WHO BECOME PUPILS IN THE
GIRLS' CONTINUATION SCHOOL OF
NEW BEDFORD AND WHY

MARGARET THERESA WALSH

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WHO BECOME PUPILS IN THE GIRLS' CONTINUATION SCHOOL OF NEW BEDFORD AND WHY

Submitted by

Margaret Theresa Walsh

(B.S. in Ed., Boston University, 1943)

In partial fulfillment of requirements

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS ANALYSIS

Background for Study

Statement of problem. The purpose of this study is to find out what type or types of girl in New Bedford leave the regular school to become continuation school pupils and to learn the reasons for which they have left the regular school. Do these types follow certain categories? Is there a relationship between type and reason? What are the factors that remove pupils from the regular school and into continuation school today?

A study of the reasons for which girls leave the regular school to attend continuation school might suggest directions of effort on the part of the principal and the school, such as, to bring parents of these school leavers to a keener appreciation of the advantages of education for their children, and to encourage individual children who tend to drop out of school as soon as the law permits, especially the more capable, to remain in regular school for their own gain.

During the war years there were opportunities for 14-16 year old girls in gainful employment but now that the war emergency is over opportunities are becoming fewer and fewer

and educational requirements for jobs are becoming more exacting.

Some vital questions. The problem divides itself into two parts: 1, characteristics of the girls who attend continuation school; 2, the reasons for which they left the regular school. Some vital questions concerning the problem are: How intelligent are the girls who attend continuation school? What are their previous school records? What are their family histories? Are home conditions favorable or unfavorable? What are the girls' attitudes? What are their reasons for having left the regular school? Do these reasons check with the reasons given by their parents and by school authorities? Is there anything that can be done to keep these girls longer in the full-time school? If they cannot be kept longer in the regular school is it because the regular school does not adequately provide for individual differences?

Facts to be secured. Facts to be secured for this study include: information from the regular school records of these girls concerning age, place of birth, date of birth, parents' names, parents' places of birth, occupations of parents, age of pupil on entering and leaving school, grade attainment, grades failed, teachers' marks for conduct, health, and scholarship; pupil's I.Q.; number of children in family; position of child in family; language spoken at home; unity or disunity of family;

home and economic conditions; attitudes; nationality factors; and reason for leaving the regular school as given by pupils, parents, and school authorities; outside activities; and future plans.

Scope of study. This study is confined to all the girls enrolled in the New Bedford Girls' Continuation School from the beginning of the school year in September 1947 to the end of the school year in June 1948. The total number of cases involved is 107. These girls are between fourteen and sixteen years of age; grades completed range from the sixth through the tenth.

Definitions of Terms

Continuation pupil. A continuation school girl is one who having completed grade six has been allowed to leave the regular school to work; she must be at least fourteen years of age and until she reaches her sixteenth birthday she must attend continuation school four hours a week as long as she is employed; if her employment ceases before she becomes sixteen, she must be present in school thirty hours a week; she then becomes a general vocational pupil. The kinds of employment for such a girl is limited; she may obtain a home permit or a domestic service certificate. A home permit entitles her to be employed in her own home; a domestic service certificate is given to a girl who gets paid for working in the homes of other people.

A girl who is fifteen years of age may obtain a certificate to work in a store, or in a hospital, but at the present time no girl under sixteen is allowed to work in a factory.

Economic necessity. The reason most often given for leaving the regular school is "economic necessity." Whether or not this reason is significant is a matter of controversy. The year 1947-1948 should reveal whether or not economic necessity is the real factor as the economic status of most families is fairly good this year. Economic necessity is present when the money the girl earns is absolutely essential for the support of her family.

It is assumed that economic necessity is not the real reason for most girls becoming continuation school pupils.

Recapitulation

The purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics of the continuation school girls and to find out what the real reasons are for their leaving the regular school to become continuation school members. This will be done by studying their previous school records and by interviewing the girls, their parents, and others with whom they have come in contact.

CHAPTER II

RELATED STUDIES

Point of View of Research

Many studies have been made of the elimination of pupils from school. Most of these are concerned with high school pupils who are old enough to leave and do not have to concern themselves with part-time education. In 1924 Hopkins[1] made a study of the intelligence of continuation school pupils in Massachusetts and their reasons for leaving the regular school. He concludes the following: that low grade intelligence is an important factor in accounting for the reasons why pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen leave school to go to work; that information received from children regarding their reasons for leaving school is unreliable; that the two usual reasons, "economic" and "genuine desire to work" are of little significance; and that inability to do the regular work of the regular school is far the more important factor. Hopkins' investigation is significant because the type of pupil studied is comparable to the type in this study. The same general characteristics are present. Low grade intelligence and desire to leave school because of inability to do the work seem to go hand in

1. Hopkins, L. Thomas, The Intelligence of Continuation School Children in Massachusetts, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1924, 132 pages.

hand.

Goldberger[1] who made a study of continuation school populations in Pennsylvania wrote:

> The average I.Q. of a continuation school is likely to be low or high in proportion as its percentage of factory or agricultural workers is high or low. A greater proportion of factory workers means lower I.Q.; a smaller proportion means higher I.Q.

Goldberger's study had to do with pupils who were actually employed at the time in factories and agricultural pursuits and as there are now no pupils employed in factories in New Bedford because the law prohibits that kind of employment for those under sixteen years of age, there is no basis for that statement as far as this group is concerned. Furthermore, the greater number of workers in New Bedford are factory workers and they contribute a large percentage to the higher I.Q. classes.

