Friendship . . . . .	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	40
APPENDIX . . . . .	42

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I.	A Comparison of Frequencies of Teacher Judgments on Characteristics of School Leavers in Adams- Friendship High School and School Leavers in the Dillon Study, 1954-1955 . . . . .	23
II.	A Comparison of Frequencies of Reasons Given by Youth in Decision to Leave School in Adams- Friendship High School and Youth in the Dillon Study, 1954-1955 . . . . .	26
III.	Frequency of Reasons Given by Parents of Youth as of First Importance in Decision to Leave Adams- Friendship High School, 1954-1955 . . . . .	28
IV.	A Comparison of Frequencies of Changes Suggested by School Leavers in Adams- Friendship High School and School Leavers in the Dillon study, 1954-1955 . . . . .	30
V.	A Comparison of Items Relating to Attendance in Adams-Friendship, Mauston, and Westfield High Schools, 1954-1955 . . . . .	33
VI.	Characteristics of Drop-outs and Non-Drop-outs Dealing with Attendance at Adams-Friendship High School, 1954-1955 . . . . .	35



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

During the past six years, there has been a distinct problem of non-attendance in the Adams-Friendship Union Free High School of Adams, Wisconsin. The facilities are of the finest, the staff is comparable to many in the state, and there seems to be a well rounded curriculum. Why is it then that there is such an attendance problem?

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Importance of the problem. The problem of improving school attendance requires serious research and study because of the vast number of drop-outs in the public schools each year. While it is true that more than a million people graduate from high school every year, educators are aware that another million drop out of high school before twelfth grade and that still another million never start a high school course.<sup>1</sup>

The need for a co-operative study of this question of drop-outs was discussed at a Work Conference on Life Adjustment in Chicago,

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<sup>1</sup> Gaumnitz, Walter A., "High School Retention: How Does Your State Rate?" School Life, 35:69-71, February 1953.

Illinois, October 16-18, 1950, by forty-six representatives of school systems in cities of more than 200,000 population.<sup>2</sup> This conference arranged by the United States Commissioner of Education, Earl J. McGrath, grew out of the recommendations approved by a 1950 Chicago conference on "Why Do Boys and Girls Drop Out of School, and What Can We Do About It?"<sup>3</sup> Some schools reported a reduction in drop-outs. However, there was a consensus of opinion that additional study and research be given to the problem of improving school attendance. A committee, appointed by Alexander H. Stoddard, Chairman of the Council of Superintendents in large city school systems, developed these six research proposals submitted to the 1951 conference:

Proposal No. 1. Uniform Pupil Accounting. A plan for basic uniform accounting procedures which would make possible the collection of comparable data concerning holding power, drop-outs, and school leavers.

Proposal No. 2. Appraisal of Pupil Characteristics and Growth. A plan for co-operative research in the appraisal of pupils, their characteristics,

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<sup>2</sup> United States Office of Education, "Fourth National Conference on Life Adjustment Education," School Life, 33:42-44, December 1950.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Security Agency, Why Do Boys and Girls Drop Out of School, and What Can We Do About It? (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1950), Circular No. 269.

and growth as related to school adjustment and vulnerability to dropping out.

Proposal No. 3. Pupil Follow-up Studies. A plan for co-operative research on pupil follow-ups.

Proposal No. 4. New Over-all Curriculum Research. A plan for general over-all curriculum research using basic education principles to guide programs in co-operating schools.

Proposal No. 5. Current On-going Curriculum Programs. A plan for curriculum research which recognizes current on-going programs of curriculum improvement with a deviation from "standard" practices.

Proposal No. 6. Partial or Limited Curriculum Experimentation. A plan for partial or limited experimentation involving a phase or single area of the curriculum.<sup>4</sup>

Purpose of this study. Although considerable research has been done in regard to the drop-out problem on national and local scales, no conclusive evidence has been submitted in the attempted solution of the complex causes. A research design has not been as yet established which would help formulate valid answers to the needs of early school leavers and the effectiveness of the school services organized to meet those needs.

The purpose of this study was one of determining the relationship between non-attendance and the incidence of drop-outs in the

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<sup>4</sup>Stoddard, Alexander H., "Some Alternatives Confronting The Schools," American Association of School Administrators: Official Report (Washington: Library of Congress, 1951), p. 81.

Adams-Friendship Union Free High School for the school year 1954-1955.

Answers to the following questions were sought: (1) What are the major reasons for non-attendance? (2) What are some implications that may be gathered through related literature on the subject? (3) How does attendance compare in outlying schools of the same approximate enrollment? (4) What administrative records are on file that deal with attendance? (5) How may the administrator guide the frequent absentee toward the channels of personal guidance and health?

