

1997

The Practice of 7th and 8th Grade Retention in Illinois Public Schools

Steve Bianchetta

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Educational Administration](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Bianchetta, Steve, "The Practice of 7th and 8th Grade Retention in Illinois Public Schools" (1997). *Masters Theses*. 1803.
<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/1803>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

THESIS REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates (who have written formal theses)

SUBJECT: Permission to Reproduce Theses

The University Library is receiving a number of request from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow these to be copied.

PLEASE SIGN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university or the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

Author's Signature

Date

11-27-97

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University **NOT** allow my thesis to be reproduced because:

Author's Signature

Date

The Practice of 7th and 8th Grade Retention
In Illinois Public Schools

BY

Steve Bianchetta

1957 -

FIELD EXPERIENCE

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
SPECIALIST IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1997

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS FIELD EXPERIENCE BE ACCEPTED AS
FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE.

11-27-97
DATE

ADVISOR

12-9-97
DATE

DEPARTMENT HEAD

Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the practice of grade retention in Illinois public schools with a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of at least 100 students and a district student population of less than 1700 students. A sample population of schools was obtained by dividing Illinois into three geographic areas and randomly selecting 30 schools from each area. The northern area consisted of schools north of Interstate 80. The central area consisted of schools between Interstate 80 and Interstate 70. The southern area consisted of schools south of Interstate 70.

Principals in each of the sample schools were surveyed and asked to supply information concerning the number of 7th and 8th grade students their schools retained during the 1995-1996 school year, and the success of these students during the 1996-1997 school year in terms of grades earned, attendance, and school behavior. The principals were also asked to report information about the existence and efficacy of formal intervention programs for retained students in their schools.

It was found that 51% of the schools in the sample retained no students during the 1995-1996 school year. However, the practice of retention at 7th and 8th grades was relatively common. Forty-nine percent of the schools that participated in the study retained at least one student during the 1996-1997 school year. Thirty-two percent of the schools retained at least 1% of their 7th and 8th grade enrollment, and 12% of the schools retained more than 3%.

Building principals reported that over 40% of retained students showed improvement in each performance criterion during the second year at the same grade level, and only a small percentage of students were perceived to perform worse during the same period of time.

It was determined that fewer than one in three schools had formal

intervention programs in place to assist retained students. It was found that schools with formal intervention programs were less likely to retain students than schools without formal programs. Also, a greater percentage of retained students in schools with formal intervention programs were perceived to show improvement in grades and attendance than retained students in schools without such programs. The most common intervention programs to assist retained students were summer school, faculty tutoring, before and after school programs, counseling, and classroom accommodations.

It was recommended that school personnel consider retention coupled with formal intervention services as an option when working with students who fail to meet the criteria for entry into the next grade level. It was also recommended that the study be replicated in other locations to corroborate the findings.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Overview of the Problem..... 1

 Background and Significance.....2

 Research Questions.....3

 Definitions of Terms..... 4

 Assumptions.....5

 Delimitations.....5

Chapter 2 Rationale and Review of the Literature and Research..... 8

 Rationale..... 8

 Review of the Literature and Research..... 8

Chapter 3 Design of the Study..... 12

 Sample and Population..... 13

 Instrumentation and Data Collection 13

 Data Analysis..... 14

Chapter 4 Results of the Study..... 16

 Overview..... 16

 Surveys Returned..... 17

 Results for Research Question 1..... 17

 Results for Research Question 2..... 19

 Results for Research Question 3.....20

 Results for Research Question 4.....21

 Results for Research Question 5.....21

 Results for Research Question 6.....22

 Results for Research Question 7.....24

 Results for Research Question 8.....24

 Results for Research Question 9.....26

 Results for Research Question 10.....27

Results for Research Question 11.....	28
Chapter 5 Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	30
Findings.....	31
Conclusions.....	34
Recommendations	37
References.....	39
Appendix A: Cover Letter.....	41
Appendix B: Retention Survey.....	42

List of Tables

Table 1. The Prevalence of 7th-8th Grade Retention During the 1995-96 School Year.....	18
Table 2. Mean Retention Rate of Participating Schools.....	18
Table 3. Schools That Utilized Retention by Geographic Area.....	19
Table 4. Mean Retention Rate of Schools by Geographic Area.....	20
Table 5. Retained Students' Grades in the Year Following Retention.....	20
Table 6. Retained Students' Attendance in the Year Following Retention.....	21
Table 7. Retained Students' School Behavior in the Year Following Retention.....	22
Table 8. The Prevalence of Formal Intervention Programs for Retained Students.....	22
Table 9. Schools With Formal Intervention Programs by Geographic Area.....	23
Table 10. Formal Intervention Programs in Twenty-One Schools.....	23
Table 11. Principals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Formal Intervention Programs.....	24
Table 12. Retention Rates in Schools With and Without Formal Intervention Programs.....	25
Table 13. Retained Students' Grades During the Year Following Retention in Schools With and Without Intervention Programs	26
Table 14. Retained Students' Attendance During the Year Following Retention in Schools With and Without Intervention Programs.....	28
Table 15. Retained Students' School Behavior During the Year Following Retention in Schools With and Without Intervention Programs.....	29

Chapter 1

Overview of the Problem

The fundamental reason for this study was to gain information to make better and more informed decisions about student retention practices at Glenn Raymond School in Watseka, Illinois, where the author is the principal. Glenn Raymond School is a central Illinois junior high school of grades six through eight with an enrollment of 325 students.

In recent years there has been a pattern of student retention at Glenn Raymond School; during the 1994-1996 school years nine students were retained. Moreover, Glenn Raymond School personnel identified nine additional students who faced the possibility of retention during the 1996-1997 school year. A review of these retained students' school performance during the past two years indicated little school improvement during the year immediately following retention. The review indicated that these students did not earn higher grades, nor did they attend school more regularly during the year following retention. Nevertheless, the Glenn Raymond School faculty has continued to strongly recommend retention for low achieving students.