With regard to the causes for leaving school Goldberger[2] has this to say:

> Whenever causes for leaving full-time school have been investigated, behind the 'face saving' one of economic necessity, there is usually found a more genuine one. Pupils leave school to enter employment oftenest because of a dissatisfaction with school conditions. They have become too large for their class; they dislike some one or all of their studies; they dislike the teacher or principal. All too often they

1. Goldberger, A.M., Variability in Continuation School Populations, New York, Teachers College, Columbia University Contributions to Education, No. 454, 1931.

2. Ibid., p.44.

> have lost faith in the value of education, and it is very rare to find the younger ones entering occupations which in themselves reveal the need for further education.

In 1920, The Department of Vocational Education of Massachusetts[1] issued a bulletin on compulsory continuation schools. Under "Reasons For Leaving School" the bulletin states that a study showed that forty per cent of young workers leave school for reasons related to economic conditions in the home, while sixty per cent leave school because of reasons which may be related to conditions in the school.

Cox and Duff[2] believe that most employed youth leave school because they have not got along in school and because they see no value in continuing therein. Concerning transfers from the regular school to continuation school they say:

> Such transfers have too frequently been requested or recommended on negative grounds; the pupil is not satisfied with what he is getting and wants to change to something else (often anything else) in the hope that it will be less disappointing; or the teacher asserts that the pupil is not adapted to or not capable of the work of his class and urges that the pupil try something else--sometimes anything else so long as he gets rid of him.[3]

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1. Massachusetts Department of Education, Compulsory Continuation Schools, Bulletin of the Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education, Boston, Printing Department, 1920, p.7.

2. Cox, P.W.L., and Duff, J.C., Guidance By The Classroom Teacher, New York, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1938, p.481.

3. Ibid., p.487.

Greenwood[1] made a study of persistence of pupils in evening high school in which he placed little reliability on the answers of both parents and pupils on financial inability as a reason for discontinuance. He believes that many parents take their children from school as soon as they are permitted by law, not because they really need the money, but either because they are unwilling to make the necessary sacrifice or because they do not consider the education worth the trouble. This may have been true in times when work for minors was plentiful but today work for those under sixteen is scarce and not too remunerative, so the writer believes this reason not valid now. However, some parents think they cannot afford more than the education required by law.

Greenwood[2] says:

> Often the children are warned of the event long in advance and this is reflected in their attitude toward the school. Such parents are apt to say that the child could have gone through school if he had really wanted to, or if he had done better work; but they do not add that they tried to get him to continue or to do better work in school.

Another point Greenwood[3] brings out is that financial ability can only be determined on the basis of the standards of

1. Greenwood, Walter B., A Study of Persistence of Public Evening High School Students, A Thesis in Education, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1932.

2. Ibid., p.231.

3. Ibid., p.100.

the family in question, and not by comparison with some other family.

> Evidences of comfort and luxury in the home are not necessarily indications of the fact that the children would have better opportunity to continue in school than would children coming from homes of poorer appearance--it might point to the opposite.

Visits to the homes of these girls quite often bear out that fact.

Fear[1] investigated the reasons for leaving school of Connecticut C.C.C. youth and found that the reasons could be grouped in two categories, namely, "Maladjustment to School Situation" and "Economic Causes." Although the group Fear investigated was older than the continuation group, it is otherwise very closely related to it and no doubt included many former continuation school boys. Fear found the interview to be a fairly reliable source of information. His conclusion that economic causes do not constitute the most important reasons for school elimination is significant.

One of the most comprehensive studies of youth and its problems was made by Bell[2] when he was in charge of an investigation of the conditions and attitudes of young people in Maryland between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four. With his

1. Fear, R.A., "Why Connecticut C.C.C. Youth Left School," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Boston, Boston University, 1940.

2. Bell, Howard M., Youth Tell Their Story, Washington, D.C., American Council on Education, 1938.

representative group of older youth, it was found that the economic reason was responsible for the greater amount of elimination. In the section, "Youth in School," he states:

> Our data reveal that with several groups of youth unsatisfactory school adjustment--by which is meant a combination of lack of interest, disciplinary difficulties, and too difficult subjects--is a more general reason for leaving school than lack of family funds. So far as the youth's own statements of why he left school can be accepted as the real reasons, all this indicates that for large groups of youth the schools simply have failed to function as a general force.

The Massachusetts Youth Study[1] gives first place to the socio-economic reason as a reason for elimination. This study was made for the purpose of promoting opportunities for young people. It is another representative study of older youth and not entirely applicable to this study.

Jones[2] says that the school itself is found to be a large factor in school leaving but that causes for leaving are very many and extremely complicated and that no one cause in itself was sufficient to produce the result.

Each year the New Bedford School Department[3] publishes a

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1. Massachusetts Youth Study, Department of Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Boston, Wright and Potter Printing Company, 1941.

2. Jones, Arthur J., Principles of Guidance, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1934.

3. New Bedford School Department, Annual Report, New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1924, p.49.

report of the School Committee and Superintendent. In the 1924 report the director of the Continuation School Department said:

> Twenty per cent of the boys and girls in the New Bedford Continuation School in September 1924 gave dislike for school as the reason for leaving the full-time school.-----I believe that this dislike for school is very real and is a vital factor in removing pupils from the full-time school. It is based largely upon a lack of interest in the school program. Most of it can be removed by providing a more diversified program.

In the 1931 report[1] it was stated that the great number of pupils enrolled in junior high schools made it impossible for them to provide special classes for pupils with special problems, so these pupils were transferred to the continuation school when their educational welfare would be served by such a transfer.

According to the 1946 report[2] dislike for the traditional day school program has always been the major excuse for desiring to leave school when the legal school requirements have been accomplished.

Summary. All research seems to bear testimony to the fact that large numbers of pupils leave the regular school not so much because of financial necessity as for reasons connected directly with the school system or with the pupils themselves,

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1. New Bedford School Department, Annual Report, New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1931, p.193.