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Attendance. Since this study was conducted in only one high school, the term attendance was interpreted as meaning the daily presence of students in the school regardless of likes or dislikes and needs or requirements of the students, or the effectiveness of teaching.

Drop-outs. Throughout this study, the term drop-out shall be interpreted as meaning the severance of pupil ties with the school.

Attendance procedures. The procedures of attendance were interpreted as a standardized method used to check students not present, adequacy of reasons for absence, and age and sex of the absentee, to prepare admission slips to classes, and to make notations on attendance cards filed in the office.

### III. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was made over a period of one year, that of 1954-1955. Adams-Friendship High School had an enrollment of 347 students. Of these 347, 125 were freshmen, 75 were sophomores, 83 were juniors, and 64 were seniors. The school is located in central Wisconsin and is the only high school in the county. Adams, Wisconsin is a division point for the Chicago Northwestern Railroad. Most of the students, however, live in surrounding rural communities. The county of Adams is evaluated as one of the poorest in the state.

The study made will endeavor to explore the relationship of non-attendance to the incidence of drop-outs. In no way will there be an attempt to explain what caused non-attendance. Further, the study will try to show means by which the frequent absentee may be led toward channels of personal guidance and health.

### IV. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

Possibly strengths and weaknesses in the guidance and health program, curriculum offerings, and instructional procedures of the high school will be revealed as a result of this study. Removal of such weaknesses would tend to improve school attendance.

## CHAPTER II

### PROCEDURES

Very definite procedures and devices were used in the study in order to make the results reliable and also effective.

#### I. USE OF RELATED LITERATURE

Relation of literature to the Adams-Friendship study. Material was first collected that dealt primarily with: (a) early school leavers, (b) reasons for pupil drop-outs, and (c) attendance literature. This material was further categorized as to: (a) national level, (b) state level, and (c) local level.

Very little has been done with the said problem on either a statewide or a local basis, so most of the literature was of national scope.

Data were gathered and comparisons made with the work of Harold J. Dillon, H. C. Seymour, Frances Wilson and Morris Krugman.<sup>1</sup>

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1

Dillon, Harold J., Early School Leavers (New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1949); Federal Security Agency, Improving School Holding Power, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1951); Wilson, Frances and Krugman, Morris, Studies of Student Personnel (unpublished paper; New York State Education Department, 1951).

These sources were chosen for the following reasons. Harold Dillon's study grouped reasons given by nearly 1,000 students as to why they decided to leave school.<sup>2</sup> Reasons dealing with the school, financial matters, or individual personal conflicts were revealed as a result.

Supplementing this study was one by Galen Jones of the United States Office of Education. In a circular published by the Federal Security Agency, Jones relates that H. C. Seymour, in a doctoral thesis written at Harvard University, claimed that there was evidence pointing toward decided limitations dealing with data collected from school leavers in the Dillon study.<sup>3</sup> This material further checked the validity of the first study and therefore was used as a check point in the Adams-Friendship study.

Consideration was again given to another phase of the Dillon study, in which teachers appraised personality characteristics of drop-outs.<sup>4</sup> Information gathered from this method would tend to indicate the type of student the drop-out was.

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<sup>2</sup> Dillon, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Security Agency, loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Dillon, op. cit., p. 79.

## II. COLLECTION OF DATA

Daily absentee sheets used as a focal point. The problem in the study at Adams-Friendship was assumed to be due to lack of attendance.

With the assistance of the administrator, A. H. Loken, and the faculty, a daily absentee sheet was composed and used to record the names of those students not in attendance on any given day in the school year 1954-1955. Information about the absentee's name, age, sex, year in school, and reason for the absence could be found from these sheets.

Teacher judgments used as a basis for judging the drop-out's personal characteristics. At an in-service meeting while discussing the value of the proposed study, the staff members agreed that further disclosure of pertinent facts to staff members was pointless unless a method was agreed upon by which all could benefit. A composite sheet approach appraising a drop-out's personal characteristics was selected. From this material some facts would be omitted as to the drop-out's personal behaviour — before and after leaving school.

The use of Dillon's table of judgment of teachers dealing with the characteristics of school leavers was agreed upon for the Adams-Friendship study.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 80.



Exit interviews used as a means to gather final data with both parent and the drop-out. Absent in the procedures used at Adams-Friendship was a way by which information could be gathered when the student decided he wanted to terminate his school relations. The superintendent, A. H. Loken, agreed to the following plan. An attendance clerk was appointed and handled all drop-outs so that some uniformity would prevail. A parent usually was urged to be present at the interview in order to get the parental viewpoints toward school leaving.

A half-sized sheet of paper carried the information requested by the clerk of the drop-out. The following is a list of essential information requested from both the student and parent: (a) name of the school leaver, (b) the date the student dropped out of school, (c) the age of the student, (d) the grade of the student, (e) the sex of the student, (f) the reason given by the student for leaving school, and (g) the parent's reason given for his child's leaving school.