The intent of this study was to identify certain aspects of the practice of grade retention in selected Illinois public schools similar to Glenn Raymond School. This study was limited to schools with a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of at least 100 students in districts with a total of 1700 or fewer students. The study measured the prevalence of grade retention in selected schools and ascertained the immediate impact of 7th and 8th grade retention on student performance by examining the building principals' perceptions of the relative improvement or lack of improvement of retained students in terms of grades earned, rate of attendance, and school behavior during the school year immediately following retention.

This study also identified the prevalence of formal school-based intervention programs to assist retained students, and ascertained the building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of these intervention programs. Included in the study was an attempt to determine if there was any relationship between the existence of positive intervention programs and the principals' perceptions of retained students' performance in the year immediately following retention.

Background and Significance

Unsuccessful student retention and an increase in the number of retention candidates were the driving forces behind this study. The author hoped that Glenn Raymond School could use the results from the study to make better and more informed decisions about student retention. The results of this study should be invaluable to the Glenn Raymond School faculty and administration.

Traditionally, educators have taken two fundamental approaches in dealing with students who fail to meet the academic requirements for a particular grade level. Educators have either chosen to retain low achieving students at grade level or to "socially promote" students to the next grade level. Unfortunately, neither approach has been without critics (Doyle, 1989; Gottfredson, 1988; Holmes & Mathews, 1984).

Grade retention is a practice that has been utilized by school districts for many years as a means to increase educational accountability and to raise educational standards. The assumption has been that the additional year at the same grade level would provide students an opportunity to "catch up on" prerequisite skills, and, therefore, better prepare them for success at the next grade level.

The practice of grade retention has fallen in and out of favor with educators and educational researchers over the past 100 years. However, there has been

a number of recent studies that indicate that grade retention is an ineffective educational tool for improving student performance. Nevertheless, grade retention has continued to be a prominent practice in our school systems (Shepard & Smith, 1990).

Much of the existing literature and research on grade retention has focused on lower elementary aged students. The fact is that many upper elementary, middle school, and junior high school teachers and principals have faced an annual decision. The decision has been whether or not to retain students who have failed to complete the necessary requirements for a grade level. These students generally have failed a significant number of classes and/or have failed to demonstrate the necessary skills for the next grade level. This decision has become a dilemma because, in some cases, there have not been viable alternatives to retention. Also, in some cases, school district personnel have failed to study the immediate impact of retention on students' performance during the year following retention. Therefore, empirical data that could be used as a basis for decision making have not been available. Moreover, there may be a number of school districts that retain junior high aged students, but do not have any sort of formal intervention programs to assist the retained students (Impara & Tomchin, 1992).

Research Questions

The following were the research questions of this study:

1. How prevalent is the practice of grade retention in grades 7 and 8 in selected Illinois public schools with a population of at least 100 students and a district enrollment of 1700 or fewer students?
2. Are educators in certain geographic areas in Illinois more likely to retain 7th and 8th grade students?
3. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' grades

earned during the year immediately following retention?

4. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school attendance rate during the year immediately following retention?

5. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school behavior during the year immediately following retention?

6. Do formal intervention programs exist to assist retained students?

7. What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of these intervention programs in terms of how well they meet student needs?

8. Is there a relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs and the frequency of retention in schools?

9. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to earn improved grades during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

10. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to have improved attendance during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

11. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to have improved school behavior during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

Definitions of Terms

For purposes of clarity, the following operational definitions were used in the study:

1. Attendance rate. The ratio of the students' total number of days attended divided by the total number of attendance days during the period of the

beginning of school through the time when the survey was completed.

2. Building principal. The person who is in direct charge of administering a school.

3. Formal school intervention programs for retained students. Established school programs and procedures designed and implemented to serve the social and academic needs of students who have been retained. These programs should be standard practice and policy.

4. Grades earned. Report card grades earned during the period of the beginning of school through the time when the survey was completed.

5. Retention. The educational practice of keeping a student at the same grade level for an additional year.

6. Retention rate. The ratio of the number of students retained divided by the total population of students.

7. School behavior. The presence or absence of disciplinary problems at school.

8. Social promotion. The educational practice of allowing students to advance to the next grade level even though they failed to meet the academic requirements at a grade level.

Assumptions

The study assumed that retained students would remain in the same fundamental educational setting as in the previous year. It was assumed that these students would receive the same or equivalent instructional opportunities as in the previous year, except in schools where formal school-based intervention programs were in place. It was also assumed that most retained students' life styles and home lives would remain essentially the same from year to year.

Delimitations

This study had several fundamental delimitations. The study considered 7th and 8th grade students only. The focus was on 7th and 8th grade due to the fact that the author is a principal of a junior high school housing these grades, and was particularly interested in educational practices at these grade levels.

The study was limited to Illinois public schools with a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of at least 100 students and a district enrollment of 1700 or fewer students. The author was interested in investigating retention practices in settings similar to Glenn Raymond School in Watseka, Illinois.

The perceptions of the building principals were used to make judgments about retention practices in selected schools. A number of other means could have been utilized to make this judgment, but it was decided the building principal could provide accurate data. Specifically the building principal was chosen because:

1. He/she was easily contacted.
2. He/she had access to the data that were needed.
3. He/she would be familiar with intervention programs for retained students.
4. He/she would have the appropriate overview of school performance.
5. He/she would have an interest in receiving the results of the study and would, therefore, be more inclined to respond appropriately.

Another delimitation was the study measured grades earned, attendance rates, and school behavior as indicators of the impact of retention on students. Other indicators such as school involvement, social adjustment, and self-esteem could have been examined, but the author decided that grades, attendance, and school behavior could be more accurately measured. The study did not ask principals to determine the degree or extent of improvement or decline; principals were only asked to determine if student performance

generally improved, stayed the same, or declined.