2. New Bedford School Department, Annual Report, New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1946, p.89.

such as dislike of school because of lack of success, and inability to do the prescribed work.

Quest for Comparisons

Is the New Bedford Continuation School group of girls comparable to these groups upon which previous research has been made? Are the girls in the continuation school overage for their grade attainment? Have they met with failures in their school careers? Is the I.Q. an important factor in the non-adjustment of the girls to the regular school situation? Was the need which was established before the girl was allowed to leave school one of economic necessity or did it have some relationship to a selective factor on the part of the pupil or school? Are dislike for the regular school and the intelligence quotient vital factors in placing girls in continuation school?

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND SOURCES OF DATA

Procedures

Entrance requirements. No girl enters the continuation school without first having received a working certificate from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. In order to receive this working certificate a need of some kind has to be established by the girl and a promise of employment has to be signed by her employer and the attendance officer. When this certificate has been issued by the Superintendent of Schools a copy of it is sent to the continuation school. The writer upon receipt of this copy visits the girl's place of employment and tells her when to report to continuation school for orientation and assignment to the particular class suited to her and to her employer's purpose as well.

Initial visits. On this initial visit to the place of employment which may be the girl's own home, the home where she is employed as a domestic, a store, or a hospital, the writer secures information which is useful in cataloging the girl. In the past year more than 90 per cent of these initial visits were to the girl's home and the visitor was enabled to get a good picture of home conditions, attitudes of both parent and girl

toward school and work, and ideals of the girl and her parents. Facts and impressions are recorded and filed.

On the girl's first visit to the continuation school a life history card is made for her from the cards which accompany her on her transfer from the regular school and from answers she gives to prescribed questions.

General vocational class. Girls enter the continuation school from two sources, namely, the regular school and the general vocational class. This general vocational class was established in cooperation with the Trustees of the New Bedford Vocational School to meet the needs of youth between the ages of fourteen and sixteen who have completed the sixth grade, who do not have to leave the regular school to work, but who are not interested in the courses provided there. To enter this general vocational class girls must make application through their parents for admittance and the application must be approved by the principal of the regular school. These girls attend this class full time until they are sixteen years old. Often, however, before that time arrives they secure working certificates through the efforts of the placement department of the continuation school in which case they become continuation school pupils. During the time they are in the general vocational class home visits are regularly made and information pertaining to them, their parents, home surroundings, ideals or lack of them, is

recorded and filed.

Collection of Data

Data for this study of continuation school girls in New Bedford have been collected from original records from the regular school, personal interviews with pupil, parent, and employer, information from attendance officers, school nurse, and from other continuation teachers who follow up these girls and from other school officials.

Treatment of Data

The data are then carefully arranged and analyzed for the purpose of making tables of significant aspects of this particular selected group of fourteen to sixteen year old girls. It is hoped that the analysis of these data will reveal characteristics of this group of girls and their reasons for leaving the regular school.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Some Characteristics of Group Studied

In an article entitled, "The Last Grade Completed As an Index of Intellectual Level," Lorge[1] says that authorities have felt that median years of school completed may be an index of the cultural level of communities and limited tests indicate that association between grade completed and measured intelligence is high. If that is so then this New Bedford group would be responsible for labeling New Bedford's cultural level as low.

Table I. Age and Grade Attainment of Group on Entering Continuation School

Age	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Totals
14	34	13	5	2	0	54
15	15	8	14	15	1	53
Totals	49	21	19	17	1	107

This table shows the regular grades completed by 107 continuation school girls. Forty-nine or nearly 46 per cent completed the minimum essential only, that is, grade six;

1. Lorge, Irving, "The Last Grade Completed As an Index of Intellectual Level," School and Society, November 28, 1942.

twenty-one or 19 per cent completed grade seven; nineteen or 17 per cent completed grade eight; 16 per cent completed grade nine; and only 1 per cent completed grade ten. This table is significant because it shows that the greater number of girls in continuation school this year left the regular school as soon as permitted by law to do so. It is interesting to note that in 1925 when there were 763 girls enrolled in continuation school 50.6 per cent entered with sixth grade attainment only. None of the forty-nine sixth graders had more than the required passing mark for this grade which might be an indication of difficulty with school subjects.

The Otis intelligence quotient for this group ranged from 62 to 120. The 62 I.Q. was a special case with special permission of the Superintendent of Schools to attend continuation school one half day a week. The next lowest I.Q. was 67. The arithmetic mean for this group was found to be 95.73 and the standard deviation 11.21.

Table II. Distribution of Cases According to I.Q. Class

Otis S.A. I.Q.

I.Q.	Classification	Number of Cases	Per cent of Group
128-	Very Superior	0	0.0
120-127	Superior	1	.9
111-119	Bright Normal	8	7.5
91-110	Normal	66	61.7
80-90	Dull Normal	22	20.6
66-79	Borderline	9	8.4
65-	Defective	1	.9
Totals		107	100.0%

This table and Figure 1 show that sixty-six or 61.7 per cent of this group of continuation girls were of normal intelligence and only nine or 8.4 per cent were better than normal. All of the girls who were above normal had completed the eighth grade or higher. One eighth-grade graduate was found in the border-line classification and two eighth-grade girls and one ninth-grade girl was found in the dull-normal group. This seems to indicate that there is a high association between school grade completed and measured intelligence as Hopkins[1] says.