Interviews held with superintendents of Mauston and Westfield Wisconsin High Schools. At a meeting with the Adams-Friendship superintendent a decision was made to check the authenticity of information gathered at the school by making a comparison with schools in the outlying area. The two schools chosen were Mauston and Westfield. Both schools were within a twenty-nine mile radius of Adams, Wisconsin, and had enrollments comparable to that of Adams-Friendship.

An introductory letter was first compiled and then sent to each of the superintendents that were to be contacted. Next, trial interview procedures were used with the local superintendent adding some constructive criticism. By the time the interviews were held both superintendents at the neighboring schools were well aware of the nature of the study at hand and very willing to make available the desired information.

Information was gathered on:

1. Number of students in school
2. Average daily attendance
3. Number of drop-outs
4. Drop-outs classified as to age, sex, and classes
5. Number of teachers on the staff
6. Curriculum offerings
7. Guidance facilities offered
8. Health facilities offered

Local superintendents classified reasons for drop-outs. At Adams-Friendship all extra-curricular activities are governed by the Seven County Conference. At an informal gathering, the executive body composed of the Seven County officials was canvassed in an attempt to classify the reasons for drop-outs. Generalizations largely resulted. In all there was a total of eighty odd years of administrative work done by the group.

### III. TREATMENT OF DATA

Data from daily absentee sheets. All information about each student who missed so much as a day of school was transferred to an

individual three by five index card. This was done to have a clearer, more complete picture of why and when each student was in absentia. Further, this material was then used as a basis to check more closely on the potential drop-out, sex of the absentee, percent of absences per student, and percent and average age of drop-outs per class.

Teacher judgment sheets compiled and then compared with the Dillon study concerning teacher judgments. As soon as a drop-out occurred, all teachers on the faculty diligently filled out a judgment sheet concerning the student's personal characteristics as they were revealed to the teachers. At the end of the 1954-1955 school year these sheets were compiled and the statistics compared to a similar study of Dillon's.

An analysis made of Dillon's study showing the drop-out's reasons for school leaving with the exit interview. Using the form agreed upon for the conducting of the final interview with the drop-outs, the investigator used material gathered as to reasons in the student's mind why he was leaving school. All this information was compiled and a comparison made with the Dillon study on the basis of the Dillon analysis.

Parental interview used to check contrast in Seymour's study. Since some discrepancy arises between the Dillon and Seymour study the method of parental interviews was used to check the findings of Seymour against the Dillon study.

Mauston and Westfield data used as a basis for comparison of Adams-Friendship study. All data were carefully checked for accuracy and then checked with statistics gathered from Adams-Friendship. This was done mainly to check on curriculum, guidance, and health services offered.

Seven County Superintendents classified reasons for drop-outs into four categories. Four main categories were agreed upon at a meeting of the Seven County superintendents, but they could be termed only generalizations.

## CHAPTER III

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Materials concerning attendance procedures as related to drop-outs throughout various parts of the nation and the findings were recorded and compiled. All literature used was related with attendance and drop-outs at Adams-Friendship Union Free High School.

#### I. BACKGROUND STATISTICS

##### Frequency of reasons given by youth in decision to leave school.

Harold Dillon's study, as related by the National Child Labor Committee in 1949, grouped the reasons given by 957 youth as of first importance in their decision to leave school into three areas. Sixty-nine percent of the youth gave reasons relating to school as being paramount to school leaving. In this first area thirty-six percent stated that they could not learn and consequently became discouraged. Smaller percentages expressed disliking failures, teachers, subjects, and instructional methods.<sup>1</sup>

Twenty-one percent of the pupils stated that they left school for financial reasons. Personal reasons made up the remaining ten percent.

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<sup>1</sup> Dillon, Harold J., Early School Leavers, (New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1949), p. 49.

Suggestions were made by these school leavers for changes which might have influenced them to remain in school. Thirty-eight percent desired work experience and instruction. Closer contact of students with counselors and teachers was suggested as well as increased student participation in extra-curricular activities.<sup>2</sup>

Limitations to data collected from pupils. Galen Jones of the United States Office of Education supplemented the Dillon study with data from H. C. Seymour's doctoral thesis at Harvard University at the Work Conference General Session in 1950.<sup>3</sup> Seymour claimed some decided limitations to data collected from pupils leaving or remaining in school. There was evidence that only an element of truth existed in their reasons. More serious and fundamental conditions were basic since a larger proportion were unable to do more than express a lack of interest in school.