Lastly, the measurement of the impact of retention on students was limited to the school year immediately following retention as opposed to measuring the long term effect of retention. This decision was made because it was assumed that a number of factors, other than the fact that the student was retained, could possibly influence a retained student's long term school performance.

Chapter 2

Rationale, and Review of the Literature and Research

Rationale

The practice of grade retention was chosen for examination because of the need to assist school personnel in making more consistent and informed decisions about student grade retention practices. Educators have received a mixed message concerning retention. Researchers have generally identified retention as a negative practice, while the public and governmental bodies have called for stricter promotion standards at all grade levels. This has led to inconsistent retention practices, and schools being unsure of how to effectively deal with the grade placement of low achieving students (Shepard & Smith, 1990).

Glenn Raymond School, like other schools, has continued to be faced with an annual dilemma of what to do with students who fail to meet the requirements to pass on to the next grade level. It was the author's hope that the data from this study would be used to guide school personnel in making decisions about the use of retention as an educational tool.

Review of the Research and Literature

The question of whether or not to retain students at grade level has been a concern for schools for almost a century. Ayes reported the first comprehensive study of pupil progress in 1909 in the book, Laggards in Our Schools. Since then many articles have been written and research carried out that have argued for and against retention (Holmes & Mathews, 1984).

Retention of students was an extremely common practice in American schools from the beginning of graded instruction in the 19th century until the 1930s. Advances in psychology during the Great Depression years brought a marked decrease in the practice in most schools because retention was linked

with negative social and psychological effects (Sherwood, 1993). During the 1970s the prevailing philosophy was that social promotion was most beneficial to low achieving students. However, the publication of A Nation At Risk in 1983 brought about a sharp decline in the practice of social promotion. This report pointed out a decline in U.S. student test scores. Critics of the practice of social promotion argued that permissive practices were responsible for the decline in American schools. An emphasis on competency based education and a popular belief in school accountability has kept the practice of retention in the forefront (Holmes & Mathews, 1984).

Retention practices over the past two decades are well illustrated by Roderick (1995) :

The most dramatic indicator of the shift in attitudes and practices regarding retention is the increase in the proportion of youths who are over age for grade. From 1970-1980, the proportion of 12-14 year olds enrolled below their grade level hovered around 20%. From 1980 to 1993, however, this proportion increased to nearly 32% (p. 2).

Despite the apparent public support for strict promotion policies, many school administrators, psychologists, and educational researchers have been in disagreement about the efficacy of the practice of retention. Moreover, a number of studies have contributed to this controversy. Unfortunately, some of the significant research concerning retention has been flawed. Perhaps, the most serious flaw may be that many of these studies have compared retained students with either randomly selected students or with students with matched ability. Frequently these comparisons have been made without considering that a more appropriate comparison would focus on students who were recommended for retention but were not retained. Thus, some studies failed to take into account the issue of retention vs. social promotion. This sort of

research has led to some conflicting results and skepticism from practitioners (Connell & Pierson, 1992).

Some of the data concerning the prevalence of junior high school aged retention are conflicting. Impara and Tomchin (1992) reported that teachers were less likely to retain a junior high school student than an elementary student. In a study of aggregate retention rates in 12 American states, Morris, (1993) found that retention at the junior high school level was common. Moreover, he found that when 7th and 8th grades were compared to other grades, they ranked fourth and fifth in terms of the percentage of retention.

Recently, educators have begun to question their retention policies and have searched for alternatives. Studies conducted in New York City and Chicago have indicated that increased retention of students has led to increased drop out rates (Roderick, 1995). According to a number of research results, the affective and educational impact of retention on students has appeared to be negative. In a prominent study, Holmes (1989) meta analyzed 63 retention studies and found that 54 of these studies indicated that retention had an overall negative effect on students. Holmes then chose 25 of the most controlled studies for further evaluation, and the negative impact of retention was confirmed. More recent reviews of the literature on retention have concluded that there were limited benefits for retained students in terms of academic gains and social growth (Carey, Dawson & Raforth, 1990; Holmes, 1983; Holmes & Matthews, 1984; Impara & Tomchin, 1992; Shepard & Smith, 1989).

Conversely, there have been studies that have indicated that retention has had a positive effect on students. Ayabe, DeGracie, and Peterson (1987) found that, in some grade comparisons, retained students had higher academic gains than non-retained students. Also, Holmes (1989) found that approximately 15%

of the studies he analyzed indicated positive gains from retention.

Reynolds (1992) found that the widely held belief that retention has a negative psychological impact on students was unfounded. In a subsequent study Fink, Gottfredson and Graham (1994) found that student adjustment outcomes were not always negative after retention. This study suggested that "retention at the end of the 6th or 7th grade has little causal effect on adolescent behavior" (p. 776).

The author found little literature concerning the existence and efficacy of formal school-based intervention programs specifically designed for retained students. This was both interesting and disconcerting considering the depth of the retention controversy. Ayabe, DeGracie and Peterson (1987) wrote,

One of the reasons for the failure of retention to improve academic achievement is that students are often retained in programs that were not beneficial to them in the first year. Accordingly, retention may be more beneficial if specific plans are developed to overcome difficulties encountered during the previous year (p. 108).

Archer (1988) wrote, "Some children benefit from retention, particularly if it is accompanied by new instruction. The crucial variable may be the chance a child is given for additional and different instruction and further maturation" (p. 3).