1. Op. cit.

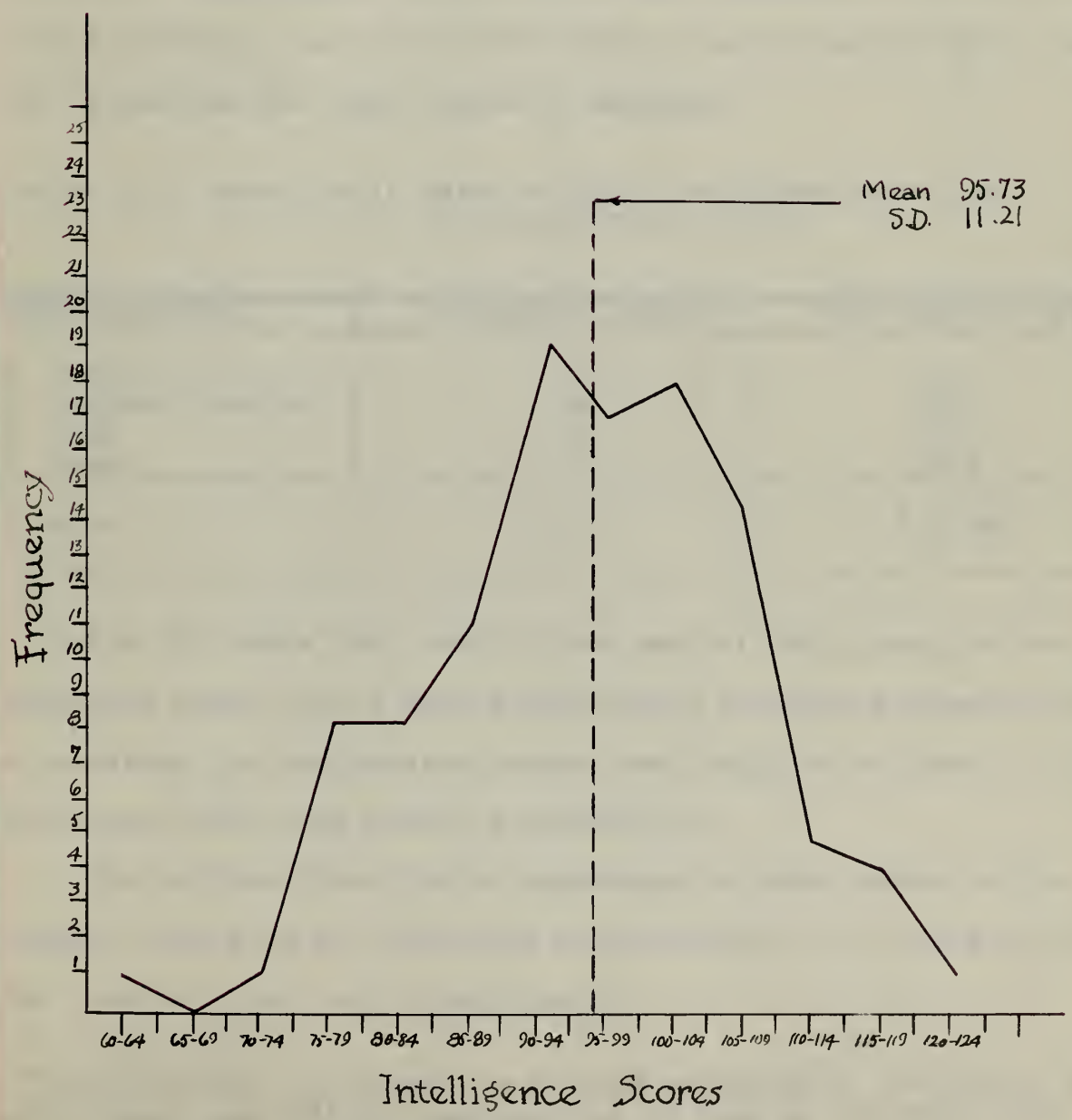

Figure 1. Distribution of cases as to I.Q.

Inability to succeed in regular school work is considered an influential factor in causing students to leave school. Scholarship marks for the last grade attended by these girls show that more than half of them were in the "Fair minus" group or lower. Scholarship* marks do not lend themselves to perfect interpretation, due to the fact that not all schools within the one system use the same system of marking.

Table III. Scholarship Marks of Last Grade Completed for 107 Continuation Girls

Marks Reported	Number of Cases	Per cent of Group
E Failure	17	15.9
D Minimum Passing	14	13.1
F Fair	66	61.7
G Good	10	9.3
Totals	107	100.0%

Table III shows that over 15 per cent of this group of continuation school girls were acknowledged failures academically on entering the continuation school and only ten of the 107 or 9 per cent were good pupils academically.

The failures that girls experience in their years in the regular school as an indication of inability to do the work of the regular school are significant.

*Scholarship status was determined by teachers' estimates of achievement and ability supplemented by results of daily work and a varied testing program.

Table IV. Terms[a] Failed in Regular School by Members of This Group

Number of Failures	Number of Girls	Per cent of Group
0	20	18.7
1	21	19.6
2	25	23.4
3	18	16.8
4	11	10.3
5	2	1.9
6	4	3.7
7	2	1.9
8	1	.9
9	2	1.9
10	1	.9
Totals	107	100.0%

a. A term failed is a half-year repeated.

Table IV shows that numerous failures* have marked the passage through the grades of these 107 continuation school girls, only twenty or eighteen per cent of whom had no failures. Only two of these twenty were sixth graders; two completed the seventh grade, four the eighth, ten the ninth and one the tenth grade. With two exceptions all who had four or more failures left the regular school on completion of the sixth grade. Since twenty girls had no failures, the remainder or eighty-seven shared 253 failures, averaging two and nine-tenths failures per girl.

*Failure was determined by teachers' estimates of achievement and ability supplemented by results of daily work and a varied testing program.