Seymour's study noted some sex differences as compared with the Dillon study. A larger percentage of girls than boys gave a lack of interest, the necessity of working at home and ill health as the foremost reasons. No girls admitted truancy as the reason for

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<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>  
Federal Security Agency, Improving School Holding Power, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1951), Research Proposals, Circular No. 291, pp. 55-57.

leaving, whereas, five percent of boys admitted this as a reason. Likewise, a larger percentage of boys were expelled from school. Approximately the same percentage of boys and girls left school because they could not do the work required by the school.<sup>4</sup>

School progress and personality factors important in New York drop-out study. The New York Education Department conducted a study of the records of 5,637 students in thirteen vocational high schools who were expected to graduate in June, 1949, to learn the characteristics of those who left school early and of those who remained to graduate.<sup>5</sup> According to the study of Morris Krugman and Frances Wilson, some very interesting data were revealed.

Among those pupils who actually began the vocational high school courses (714 either never reported or attended only a few days), thirty-nine percent graduated. The drop-outs left early in their high school careers. Approximately ninety-one percent left to go to work, three percent joined the armed services, and six percent left for other reasons. The greater majority of the school leavers were under seventeen years of age (the minimum legal age for leaving was sixteen). By the end of the third semester of school, over half of

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Wilson, Frances and Krugman, Morris, Studies of Student Personnel, (unpublished paper: New York State Education Department, 1951), pp. 25-27.

the entering boys and a third of the girls had left school.

Evidence was revealed that the boy or girl with an I.Q. below ninety, retarded in school progress, and reaching the minimum legal age for school leaving, became the potential drop-out. Teacher ratings in character traits and work traits could not be ignored even though the data were subjective. Graduates were rated "excellent" six times as often as drop-outs; drop-outs were rated "poor" nine times as often as the graduates. The attendance of sixty-seven percent of the drop-outs was unsatisfactory, as compared to eleven percent of the graduates. The graduates passed their subjects approximately twice as often as the drop-outs, the discrepancy being greatest in academic subjects.<sup>6</sup>

Outstanding among the characteristics appraised by the teachers in the Dillon study were observations that the school leavers lacked skill in tool subjects and had poor study habits. Surprisingly, the study showed that in the majority of cases the drop-out did not seem to be too aggressive, sullen or resentful, immature, secretive, unhappy or worried. On the whole he got along well with the teachers and others.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Dillon, loc. cit., p. 79.



Financial reasons secondary to general disinterest. Interviews with 1,538 applicants for employment certificates in December, 1949, and January, 1950, in New York City revealed that financial reasons, as in the findings of the Dillon study, were secondary to a general disinterest in school. A further analysis of the reasons disclosed:

While the major reason for leaving school as given by the applicants, was financial, when analyzed, it was found to be secondary to a general disinterest in school. The financial reasons were related to family problems, such as broken homes, father unemployed, illness of one or both parents, and the like, and accounted for twenty-six and one-half percent of the drop-outs, according to their own stories. Another seven and seven-tenths percent felt they had financial needs apart from those of their families. If a variety of reasons of another type offered for school leaving is pooled, however, quite another picture is obtained: forty-nine percent of the total can be classified as boredom with school, and thirteen percent as trouble in school, or as minimal since all studies of drop-outs indicate that the financial reason is frequently a disguise for dissatisfaction with school. We do not then know exactly how many left school because we do know that not less than two-thirds of the drop-outs did not leave school because of financial reasons.<sup>8</sup>

Compulsory attendance in Wisconsin a dominant factor in retaining students. General provisions concerning school attendance in the state of Wisconsin are as follows: Any person having under his control a child between the ages of seven and sixteen years shall cause such child to attend some school regularly to the end of the school term in which he is sixteen years of age, unless the child has a legal excuse, during the full period and hours, religious holidays

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

excepted, that the public or private school in which such child should be enrolled is in session.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Laws of Wisconsin Relating to Public Schools, Chapter 40, 1955, p. 625.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA

The reasons why pupils drop out of school must emanate from four possible sources: the pupil himself, his family, the high school, and the community.<sup>1</sup> An effective study relating to the drop-out situation needs then a varied and rather extensive means by which to evaluate it.

Various studies used as a basis for forming the instrument by which to make comparisons. All of the related literature that was collected was used to show relationships between the studies of others and the one of Adams-Friendship.

The relationships of drop-outs' reasons for terminating school were treated. This was done by checking the Dillon study with information gathered through the exit interview with the student drop-outs at Adams-Friendship.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Layton, Warren K., Special Services of the Drop-out and the Potential Drop-out, (The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 37:73, March 1953).

<sup>2</sup> Dillon, Harold J., Early School Leavers, (New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1949), p. 49.

The information gathered in the Seymour study was compared with the drop-out's parental interviews to check the contrast found by Seymour in Dillon's study.<sup>3</sup>

Again the Dillon study was compared with suggested changes reported by drop-outs for retaining students in high school.<sup>4</sup> The study was also used as a means by which Adams-Friendship school leavers' changes were evaluated.