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

The study utilized a survey sent to school principals to gather data about retention practices in Illinois public schools with a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of at least 100 students and a district enrollment of 1700 or fewer students. The survey was designed to provide data to answer the following research questions:

1. How prevalent is the practice of grade retention in grades 7 and 8 in selected Illinois public schools with a population of at least 100 students and a district enrollment of 1700 or fewer students?
2. Are educators in certain geographic areas in Illinois more likely to retain 7th and 8th grade students?
3. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' grades earned during the year immediately following retention?
4. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school attendance rate during the year immediately following retention?
5. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school behavior during the year immediately following retention?
6. Do formal intervention programs exist to assist retained students?
7. What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of these intervention programs in terms of how well they meet student needs?
8. Is there a relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs and the frequency of retention in schools?
9. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to earn improved grades during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

10. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to have improved attendance during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

11. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to have improved school behavior during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

Sample and Population

The schools chosen for this study were Illinois public schools with a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of at least 100 and district enrollments of fewer than 1700 students. The students considered in this study were retained in 7th and 8th grade during the 1995-1996 school year.

A sample population of schools was obtained by dividing Illinois into three geographic areas and randomly selecting 30 schools from each area. The northern area consisted of schools north of Interstate 80. The central area consisted of schools between Interstate 80 and Interstate 70. The southern area consisted of schools south of Interstate 70.

A complete listing of Illinois public schools with a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of at least 100 students and district enrollment of 1700 or fewer students was obtained from the Illinois State Board of Education. It was determined that there were 296 Illinois schools that met the criteria to be included in the study. A total of 90 schools, 30 from each geographic area, were randomly selected to participate in the study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

In March of 1997, the author used personal observations and data obtained from the review of research and literature to formulate a survey on

schools' retention practices. Later in the same month, the survey was field tested with principals from Iroquois County where the author's school is located. In April of 1997, principals from each of the schools in the sample population were sent a cover letter (see Appendix A) and a copy of the Retention Survey (see Appendix B). Each principal who did not respond to the initial mailing received a subsequent survey two weeks after the initial mailing.

The survey requested principals to:

1. Provide the school's enrollment in grades 7 and 8 during the 1995-1996 school year. This information was used to address research questions 1, 2, and 8.

2. Provide the number of students retained in both 7th and 8th grades during the 1995-1996 school year. This information was used to address research questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

3. Make judgments concerning retained students' relative improvement or lack of improvement in terms of grades earned, attendance rate, and school behavior during the period from the beginning of the 1996-1997 school year through the time when the survey was completed. This information was used to address research questions 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, and 11.

4. Provide information concerning the existence and components of formal school based intervention programs for retained students at their schools. This information was used to address research questions 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

5. Provide judgments concerning the overall effectiveness of the intervention programs. This information was used to address research question 7.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected for each research question. The analysis of the data was presented through tables which

represent responses by numbers and percentages. Some percentages were rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Chapter 4

Results of the Study

Overview

The analyzed data for each research question are presented in text and tables.

The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. How prevalent is the practice of grade retention in grades 7 and 8 in selected Illinois public schools with a population of at least 100 students and a district enrollment of 1700 or fewer students?
2. Are educators in certain geographic areas in Illinois more likely to retain 7th and 8th grade students?
3. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' grades earned during the year immediately following retention?
4. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school attendance rate during the year immediately following retention?
5. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school behavior during the year immediately following retention?
6. Do formal intervention programs exist to assist retained students?
7. What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of these intervention programs in terms of how well they meet student needs?
8. Is there a relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs and the frequency of retention in schools?
9. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to earn improved grades during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?
10. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal

Chapter 4

Results of the Study

Overview

The analyzed data for each research question are presented in text and tables.

The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. How prevalent is the practice of grade retention in grades 7 and 8 in selected Illinois public schools with a population of at least 100 students and a district enrollment of 1700 or fewer students?
2. Are educators in certain geographic areas in Illinois more likely to retain 7th and 8th grade students?
3. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' grades earned during the year immediately following retention?
4. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school attendance rate during the year immediately following retention?
5. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school behavior during the year immediately following retention?
6. Do formal intervention programs exist to assist retained students?
7. What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of these intervention programs in terms of how well they meet student needs?
8. Is there a relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs and the frequency of retention in schools?
9. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to earn improved grades during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?
10. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal

the schools in the sample retained few, if any, 7th and 8th graders during the 1995-1996 school year. However, retention was practiced in 49% of the schools. Thirty-two percent of the schools retained more than 1% of their 7th and 8th grade populations, and 12% retained over 3% of their 7th and 8th grade enrollment.

Table 1

Prevalence of 7th-8th Grade Retention During the 1995-1996 School Year

School Retention	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Retained no students	37	51%
Retained at least one student	36	49%

Table 2

Mean Retention Rate of Participating Schools

Retention Rate	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
0	37	51%
.01-1.0	12	16%
1.01-2.0	7	10%
2.01-3.0	7	10%
3.01-4.0	4	5%
4.01-5.0	3	4%
5.01-6.0	1	1%
6.01-7.0	1	1%
7.01-8.0	0	0%
8.01-9.0	1	1%

Note: Range of retention rate- 0%-8.2%

Results of Research Question 2

Are educators in certain geographic areas in Illinois more likely to retain 7th and 8th grade students?

The prevalence of retention in each geographic area was determined by the percentage of schools that retained 7th and 8th graders during the 1995-1996 school year. The mean retention rate was the overall average retention rate for each geographic area. The number of students retained in each geographic area was divided by the total school enrollment in the geographic area to determine the mean retention rate. As identified in Table 3, southern Illinois schools were most likely to retain students, while northern schools were least likely to utilize retention. Seventy-one percent of the sampled schools in southern Illinois retained 7th and 8th grade students, compared to 50% in central Illinois, and 31% in northern Illinois.

Table 3

Schools That Utilized Retention by Geographic Area

Geographic Area	Utilized Retention	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Southern	15	71%
Central	13	50%
Northern	8	31%

Table 4 shows a comparison of the mean retention rates for each of the three identified geographic areas. As shown in Table 4, southern Illinois schools had a mean retention rate of 1.80%, while central Illinois schools had a retention rate of 1.10%, and northern Illinois schools reported a rate of .71%.