Table V. Failures of 107 Continuation School Girls According to Grades

Grades	Number of Failures	Per cent per Grade
1	21	8.3
2	36	14.2
3	16	6.3
4	59	23.3
5	54	21.4
6	41	16.2
7	13	5.1
8	8	3.2
9	2	.8
10	3	1.2
Totals	253	100.0%

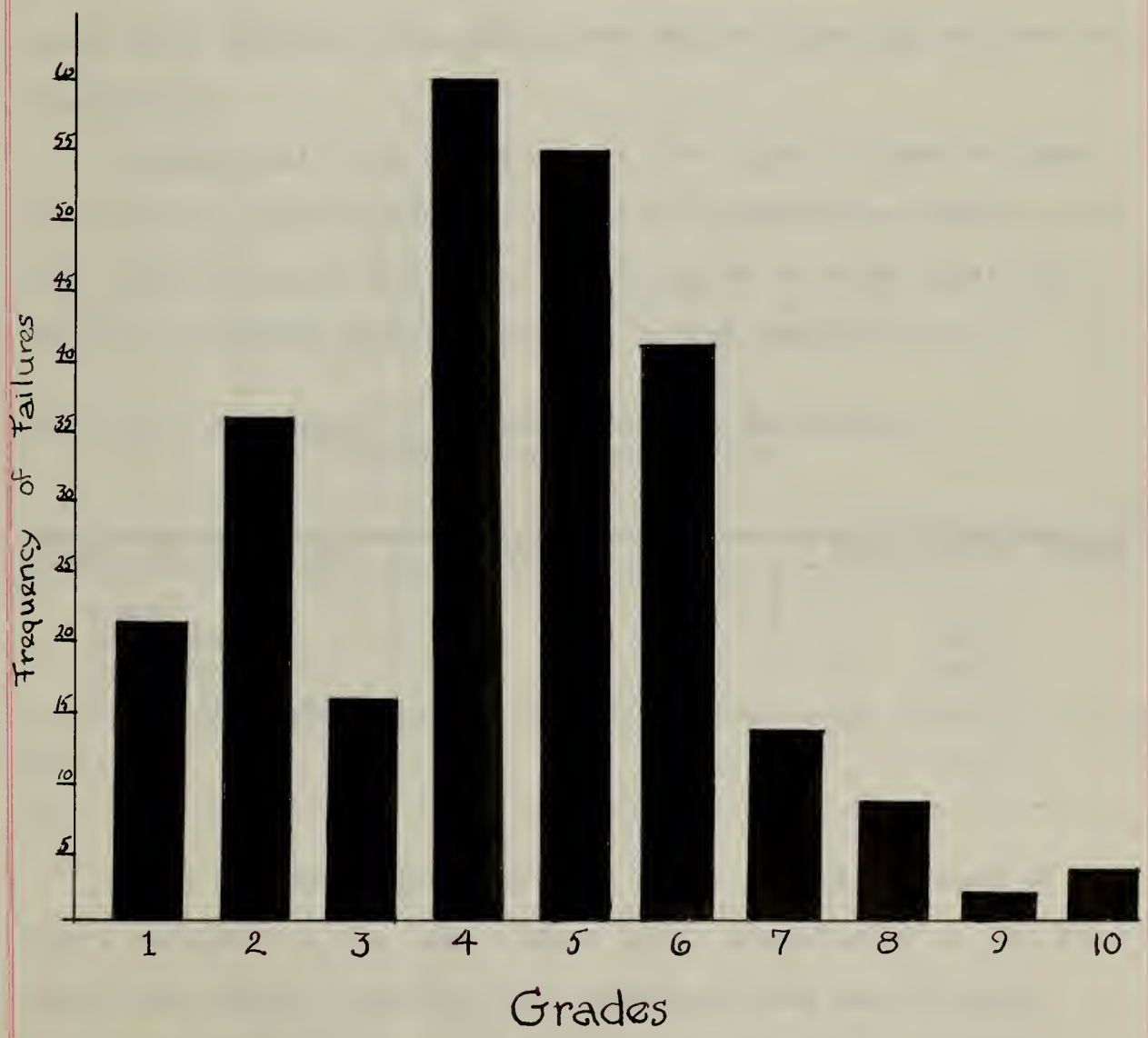

Figure 2. Failures of this Group according to grades.

Table V and Figure 2 show that the greater number of failures occur in grades four, five, and six as far as girls attending continuation school this year are concerned. These figures tend to refute the statement so often made by administrators that promotional procedure is so flexible that pupils reach their goal through adjustment and not through failure and repetition.

Frequent shifting of addresses and school districts mark the previous school life of these 107 continuation school girls. This shifting might well have something to do with their inability to achieve greater success in the regular school.

Table VI. Frequency of School Transfers Among This Continuation School Group

Number of Transfers	Number of Cases	Per cent of Group
None	9	8.4
One-Three	45	60.7
Four-Seven	31	29.0
Eight or More	2	1.9
Totals	107	100.0%

Table VI shows that only nine girls or 8.4 per cent of the group remained in the same school until transferred to the continuation school, that 60.7 per cent had from one to three transfers, and 29 per cent had from four to seven transfers.

Of the two who had eight or more transfers, one had eight and the other had fifteen.

Of the 107 girls studied twenty-four had the same address throughout attendance at regular school and one had as many as fifteen different addresses. Frequent moving cannot help but interfere with school progress. The following table shows frequency of change of address for this group.