Further, the statistics of Adams-Friendship judgment of teachers on characteristics of drop-outs were checked with the Dillon study to compare the parallelism of the two.

Analysis made of Drop-outs of Mauston and Westfield Union Free High Schools and those of Adams-Friendship. Both Mauston and Westfield High Schools, under the superintendents, M. E. Kjeseth and K. B. Krohn, were used for comparison purposes with Adams-Friendship. Data such as number of students, average daily attendance, number of drop-outs, number of teachers on the faculty, curriculum offerings, and guidance and health facilities were recorded from these schools for study of similarities.

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<sup>3</sup> Federal Security Agency, Improving School Holding Power, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1951), Research Proposals, Circular No. 291, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Dillon, op. cit., p. 56.

Cumulative student absentee cards used for compiling valid data.

Material collected on three by five inch index cards was used to check into individual data concerning absences. From this information such facts as sex and percent of absentees with illness as the reason for absence, percent of absences per student, and percent and average age of drop-outs per class were gathered. This data further served as a point from which to explore the relationship of non-attendance in regard to the incidence of drop-outs.

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

The value of such a study should be of interest not only to those persons connected with the administering of the school policies, but also to the community itself.

#### I. TEACHER JUDGMENTS

Frequently assigned characteristics. The data of Table I, page 23, indicate that the characteristics most frequently mentioned by both groups of teachers were:

1. "The student presented an attendance problem" was mentioned by 84 percent of the Adams-Friendship teachers and by 70 percent of the teachers in the Dillon study.
2. The Adams-Friendship teachers (81 percent) listed "the student lacked initiative" as did the teachers in the Dillon study (72 percent).
3. "The student got along well with teachers and other" was a characteristic mentioned by 78 percent of the teachers in the Adams-Friendship study as compared to 70 percent of the teachers in the Dillon study.
4. "The student was irresponsible" was a characteristic assigned pupils in the Dillon study (66 percent) and also the Adams-Friendship study (70 percent).

TABLE I  
A COMPARISON OF FREQUENCIES OF TEACHER JUDGMENTS ON  
CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL LEAVERS IN ADAMS-  
FRIENDSHIP HIGH SCHOOL AND SCHOOL  
LEAVERS IN THE DILLON STUDY,  
1954-1955.<sup>a</sup>

Characteristics Appraised*	Teacher Judgments			
	Adams Friendship		Dillon Study	
	No.	Yes	No.	Yes
Seemed unhappy or worried	300	65%	461	30%
Easily discouraged	245	53	754	49
Lacked initiative	374	81	1107	72
Interested in school	111	24	461	30
Caused trouble	69	15	369	24
Secretive or seclusive	148	32	569	37
Participated in class	222	48	769	50
Got along well with teachers and others	360	78	1077	70
Too aggressive	69	15	262	17
Sullen and resentful	84	18	308	20
Speech disorder	0	0	46	3
Attendance problem	388	84	1077	70
Lacked skill in tool subjects	337	73	923	60
Immature	51	11	461	30
Irresponsible	323	70	1015	66
Poor study habits	296	64	872	58
Lacked self confidence	360	78	861	56
Total Reports	462		1,537	

\* Though some items are similar, they were purposely listed separately as an additional check on the interviewer and for consistency in rating various items.

<sup>a</sup>Dillon, Harold J., Early School Leavers (New York: National Child Labor Committee), Table 38, p. 80.

Infrequently assigned characteristics. Teachers in the two studies rated most infrequently the following characteristics of school leavers as pertaining to the pupils under study:

1. Speech disorders were mentioned by three percent of the teachers in the Dillon study and by none of the teachers in the Adams-Friendship study.
2. Pupils were described as "too aggressive" or "sullen and resentful" by approximately one-fifth of the teachers in each study.
3. The teachers in the Adams-Friendship study (65 percent) tended to mention the student's "unhappy or worried" condition somewhat more frequently than did the Dillon study (30 percent).
4. Another direct point of disagreement was the Dillon study's finding on "immaturity" (30 percent) as compared with the Adams-Friendship's finding of (11 percent).

Fourteen Adams-Friendship teachers handed in thirty-three reports apiece, making a total of 462 reports. There were 1,537 reports in the Dillon study.

## II. STUDENTS DECISIONS TO LEAVE SCHOOL

Frequently designated reasons. The information given in Table II, page 26, denotes the reasons most frequently mentioned by each group



of drop-outs were:

1. "The students preferred work to school" was a decision mentioned by 5 percent in the Adams-Friendship study and by 36 percent in the Dillon study.
2. The Dillon study (15 percent) designated "the student needed money to buy clothes and also money was needed to help at home" as compared to the Adams-Friendship study (5 percent).
3. "The student was not interested in school work" was the reason given by 11 percent in the Dillon study and 9 percent in the Adams-Friendship study.