Table 4

Mean Retention Rate of Schools by Geographic Area

Region	Mean Retention Rate
Southern	1.80%
Central	1.10%
Northern	.71%

Results for Research Question 3

What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' grades earned during the year immediately following retention?

Slightly more than half of the schools that responded to the survey did not retain any students during the 1995-1996 school year. The principals from the remaining schools were asked to report their perceptions of retained students' grades earned during the 1996-1997 school year.

As shown in Table 5, principals reported that 88% of the students retained in 1995-1996 earned grades that either improved or stayed the same during the 1996-1997 school year. It was reported that 53% of the retained students earned higher grades, while 35% stayed the same, and 12% had worse grades.

Table 5

Retained Students' Grades Earned in the Year Following Retention

Grades Earned	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Improved	68	53%
Stayed the same	45	35%
Declined	15	12%

Results for Research Question 4

What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' attendance rate during the year immediately following retention?

As indicated in Table 6, 90% of the retained students' attendance either stayed the same or improved. It was reported that 42% of the retained students had better attendance, while 48% attended the same, and 9% had worse attendance during the year following retention.

Table 6

Retained Students' Attendance in the Year Following Retention

Attendance	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Improved	54	42%
Stayed the same	62	48%
Declined	12	9%

Results for Research Question 5

What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school behavior during the year immediately following retention?

As indicated in Table 7, 91% of the retained students were reported to behave in the same or in an improved manner during the 1996-1997 school year. Forty-five percent of the students were reported to have had fewer disciplinary problems, while 46% were reported to have about the same number of disciplinary problems as in the previous school year, and 9% were reported to have more discipline problems during the year following retention.

It should be noted that a total of 150 students were actually retained in sampled schools. Twenty-two of 150 students either moved, dropped, or were expelled. These students were not included in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

Table 7

Retained Students' School Behavior in the Year Following Retention

Disciplinary problems	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Fewer	58	45%
Same amount	59	46%
More	11	9%

Results for Research Question 6

Do formal intervention programs exist to assist retained students?

As indicated in Table 8, 29% of the principals who responded to the survey reported that their schools had formal intervention programs that were standard policy and practice. Some respondents indicated that their schools did provide services to retained students, but the services were not standard policy or practice. These schools were not considered to have formal intervention programs since the services were not standard policy and practice.

Table 8

The Prevalence of Formal Intervention Programs for Retained Students

Schools	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Without formal intervention programs	52	71%
With formal intervention programs	21	29%

Although schools with formal intervention programs for retained students were a minority, schools with intervention programs were spread throughout Illinois. As indicated in Table 9, 31% of the schools in the northern and central areas reported having formal intervention programs, while 24% of the southern

schools reported the existence of intervention programs for retained students.

Table 9

Schools With Formal Intervention Programs by Geographic Area

Region	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Central	8	31%
Northern	8	31%
Southern	5	24%

Table 10 shows the frequency of intervention practices for retained students.

Table 10

Formal Intervention Programs in Twenty-One Schools

Program	Schools Utilizing the Program	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Summer school	16	76%
Faculty tutoring	12	57%
Before/after school programs	10	48%
Counseling	10	48%
Classroom accommodations	9	43%
Individual education plans	8	38%
Monitoring	8	38%
Peer tutoring	7	33%
Outside agencies	6	29%
Mentoring	3	14%
Peer counseling	2	10%

As indicated in Table 10, the most common type of intervention was summer school, reported as being used in 76% of the schools with formal intervention programs. Fifty-seven percent of the schools reported using faculty tutoring, while 48% of the schools reported using before/after school programs and counseling. Forty-three percent of the schools reported using classroom accommodations, 38% reported using individual education programs and monitoring, while 33% reported using peer tutoring, and 29% outside agencies. Only 14% of the schools reported the utilization of mentors and 10% peer counseling as part of their formal intervention program for retained students.

Results for Research Question 7

What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of these intervention programs in terms of how well they meet student needs?

As indicated in Table 11, 18 of the 21 principals reported that their schools' formal intervention programs met retained students' needs. Conversely, three principals reported that their schools' formal intervention programs did not meet retained students' needs.

Table 11

Principals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Formal Intervention Programs

Principals' Perception	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Programs met students' needs	18	86%
Programs did not meet students' needs	3	14%

Results for Research Question 8

Is there a relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs and the frequency of retention in schools?

Table 12 shows the retention rate of all schools, schools with no formal

intervention programs, and schools with formal intervention programs for retained students. The retention rate was calculated by dividing the number of retained 7th and 8th grade students in each type of school by the total 7th and 8th grade enrollment of the school. The 73 schools that participated in the study had a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of 12,755 students; these schools retained a total of 150 students during the 1995-1996 school year, for a retention rate of approximately 1.18%. Fifty-two of the 73 schools had no formal retention program. These schools had a 7th and 8th grade combined enrollment of 9,066 students, and retained 113 students, for a retention rate of approximately 1.25%. Twenty-one of 73 total schools had formal intervention programs for retained students. The schools with formal intervention programs for retained students retained 37 total students, and had a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of 3,689 students, for a retention rate of approximately 1.0%.

Table 12

Retention Rates of Schools With and Without Formal Intervention Programs

Schools	Total Enrollment	N of Students Retained	Retention Rate
All	12,755	150	1.18%
No formal programs	9,066	113	1.25%
Formal programs	3,689	37	1.00%

Although a total of 150 students were retained in the schools that participated in the survey, only 128 of these students actually attended the school that retained them for the entire 1996-1997 school year. At the time of the survey, 22 students who were retained either moved or were placed out of

the district, dropped out, or were expelled from school.