Table VII. Frequency of Change of Address Among This Continuation School Group

Number of Addresses	Number of Girls	Per cent of Group
One	24	22.4
Two-Four	61	57.0
Five-Seven	12	11.2
Eight or More	10	9.4
Totals	107	100.0%

Table VIII. Position of Girl in the Family Group

Position	Number of Girls	Per cent of Group
First	38	35.5
Second	19	17.8
Third	18	16.8
Fourth	8	7.5
Fifth	8	7.5
Sixth	8	7.5
Seventh or Greater	8	7.5
Totals	107	100.0%

Table IX. Number of Children in Families of Group Studied

Number of Children	Number of Cases	Per cent of Group
One	3	2.8
Two	13	12.1
Three	14	13.1
Four	20	18.7
Five	22	20.6
Six	12	11.2
Seven	8	7.5
Eight	5	4.7
Nine to Fourteen	10	9.3
Totals	107	100.0%

Table VIII shows the position of the continuation school girl in the family and Table IX shows the size of the families from which these continuation school girls come. Both position in the family and size of family are considered by many to have a bearing on the dropping out of pupils from the regular school. It is interesting to note that 35.5 per cent of this continuation group were first children whereas in all this group only three or 2.8 per cent were only children. Three families had nine children, one had ten, three had eleven, two had twelve, and in one family there were fourteen living children! The average number of children per family for this group is five. Bell[1] in his study found the average to be 4.7 which was

1. Op. cit., p.22.

considered high and a potent factor in determining the economic level of the home. The Bureau of the Census[1] reports the median size of the family in Massachusetts as 3.25.

Nationality of descent. With one exception all the girls in this study were born in the United States, in fact, ninety-two of the 107 were born in New Bedford, eight of the others in surrounding towns and cities, and the rest in nearby states. The one exception was born in Portugal.

Table X. Nationality of Descent of 107 Continuation School Girls

Nationality	Number of Girls	Per cent of Group
Portuguese	52	48.6
French	25	23.4
English	14	13.1
Cape Verdean	8	7.5
Polish	3	2.8
Swedish	1	.9
Norwegian	1	.9
Austrian	1	.9
Syrian	1	.9
Italian	1	.9
Totals	107	100.0%

According to the latest Census Report[2] the foreign born

1. Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 68th Edition, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1947.

2. Op. cit.

white population of New Bedford is made up of 33.3 per cent Portuguese, 16.2 per cent from Portugal and 17.1 per cent from the Azores. English come next with 20.7 per cent and French follow with 20 per cent. In the make up of this continuation school group Portuguese lead with French second and English third and the other percentages are fairly representative of the population of New Bedford as a whole. Those of Portuguese descent seem to drop out in a little larger proportion and English less. It is interesting to note that seldom does a Jewish girl leave the regular school to enter continuation school.

The broken home is considered by authorities to have a powerful influence on the educational status of youth and the facts as represented in Table XI would indicate that it might be significant in this study. A girl is considered to come from a broken home if one parent is dead and if parents are divorced or separated for some reason.

Table XI. Incidence of Broken Homes Among 107 Continuation School Girls

Status of Home	Number of Cases	Per cent of Group
Unbroken	64	59.8
Broken	43	40.2
Totals	107	100.0%

Table XI shows an unusually high percentage of broken homes among this group. Forty-three or 40.2 per cent of the homes were broken by death or other unfortunate circumstances whose effects might well be significant in this study. Sixteen or 37.2 per cent of the broken homes were due to death of one or both parents, which leaves the incidence of separation or divorce still much too high.

The bi-lingual home is considered to operate very often against success in school work and the girls in this group to an extent are members of families where a language other than English is spoken a greater part of the time, despite the fact that in nearly half of the cases both parents were born in this country.

Table XII. Number of Cases and Percentage of Bi-lingual Homes

Language of the Home	Number of Girls	Per cent of Group
English only	26	24.3
Bi-lingual	81	75.7
Totals	107	100.0%

Table XII shows that in twenty-six or 24.3 per cent of the cases English is the only language of the home while in eighty-one or 75.7 per cent of the cases another language besides English is spoken to a greater or lesser extent. This could

well be a handicap to success in school.

Table XIII. National Origin of Parents of Group Studied

National Origin of Parents	Number of Cases	Per cent of Total
Both Native Born	51	47.7
One Foreign Born	29	27.1
Both Foreign Born	27	25.2
Totals	107	100.0%

Table XIII indicates that in 47.7 per cent of the 107 cases studied both parents were born in this country, yet in only 24.3 per cent of the homes as Table XII indicates was English the only language spoken.

Leisure Time Activities

In a check up of the leisure time activities of this group of continuation school pupils it was found that frequent movie attendance was very common-the number one recreational activity; reading came next, with listening to the radio and dancing following in that order. Seldom was any form of educational activity engaged in in leisure time.

Reasons For Leaving School

One hundred and seven girls left the regular school to attend the continuation school in the school year from September

1947 to June 1948. Fifty-six of this group left the regular school on permits issued by the certificating office of the New Bedford School Department. Fifty-one left the regular school to attend the general vocational class, a department of the continuation school where they would attend just as many hours as they attended in the regular school. After the proper amount of training in this class the girls secured housework or child care jobs through the placement department of the school and thus became continuation school pupils for as long as they remained on their jobs and until they became sixteen years of age. From this it is clear that fifty-one or 47.7 per cent of the continuation school girls in New Bedford this school year left the regular school for reasons connected with the school itself or for reasons connected with their inability to do the work of the regular school and not for any economic reason. In fact, attendance in the general vocational class was more costly for them as more money for car fares, lunches, and materials for trade classes was required.

Of the fifty-six who left the regular school on permits from the school department forty-six were granted home permits and ten were granted employment certificates. Of these employment certificates one was for work in a laundry, three were for store work and six were for domestic service jobs. Most of the

jobs of the general vocational group secured through the placement department of the continuation school were domestic service or child care jobs with an occasional job in a fruit store or as a maid in a hospital.