Infrequently designated reasons. School leavers in both studies rated most infrequently the following reasons for terminating their schooling:

1. The drop-outs in the Dillon study (3 percent) related that they could learn more out of school than in school. There was no mention of this reason in the Adams-Friendship study.
2. Approximately one-twentieth of the students in the Dillon study gave "disliking a certain teacher" as their reason for school leaving, whereas there was no account of this in the Adams-Friendship study.
3. The Adams-Friendship drop-outs rated "parents wanted youth to leave school" (24 percent), "students could learn

TABLE II

A COMPARISON OF FREQUENCIES OF REASONS GIVEN BY YOUTH  
IN DECISION TO LEAVE SCHOOL IN ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP  
HIGH SCHOOL AND YOUTH IN THE DILLON STUDY,  
1954-1955.<sup>b</sup>

	Frequency			
	Adams Friendship		Dillon Study	
<u>Reasons Relating to School</u>	No.	%	No.	%
Preferred work to school	1	5	342	36
Was not interested in school work	2	9	104	11
Could not learn and was discouraged	0	0	66	7
Was failing and did not want to repeat	1	5	55	6
Disliked a certain teacher	0	0	47	5
Disliked a certain subject	0	0	30	3
Could learn more out of school than in school	4	19	16	1
<u>Financial Reasons</u>				
Needed money to buy clothes and help at home	1	5	144	15
Wanted spending money	2	9	55	6
<u>Personal Reasons</u>				
Ill health	4	19	49	5
Friends had left school	1	5	29	3
Parents wanted youth to leave school	5	24	20	2

<sup>b</sup> Dillon, Harold J., Early School Leavers (New York: National Child Labor Committee), Table 24, p. 50.

more out of school" and "ill health" (19 percent) more frequently than the Dillon study (2, 1, and 5 percent).

4. The only major disagreement was that approximately two-fifths of the drop-outs in the Dillon study rated "preferred work to school" as compared to one-twentieth in the Adams-Friendship study.

### III. PARENTAL REASONS FOR SCHOOL LEAVING

Frequently named reasons. The report given in Table III, page 28, discloses that the reasons most frequently mentioned by the parents in the Adams-Friendship study were:

1. The students transferred to other schools (14).
2. The students became pregnant during the school term (4).
3. The students joined various branches of the armed forces (4).
4. The students were not adequately provided with a good home background (4).

Infrequently named reasons. Parents in the Adams-Friendship study rated most infrequently the following reasons for their children's leaving school:

1. "Ill health" (6 percent) and "could not learn and was discouraged" (6 percent) were two reasons mentioned in the Adams-Friendship study.

TABLE III  
FREQUENCY OF REASONS GIVEN BY PARENTS OF YOUTH AS OF  
FIRST IMPORTANCE IN DECISION TO LEAVE  
ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP HIGH SCHOOL,  
1954-1955.

	Frequency	
	No.	Percent
<u>Reasons Relating to School</u>		
Preferred work to school	0	0
Was not interested in school work	1	3
Could not learn and was discouraged	2	6
Was failing and did not want to repeat grade	0	0
Disliked a certain teacher	0	0
Disliked a certain subject	0	0
Could learn more out of school than in school	0	0
Transferred to another school	14	43
<u>Financial Reasons</u>		
Needed money to buy clothes and help at home	0	0
Wanted spending money	0	0
<u>Personal Reasons</u>		
Ill Health	2	6
Friends had left school	0	0
Parents wanted youth to leave school	0	0
Pregnancy	4	12
Joined the armed forces	4	12
Broken home	4	12
Invalid parent	1	3
Death	1	3

2. Three percent of the parents described the drop-out as not being interested in school.
3. Death and a student dropping out of school to take care of an invalid parent accounted for approximately one-seventh of the parental reasons.

No definite conclusions may be drawn from Table III since only twenty-one parents were involved in the reporting of the reasons.

#### IV. SUGGESTED CHANGES

Frequently suggested changes. The data of Table IV, page 30, note that the changes most frequently recorded by the Dillon and the Adams-Friendship studies were:

1. The students of the Adams-Friendship study (26 percent) desired "more work experience" as compared to the Dillon study (23 percent).
2. Twenty-two percent of the Adams-Friendship students sought specific vocational instruction whereas the response in the Dillon study was fifteen percent.
3. Eleven percent of the students in the Dillon study felt a lack of opportunity to participate in school functions compared with nineteen percent in the Adams-Friendship study.