Results for the Research Question 9

Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to earn improved grades during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

As shown in Table 13, respondents indicated that 53% of retained students at sampled schools were reported to have earned improved grades during the year following retention, while 35% earned the same grades, and 12% earned worse grades. Fifty-nine percent of the retained students in schools with intervention programs had higher grades, 29% had approximately the same grades, and 12% had lower grades during the year following retention. Fifty-one percent of retained students in schools without formal intervention programs were reported to earn higher grades, 37% were reported to have earned approximately the same grades, and 12% were reported to have earned lower grades during the same time period.

Table 13

Retained Students' Grades During the Year Following Retention in Schools With and Without Intervention Programs

Schools	Grades					
	Improved		No Change		Declined	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
All	68	53%	45	35%	15	12%
With formal programs	20	59%	10	29%	4	12%
Without formal programs	48	51%	35	37%	11	12%

A greater percentage of retained students in schools with formal intervention programs were reported to have shown improvement in grades earned during the year following retention than did students in schools without such programs. Principals reported that 8% more students showed improvement in grades earned in schools with formal programs than did students in schools without programs. The percentages for students who earned worse grades during the year following retention were similar regardless of the existence or lack of formal intervention programs.

Results for Research Question 10

Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to have improved attendance during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

As shown in Table 14, respondents indicated that 42% of all the students who were retained at participating schools were reported to have improved attendance during the year following retention, while 48% attended at the same rate, and 9% had worse attendance. Fifty-three percent of the retained students in schools with formal intervention programs had improved attendance in the year following retention, while the attendance of 29% remained the same, and 18% were reported as having worse attendance. This was compared to students in schools without formal intervention programs where 38% were reported to show improvement, 55% were reported to have had no change, and 6% were reported to have worse attendance in the the year following retention.

The data indicated that schools with formal programs tended to have a greater percentage of students show improvement in the year following retention than did retained students in schools without formal programs. Fifteen percent more students in schools with formal programs showed improved

attendance than did students in schools without programs.

Table 14

Retained Students' Attendance During the Year Following Retention in Schools with and without Intervention Programs

Schools	Attendance					
	Improved		No Change		Declined	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
All	54	42%	62	48%	12	9%
With formal programs	18	53%	10	29%	6	18%
Without formal programs	36	38%	52	55%	6	6%

Results for Research Question 11

Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to have improved school behavior during the year following retention than retained students in schools which had no formal intervention programs?

As shown in Table 15, 45% of all the students who were retained at participating schools were reported to show improved behavior, while 46% were reported to have remained the same, and 9% were reported to have demonstrated worse school behavior. Thirty-eight percent of the retained students in schools with formal intervention programs were reported to show improved behavior, while 53% were reported to have remained the same, and 9% were reported to have demonstrated worse school behavior. This was compared to schools without formal programs where 48% of the students were reported to show improvement, 44% were reported to have remained the same, and 9% were reported to have demonstrated worse behavior. The school

behavior data were contrary to the other performance data, as a greater percentage of retained students in the schools without formal intervention programs were reported to have fewer disciplinary problems.

Table 15

Retained Students' School Behavior During the Year Following Retention in Schools With and Without Intervention Programs

Schools	School Behavior					
	Improved		No Change		Declined	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
All	58	45%	59	46%	11	9%
With formal programs	13	38%	18	53%	3	9%
Without formal programs	45	48%	41	44%	8	9%

Chapter 5

Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study investigated the practice of grade retention of 7th and 8th grade students in Illinois public schools with a combined 7th and 8th grade enrollment of at least 100 students in districts of fewer than 1700 total students. The author chose to limit the study to these parameters in order to make the results as applicable as possible to Glenn Raymond School, where the author is the principal. The global significance of this study was to compile and organize data so that other school personnel who are considering the practice of retention or instituting programs to help retained students could make better informed decisions.

The specific research questions addressed by this study were:

1. How prevalent is the practice of grade retention in grades 7 and 8 in selected Illinois public schools with a population of at least 100 students and a district enrollment of 1700 or fewer students?
2. Are educators in certain geographic areas in Illinois more likely to retain 7th and 8th grade students?
3. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' grades earned during the year immediately following retention?
4. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school attendance rate during the year immediately following retention?
5. What are building principals' perceptions of retained students' school behavior during the year immediately following retention?
6. Do formal intervention programs exist to assist retained students?
7. What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of these intervention programs in terms of how well they meet student needs?

8. Is there a relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs and the frequency of retention in schools?

9. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to earn improved grades during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

10. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to have improved attendance during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

11. Are 7th and 8th grade students who are retained in schools with formal intervention programs for retained students more likely to have improved school behavior during the year following retention than retained students in schools which have no formal intervention programs?

This study was based on data collected from a survey of school principals in selected Illinois schools. Illinois was divided into three geographic areas- northern, central, and southern, and 30 schools were randomly selected from each area. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected. The data were used to address each of the research questions.

Findings

Fifty-one percent of schools responding to the survey did not retain any 7th or 8th grade students during the 1995-1996 school year, while 49% retained at least one student. Although the majority of sampled schools retained few, if any, students during the 1995-1996 school year; 12% of the schools had a 7th and 8th grade retention rate of over 3%.

Even though it was found that retention was common in the sample population of schools, the vast majority of schools in the sample did not retain a

high percentage of students. The sample schools retained an average of 1.2% of their 7th and 8th grade students, and more than 2/3 of the schools surveyed retained less than 1.0% of their 7th and 8th grade population. Schools in the southern area had the highest retention rate at 1.8%, while schools in the northern area had the lowest rate at .71%.

The practice of retention was most common in schools south of Interstate 70, where 71% of the schools retained at least one 7th or 8th grade student during the 1995-1996 school year. Retention was least likely in northern schools where only 31% of these schools retained at least one 7th or 8th grade student during the 1995-1996 school year.