Table XIV. Initial Jobs of 107 Continuation School Girls

Kind of Job	Number of Cases	Per cent of Group
Home Permit	57	53.2
Domestic Service	34	31.8
Store Clerk	9	8.4
Laundry work	2	1.9
Hospital Work	2	1.9
Waitress	2	1.9
Bakery Clerk	1	.9
Totals	107	100.0%

Table XIV shows the types of employment entered into by this group of continuation school girls in New Bedford. As has been stated before fifty-one obtained jobs after being enrolled in the general vocational class of the continuation school. The reason given by regular school authorities for transfer of these pupils was in most cases "for the good of the pupil," which is none too enlightening. For those given home permits the reason for leaving is recorded as "needed at home." Both of these reasons might embrace many facts, not at first apparent, which have operated to terminate the pupils' formal education.

Table XV. Reasons Given by Girls for Leaving School

Reasons	Number of Cases	Per cent of Group
Parents needed help at home	57	53.3
Failing	20	18.7
Disliked school	13	12.1
Wanted to work	10	9.3
Feeling of completion	5	4.7
To support self	1	.9
Personal illness	1	.9
Totals	107	100.0%

Table XV shows that 53.3 per cent of the cases established a need as a reason for leaving school. On the face of it this would indicate that the socio-economic reason was the outstanding factor in eliminating these girls from the regular school. Visits to the home and interviews with parents show that in over half of these cases the need was not such as to deprive the girl of more regular school education had the girl shown any inclination towards staying in school. In that many cases parents were willing for them to continue. The girls themselves admitted that they were glad of a chance to leave as they did not like school. Only 9.3 per cent gave dislike as a reason.

Only twenty girls or 18.7 per cent of the group gave failing as a cause of elimination. The fact that these 107 girls averaged 2.9 failures per girl would indicate that inability to

do the work was a more vital factor than it appears to be in this table.

No pupil gave disciplinary trouble as a reason for leaving the regular school, but study of these girls, and conferences with parents and attendance officers because of their apparent lack of self-control and other desirable character traits have brought to light that ten, if not more, of these girls were definite disciplinary problems in the regular school. These facts would indicate that the reasons as originally given for leaving the regular school are not always reliable. It is safe to say that with this group lack of interest in regular school and inability to do the work of the regular school are more vital factors in elimination than is the socio-economic reason. Another fact that would tend to prove this statement is shown in the following table.

Table XVI. Grade Last Attended and Grade Should Have Attended By Normal Progression

Age	Number of Girls	Grade Attended	Grade Should Have Attended	Correctly Placed	Per cent
14	34	6	9	0	0.
14	13	7	9	0	0.
14	5	8	9	0	0.
14	2	9	9	2	1.9
15	15	6	10	0	0.
15	8	7	10	0	0.
15	14	8	10	0	0.
15	15	9	10	0	0.
15	1	10	10	1	.9
Totals	107	--	--	3	2.8

Table XVI shows that only 2.8 per cent of the 107 continuation school girls had experienced success which would be normal for girls entering school at six years of age. This is another indication that maladjustment to the regular school situation is very vital in sending these girls to continuation school.

Some of the verbatim reasons given by girls after they had been in continuation school some time follow:

> I left school because I thought that I would prefer to go to work and buy my own clothes. Furthermore, I was tired of homework.

> I left school because I was put here. I was absent too much and was not good in my school work.

> I didn't have any interest in school and besides I wanted to help the family.

I left the other school because I didn't like it, and the work wasn't my type.

The reason why I didn't want to continue in regular school is because I wanted to learn how to cook, sew, and nurse. I didn't like to do English and I wasn't interested in school work.

I came here for a nursing course. I could not get it in the other school.

The real reason why I left the other school is because I didn't like it and I was going to be in the seventh grade for the third time and I was glad to come here because it sounded interesting and I would learn how to sew and take care of people who are sick.

I left high school because I wanted to go to work.

I completed the ninth grade. I discontinued going to regular school because I was away when school started in September and it would be quite hard to make up two months of schooling. I may return to high school next September.

The last grade I attended was the ninth at Vocational High School. The reason for my leaving was that my father was in St. Luke's Hospital and was unable to pay my board. I didn't want to depend on sisters because they are planning to be married and they want to save as much as possible so I left school and went to work. Now I pay my board and buy my own clothing.

I quit New Bedford High School because I didn't care for the work and I didn't like the French teacher I had. I was failing in three subjects because I didn't like school and was absent very often.

I left school because I had an idea I wasn't going to pass the grade. So I thought I might as well go to a school that taught me something.

The real reason why I left the regular school was that I wasn't good in history and geography and I didn't like it.

I left school because we have quite a large family and my mother needs me at home.

Plans for the Future

One girl of this group hoped to be able to attend a business school when she became sixteen, two wanted to study hairdressing, one was interested in nursing, another in dress design, a few wanted store work but the majority intended to go to work in a factory when they became sixteen years of age and would leave continuation school.

Recapitulation

This chapter indicates that not one but many factors, sometimes hard to discern, influence the school progress of these continuation school girls and appear to operate in terminating their formal education.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

By means of personal interviews with pupils, at school and in the home, visits with parents at home, and by studying school records and reports of attendance officers and other teachers data were gathered to show the characteristics of 107 continuation school girls in New Bedford and their reasons for becoming members of this school.

This data may be summarized as follows:

107 girls were enrolled in continuation school this year, fifty-four of whom were fourteen years old and fifty-three were fifteen years old at time of enrollment.