TABLE IV  
A COMPARISON OF FREQUENCIES OF CHANGES SUGGESTED BY  
SCHOOL LEAVERS IN ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP HIGH SCHOOL  
AND SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE DILLON STUDY,  
1954-1955.<sup>c</sup>

Suggestions	Frequency			
	Adams Friendship		Dillon Study	
	No.		No.	
Provide work experience	19	26%	377	23%
Specific vocational instruction	18	22	245	15
Services of a guidance counselor	6	8	196	12
More personal contact with the teachers	8	10	188	11
More participation in school activities	15	19	184	11
Opportunity to change courses	4	5	175	11
Smaller classes with more individual instruction	6	8	166	9
Transfer to another school	1	2	131	8

<sup>c</sup> Dillon, Harold J., Early School Leavers (New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1949), Table 30, p. 57.

4. Eleven percent of the students in the Dillon study and ten percent in the Adams-Friendship study considered teacher-pupil relations to be unsatisfactory.
5. That "guidance facilities were limited in scope" was mentioned in the Dillon study (12 percent) and also in the Adams-Friendship study (8 percent).

Infrequently suggested changes. Students in both studies infrequently listed the following changes:

1. "An opportunity to change courses" was mentioned by eleven percent in the Dillon study and five percent in the Adams-Friendship study.
2. Approximately one-tenth of the pupils in both studies described "overcrowded conditions with too little individual instruction" as a needed change.
3. The students in the Dillon study (8 percent) tended to mention "transfer to another school" somewhat more frequently than did the Adams-Friendship students (2 percent).

#### V. ITEMS RELATING TO ATTENDANCE

Agreement of named items. The data of Table V, page 33, indicate that the following similarities existed in the three schools, Mauston, Adams-Friendship, and Westfield were:

1. The number of teachers on the staff (18, 14, 12)
2. Enrollment of the three schools (324, 347, 286)
3. The majority of drop-outs leave school in their first two years of high school (9, 24, 13)

Disagreement of named items. Statistics of the three schools reveal the following areas of differences:

1. The average daily attendance of Adams-Friendship (320.4) showed quite a variation as compared to Mauston (314.6) and Westfield (276.9).
2. A wider deviation was found by comparing the percent of annual attendance at Adams-Friendship (92.3 percent) with Mauston (97.1 percent) and Westfield (96.8 percent).
3. Though the number of drop-outs at Mauston (15) and Westfield (17) was comparable, there again was revealed a sharp difference at Adams-Friendship (33).
4. At Adams-Friendship only 55 percent of the drop-outs were boys while Mauston with 67 percent and Westfield with 65 percent showed an appreciable increase.
5. In the area of "curriculum differences" Mauston offered art, advanced mathematics, and two foreign languages and Westfield offered art and advanced mathematics. None of these subjects was offered at Adams-Friendship.



TABLE V

A COMPARISON OF ITEMS RELATING TO ATTENDANCE IN ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP, MAUSTON, AND WESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOLS, 1954-1955.

Items	Mauston		Adams Friendship		Westfield	
Number in school	324		347		286	
Average daily attendance	314.6		320.4		276.9	
Percent of annual attendance	97.1		92.3		96.8	
Number of drop-outs	15		33		17	
Class and sex of drop-outs	F	M	F	M	F	M
a. Freshmen	2	4	11	8	2	5
b. Sophomores	0	3	0	5	1	5
c. Juniors	1	3	2	4	3	1
d. Seniors	2	0	2	1	0	0
Number of teachers	18		14		12	
Curriculum Difference in each School	Latin Spanish Ad. Math Art				Art Ad. Math	
Guidance facilities	Guidance man Home room plan				Home room plan	
Health facilities	Physical exam City nurse County nurse				Physical exam County nurse	

6. Guidance facilities in abundance were offered at Mauston, limited facilities at Westfield and no facilities at Adams-Friendship.
7. Periodic physical examinations were given at both Mauston and Westfield, whereas the examination was not a part of the program at Adams-Friendship.

#### VI. ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP ATTENDANCE DATA

Findings for 1954-1955. Data from Table VI, page 35, lists the following characteristics concerning attendance of Adams-Friendship High School students:

1. The average age of the non-drop-out was found to be 15 years 6 months whereas that of the Adams-Friendship drop-out was 16 years 11 months.
2. Both the parents of the drop-outs (46 percent) and the non-drop-outs (52 percent) gave illness as the dominant excuse for absence.
3. The high school male drop-out (58 percent) was absent more often than the female drop-out (42 percent).
4. The high school female non-drop-out (53 percent) was absent more often than the male non-drop-out (47 percent).
5. The freshman class comprising 35.9 percent of the school population had the largest percentage of drop-outs (5.4 percent).

TABLE VI  
CHARACTERISTICS OF DROP-OUTS AND NON-DROP-OUTS  
DEALING WITH ATTENDANCE AT ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP  
HIGH SCHOOL, 1954-1955.