Data were collected concerning the building principals' perceptions of retained students' grades, attendance, and school behavior during the year immediately following retention in an attempt to determine the immediate impact of retention on student performance. Contrary to some of the existing research, the principals in the study reported that retained students tended to show improvement during the second year at the same grade level. This was especially true in respect to grades earned by retained students. Principals reported that 53% of students retained in 1995-1996 earned higher grades during the 1996-1997 school year, while 35% were reported to have made the same grades, and 12% were reported to have earned lower grades. The attendance and school behavior results were also relatively positive, although not as positive as grades. Principals reported that 42% of their retained students had better attendance during the second year at the same grade level, while 48% of the students attended at essentially the same rate, and 9% attended at a lower rate. Similar results were obtained in terms of school behavior. Principals reported that 45% of the retained students had fewer disciplinary problems than in the previous year, while 46% experienced about the same number of

problems, and 9% had more disciplinary problems.

Formal intervention programs are standard organized services for retained students to help them be successful in school. Only 29% of schools participating in the study had formal intervention programs that were standard policy and practice. Principals in 86% of these schools reported that their formal intervention programs met students' needs.

The most common type of formal intervention program for retained students was summer school. Seventy-six percent of the schools that reported the existence of a formal program listed summer school as a component of the program. Other common services were faculty tutoring, before/after school programs, and classroom accommodations. Schools were less likely to offer the assistance of outside agencies, mentoring programs, and peer tutoring.

Schools with formal intervention programs were less likely to retain students than schools without such programs, as schools with formal programs retained a smaller percentage of 7th and 8th grade students than schools without formal programs. Schools with formal intervention programs retained 1.0% of their 7th and 8th grade enrollment during the 1995-1996 school year, whereas schools without formal programs retained 1.25%. Therefore, it could be argued that there was a relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs and the frequency of retention. However, this relationship was tenuous, as the difference in retention rates was 1/4 of one percent.

A greater percentage of retained students in schools with formal intervention programs were reported to have shown improvement in grades earned during the year immediately following retention than did students in schools without such programs. Principals reported that 8% more students showed improvement in grades earned in schools with formal programs than did students in schools without programs. The percentages of students who

earned worse grades during the year following retention were similar irrespective of the existence or lack of formal intervention programs.

Principals reported that students in schools with formal intervention programs were more likely to have improved attendance during the year following retention than students in schools without formal programs. Fifteen percent more students in schools with programs showed improved attendance than students in schools without programs. Interestingly, a higher percentage of students in schools with formal programs had worse attendance than students in schools without formal programs.

School principals also rated retained students in terms of the number of disciplinary problems retained students experienced. It was found that schools without intervention programs had a higher percentage of students who showed behavior improvement than in schools with formal programs. Thirty-eight percent of the students in schools with formal intervention programs were reported to have fewer disciplinary problems, while 48% of the students in schools without formal programs experienced fewer disciplinary problems during the year following retention.

Conclusions

Despite a number of studies that argue that retention is an ineffective educational tool, Illinois schools have continued to retain 7th and 8th grade students. While the percentage of students retained in the sample population was relatively small in relation to the overall enrollment, the practice of retention has, nevertheless, continued.

The principals' perception of retained students' school performance during the year immediately following retention appeared to be skewed to the positive. Principals reported that the vast majority of students functioned at the same level or improved during the year following retention. The high rate of reported

improvement was important, but it should be noted that the percentage of students who remained the same was not necessarily a positive outcome. Students who were retained generally did not experience success during the year previous to retention; therefore, if students remained the same, they remained unsuccessful. If the results are examined in this light, 47% of the retained students continued to have sub standard grades during the year following retention. Although this perspective casts a less favorable light on the data, the principals' perceptions of retained students' performance during the year following retention were generally positive.

Two parts of the principals' evaluation of retained students' performance stand out. It was reported that a number of retained students demonstrated improvement in grades earned, attendance, and behavior during the year immediately following retention, while a small percentage of retained students did worse during the same year. The data indicated that, not only did retention possibly benefit many of these students, it had a negative impact on only a small percentage of students. These data were contrary to some of the research reported by the author. There may be at least three reasons for this difference. The study considered the immediate impact of retention on student school performance. Although the results indicated a positive effect, the impact of retention may change over an extended period of time. Also, the building principals may have had an inaccurate impression of retained students' performance. Possible inaccuracies may be based upon lack of correct information, or less than honest appraisal of the situation. Lastly, the study was limited to moderately small school districts of less than 1700 students. Perhaps retained students in schools of this size receive the sort of attention and consideration that is conducive to success.

Prior to the study, the author believed that schools with formal intervention

programs would be much more likely to retain students due to the fact that these schools had the necessary programs to effectively deal with retained students. This belief was not substantiated by the data from the study. Principals from schools with formal intervention programs reported a lower retention rate than principals from schools without formal programs.

The data indicated that formal intervention programs for retained students were not common among participating schools. Only 29% of surveyed schools reported formal intervention programs. However, the data indicated a positive relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs to assist retained students and improvement in retained students' grades and attendance during the year following retention. The data indicated that a greater percentage of students were perceived to earn higher grades and attend school more regularly in schools with formal programs than in those without such programs. The relationship did not exist in terms of the number of disciplinary problems retained students experienced. It was found that retained students in schools with formal intervention programs were more likely to have discipline problems in the year following retention than retained students in schools without formal programs.

A greater percentage of student grade and attendance improvement in schools with formal programs to assist retained students may be explained by the fact that these students received increased attention and more opportunities for success. The lower percentage of improved student behavior in schools with intervention programs suggested that negative school behavior was not impacted by the formal programs. It could be speculated that formal intervention programs focused on improving students' grades and attendance, but did not actively address discipline issues.

It should be noted that the population of students who were retained in

schools with formal intervention programs was small. Only 29% of the schools surveyed reported having formal intervention programs to assist retained students. Schools with formal intervention programs retained a total of 37 students, approximately 25% of the total number of students retained in the sample. Therefore, 75% of the retained students were in schools without intervention programs. This small population of retained students weakened the relationship between the existence of formal intervention programs and improved student performance.