Forty-nine girls completed grade six; twenty-one completed grade seven; nineteen completed grade eight; seventeen completed grade nine; and one completed grade ten.

The mean I.Q. of this group was found to be 95.73 and the standard deviation 11.21.

Inability to succeed in regular school work is characteristic of this group as indicated by the low scholarship marks and the great number of failures experienced by them in their

passage through the grades.

Frequent shifting of school districts and homes characterize this group.

Most of these girls come from fairly large families, the average number per family being five.

Although all but one of these girls were American born, most of them come from bi-lingual homes, despite the fact that in 47.7 per cent of the cases both parents were native born.

The incidence of broken homes was high among this group.

As a general thing home conditions and economic status were fairly good.

"For the good of the pupil" and "needed at home" were the reasons most often given by school authorities for the transfer of these girls to continuation school.

"Needed to help at home" was most often given by the pupils themselves as the reason for transfering from the regular school to continuation school.

Most girls could have stayed on in the regular school had they so desired.

Conclusions

The conclusions arrived at by this study are these:

Continuation school girls in this group are over age for their grade attainment; they have experienced much retardation

in their regular school life; their mean I.Q. while not high is not so low as might be expected, therefore, it would seem that the regular school has not met the needs and interests of this particular group of girls. The fact too, that nearly one-half of all these girls left the regular school to enroll in the general vocational department of the continuation school, a full-time department, would indicate that economic need was not present but that the regular school was not meeting the needs of this particular group.

If pupils in the regular school are supposed to reach their goal through adjustment and not through failure and repetition, then this particular group has not achieved its goal.

The real reasons for these girls leaving the regular school may be found in factors concerning maladjustment of some sort to the school and its failure to recognize individual differences.

Labor laws and state laws have greatly reduced the number of pupils attending continuation school in New Bedford yet 107 girls have found a reason of some sort for leaving before they reached their sixteenth birthday. It has been suggested that many girls who could and would profit by homemaking work in this school remain in the grades hoping to secure a grammar school diploma.

The New Bedford Continuation School this year has made arrangements whereby grammar school certificates will be issued to those members of the school who have earned a sufficient number of credits in homemaking and academic work.

Kvaraceus[1] says, "There is need of more effective guidance and screening of those pupils who attempt adjustments in the vocational school."

1. Kvaraceus, W. C., Juvenile Delinquency And the School, New York, World Book Company, 1945. 337 pp.

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CHAPTER VI

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Limitations

This study has applied to just one year's group of girl enrollees in the New Bedford Continuation School numbering 107. It is therefore a selected group and not representative of fourteen and fifteen year old drop outs as a whole, and no comparisons have been made with any similar group.

Further Research

Research into the earlier difficulties experienced by this group might suggest changes in the regular school program which would aid others in achieving a greater amount of success. A study of all those who have left the regular schools of the state to attend continuation schools, trade schools, and prevocational schools would be helpful in throwing light on the school situation and on the attitudes and aptitudes of the under sixteen drop out population.

Further follow-up study of these 107 girls within five years would show whether or not they have been deprived of their rightful heritage, which is well expressed under General Aims of Education in Passaic.[1]

1. Ibid., p.271.

Public education aims to help each child to:

1. Prepare to earn a living
2. Live a healthful life
3. Use his leisure time beneficially and enjoyably
4. Live the democratic way of life
5. Love his country
6. Formulate a philosophy of life founded on spiritual values.

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APPENDIX

DATA GATHERING FORM

Family data

Name _____ Address _____

Date of birth _____ Place of birth _____

Father's name _____ Place of birth _____

Occupation _____

Mother's maiden name _____ Place of birth _____

Occupation _____

Citizenship: Pupil _____

Father _____

Mother _____

Languages spoken in the home _____

_____

Type of parental relation:

Divorced _____ Separated _____ Step-parents _____

Foster Home _____ Parents living _____

Number of children in family _____

Number of brothers _____ Number of sisters _____

Number of brothers older _____ Number of sisters older _____

Number of brothers younger _____ Number of sisters younger _____

Brothers and sisters working _____

Brothers and sisters in school _____

Pre-school children _____

Data Gathering Form (continued)

School data

School previously attended_____ Grade completed_____

Number of other schools attended_____

Number of different addresses while in school_____

Number of failures_____ Grades failed_____

Age on entering school_____ Age on leaving school_____

I.Q._____ Scholarship Last Grade_____

Conduct_____ Attendance_____ Health_____

Attitudes:

Pupil's towards school____ Parents' toward school____

Pupil's towards home_____ Parents' toward child_____

Pupil's toward other pupils____

Interests:

Leisure time activities_____

Strongest interest_____

Plan for future_____

Data Gathering Form (continued)

Reasons For Leaving School (Pupils)

I. Why did you leave the regular school?

(Check the answer or answers applying to you.)

1. Had to work _____

2. Wanted to work _____

3. So mother could work _____

4. To help mother at home _____

5. To take full charge of the home, _____
(mother dead)

6. Couldn't afford to stay in school _____

lunches _____

car-fare _____

dress _____

7. Didn't like school at all _____

8. Didn't like some subjects _____

9. Didn't like the teacher _____

10. Didn't like the pupils _____

11. Too much homework _____

12. Had difficulties with principal and/or _____
teachers

13. Advised to leave _____

14. Other reasons _____ Name them: _____

_____

Data Gathering Form (continued)

Parents' Reasons

1. Did you want your daughter to leave school?
2. Did you think she had had enough education?
3. Did you think she was wasting her time in school?
4. Do you believe in more education for girls?
5. Would you have allowed your daughter to stay in school if she so desired?
6. Would you allow your daughter to return to regular school now?
7. Why did she really leave the regular school?
8. What plans do you have for her future?

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