Characteristics	Non-drop-outs	Drop-outs
Average age	15 yrs. 6 mo.	16 yrs. 11 mo.
Average number of absences	12	26
Reasons by parents		
Work as an excuse	29%	32%
Illness as an excuse	52%	46%
Sex		
Percent of males	47	58
Percent of females	53	42
Percent of class enrollment		
Freshmen	30.5	5.4
Sophomores	20.3	1.4
Juniors	22.2	1.7
Seniors	17.6	.9

6. The senior class comprising only 18.5 percent of the school population had the smallest percentage of drop-outs ( .9 percent).

## VII. ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS FOR DROP-OUTS

Frequently assigned reasons. Seven superintendents of the "Seven County Conference" classified reasons for drop-outs in the following four categories:

1. The students showed a lack of interest (curriculum and subject matter traditional, lack of warm relationships with teachers).
2. The students revealed frequent signs of frustration (emotional instability, family tension, physical handicaps).
3. The students were found to be socially immature (pupil-pupil relationship, participation in extra-curricular activities, lack of self-confidence).
4. The student came from a family of low economic status (physical appearance, spending money).

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to discover patterns of attendance and influences which show a relationship to school leaving, definite procedures were established to enable school officials at Adams-Friendship to use the results of the study.

#### I. SUMMARY

Inadequate curriculum offerings, limited guidance services, and outmoded instructional procedures as reasons for early school leaving. The reasons stated by school leavers in different geographical areas were very similar. Generally, work was preferred to school, money was needed to buy clothes and to help at home, personality factors entered into the picture, attendance was unsatisfactory, and closer pupil-teacher relationships were desired as well as pupil-school relationships. Inadequate curriculum offerings, outmoded instructional procedures, and limited guidance service formed the bases for reasons given by drop-outs for early school leaving.

Socio-economic status and student immaturity as reasons for early school leaving. The reasons stated by the parents of the school leavers in Adams-Friendship High School showed a degree of discrepancy when compared to the reasons given by their children.

Generally, transfer to another school, pregnancies during the school term, joining the armed forces, and only one parent providing a poor home situation for the child were the major reasons given. Socio-economic status of the parent in the community and immaturity of the pupil form the bases for reasons given by the drop-outs' parents for early school leaving.

Transient workers as reasons for non-attendance and school leaving at Adams-Friendship High School. In making a comparison with Adams-Friendship and the two schools in close proximity, the investigator found quite a bit of disagreement. The annual attendance was found to be much lower and the number of drop-outs higher at Adams-Friendship as compared to Mauston and Westfield High Schools.

The majority of absences and drop-outs in the Adams-Friendship study was found in the freshman and sophomore years. Prevailing reasons in order of importance for absences were work and illness. The average age of the non-drop-out was found to be fifteen years, six months; whereas, the average age of the drop-out was sixteen years, eleven months.

In the opinion of the investigator, the afore mentioned reasons resulted from the occupational background of a large number of parents. Approximately eighty per cent of the 1,400 people in Adams, Wisconsin,

were railroad workers and were transferred periodically.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

The Adams-Friendship study, 1954-1955, endeavored to explore the relationship of non-attendance to the incidence of drop-outs. In the study opinions of students, parents, and teachers were compared. Some of these opinions may have been prejudiced and biased.

Since the study was carried on for only a year, many factors may have been altered or changed at the school.

Recommendations could be made in the following areas:

1. Weakness was found in the guidance facilities. The removal of such weaknesses would tend to keep some potential drop-outs in school.
2. A need for health facilities has been revealed. The desire for a county health nurse could be expressed vigorously to the Adams County Welfare Department.
3. Possibly weaknesses were shown in the curriculum offerings. Additional subjects added to the curriculum where there is a definite need would also be a factor in attaining high attendance and lowering the number of drop-outs.

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## APPENDIX A

Adams, Wisconsin  
October 8, 1955

Mr. M. E. Kjeseth  
Superintendent of Schools  
Mauston, Wisconsin

Dear Sir:

This is to introduce Kenneth E. Ripple. He is a faculty member of the Adams-Friendship High School and is currently compiling data for a professional paper as a requirement for a Master's degree in Education at Montana State University.

Mr. Ripple is making a study of attendance in relation to the incidence of drop-outs at our high school. We have decided that in making the study more revealing, a comparison of items relating to attendance could be made with two neighboring schools of comparable enrollment.

Mr. Ripple will be present at your school on October 24 at one o'clock. If this time is already blocked out in your schedule would you set a time and record the same on the enclosed postal card?

Sincerely yours,

A. H. Loken  
Superintendent of  
Schools  
Adams, Wisconsin

## APPENDIX B

# DAILY ABSENTEE SHEET

Name	Age	Sex	Class	Reasons for Absences	Date