Recommendations

The response from the principals in the study suggested that Illinois schools with 7th and 8th grade students should consider grade retention as an option when working with students who do not meet the criteria for promotion into the next grade level. This response was contrary to much of the research available to the author. However, the results clearly indicated that many of the retained students in the sample population were perceived by principals to show improvement during the school year following retention.

Schools that do retain students should consider instituting formal intervention programs that are regular practice and policy. This recommendation is made for two reasons. Schools with formal intervention programs were less likely to retain students than schools without formal programs, and retained students in schools with formal programs were more likely to show improvement in the areas of grades earned and attendance. Also, the vast majority of principals (85%) in the study reported that the formal intervention programs in their schools met students' needs. These programs should include summer school, faculty tutoring, before/after school programs, counseling, and classroom accommodations.

It is recommended that this study be replicated in other locations in order to

further corroborate the results. Also, it would be informative to determine the degree and extent of student improvement, and to determine if this pattern of improvement continues over time

References

- Archer, C. (1988). Grade retention: Making the decision. Eric Clearinghouse, 46, 1-4.
- Ayabe,C., DeGracie, J., & Peterson ,S. (1987). A longitudinal study of the effects of retention/promotion on academic achievement. American Educational Research Journal, 24 (1), 107-118.
- Carey, K., Dawson, M., & Raforth, M. (1990). Best practices in assisting promotion and retention decisions. Best Practices in School Psychology, 2, 137-146.
- Connell, J. & Pierson, L. (1992). Effect of grade retention on self system processes, school engagement, and academic performance. Journal of Educational Psychology, 84 (3), 300-307.
- Doyle, R., (1989). The resistance of conventional wisdom to research evidence. Phi Delta Kappa, 71 (3), 215-220.
- Fink, C. , Gottfredson, D., & Graham, N. (1994). Grade retention and problem behavior. American Educational Research Journal, 31 (4), 761-784.
- Gottfredson, G. (1988). You get what you measure, you get what you don't: Higher standards, higher test scores, more retention in grade. Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools. (Report 29) , 2-22.
- Holmes, T. (1983). The fourth r: Retention. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 17 (1), 1-5.
- Holmes, T. (1989). Grade level retention effects: A meta analysis of research studies. Flunking grades: Research and policies on retention, edited by Shepard and Smith. London: The Farmer Press.
- Holmes, T. & Matthews, K. (1984). The effects of nonpromotion on elementary and junior high pupils. Review of Educational Research, 54, 225-236.

Impara, J. & Tomchin, J. (1992). Unraveling teachers' beliefs about grade retention. American Educational Research Journal, 29 (1), 199-223.

Morris, D. (1993). Patterns of aggregate grade retention rates. American Educational Research Journal, 30 (3), 497-514.

Reynolds, A. (1992). Grade retention and school adjustment: An explanatory analysis. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 14 (2), 101-121.

Roderick, M. (1995). Grade retention and school dropout: Policy debate and research questions. Phi Delta Kappa Research Bulletin, 15, 1-5.

Shepard, L. & Smith, M. (1990). Synthesis of research on grade retention. Educational Leadership, 47 (8), 84-88.

Sherwood, C. (1993). Retention in grade: Lethal lessons. Eric (On line serial). Available: Do. No. MP01/PC01.

Appendix A

Cover Letter

Dear<<First name>>:

My name is Steve Bianchetta. I am the principal of Glenn Raymond School in Watseka, Illinois. Glenn Raymond School is a 6th-8th grade building with a student enrollment of approximately 325 students.

I know you are busy this time of year, but I need your help to complete a study that I am conducting. Please take a few minutes and complete the attached survey, and return it to me by **April 21st, 1997**. I will use the results of this study to help make decisions about student grade retention at our school. I have chosen your school for the study because you are a school of similar size to Glenn Raymond School.

Like most of you, we face an annual dilemma. We must answer the questions: "What do we do with 7th and 8th grade students who fail to meet the requirements to go to the next grade levels?" and "If we do retain students, does it do any good?" Moreover, most of us have faced the question of: "What do we do to help retained students perform better the second time around?"

In this study I hope to determine the prevalence of retention in 7th and 8th grades and the immediate impact of retention on these students. I am also interested in determining if formal intervention programs exist for retained students and if these programs are successful.

I am hopeful that you will complete the attached survey and return it to me in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope by 4/21/97. I will be happy to share my findings with you when the study is complete.

Sincerely,

Steve Bianchetta

Appendix B
Retention Survey

School Name: _____

1. Type of school: (circle correct response)

Elementary Junior high Middle school Jr/So high

2. The total number of 7th and 8th graders you retained in 1995-96:

3. The number of 7th and 8th graders retained in 1995-96 who:

earned higher report card grades during the 1996-97 school year: _____

earned the same report card grades during the 1996-97 school year: _____

earned lower report card grades during the 1996-97 school year: _____

4. The number of 7th and 8th graders retained in 1995-96 who:

had a better rate of attendance during the 1996-97 school year: _____

had about the same rate of attendance during the 1996-97 school year: _____

had a lower rate of attendance during the 1996-97 school year: _____

5. The number of 7th and 8th graders retained in 1995-96 who:

had fewer disciplinary problems during the 1996-97 school year: _____

had about the same number of disciplinary problems during the 1996-97 school year: _____

had more disciplinary problems during the 1996-97 school year: _____

6. Does your school offer a formalized intervention program for retained students?

(Formalized means that it is a coordinated effort that is standard policy & practice) YES NO

7. Does this formal program include?: (Circle those that apply to your school)

summer school	before/after school programs	individual education plans
peer counseling	counseling	monitoring programs
peer tutoring	classroom accommodations	involvement with outside agencies
faculty tutoring	remedial classrooms	mentoring programs

8. Do you feel your formal intervention program meets students' needs?

YES NO

Please return survey in the enclosed envelope by 4/21/97