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A SURVEY OF SELECTED ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS
IN THE TOPPENISH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

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

by
Bruce K. Comer
August 1959

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A SURVEY OF SELECTED ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS
IN THE TOPPENISH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Interest in school attendance and the problems associated with it are the basic reasons this field has been chosen for study. The writer has worked in the attendance department of the Toppenish Junior High School for several years, and during that period of time many problems have come up concerning the attendance of students which have not been expediently solved. By reading widely in the field of attendance and by conducting research, it is the purpose of the writer to increase his knowledge of the attendance problem, and thus be able to suggest solutions for the problems which arise.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. The Toppenish Junior High School has one man and one woman devoting approximately four hours a day to the administration of attendance. It also has a part time attendance officer to take care of home problems with the students.

The field of attendance is very broad in scope and it has been a difficult task limiting the project to the fields of most concern. This is not a study of a single problem. Five separate attendance problems have been chosen concerning Toppenish Junior High School which need investigating. The five problems chosen are: (1) How does the percentage of absences at the Toppenish Junior High School compare with national averages? (2) Do the students of Toppenish Junior High School who participate in school activities have better or poorer attendance records than those who do not participate? (3) Are there days of the school week at the Toppenish Junior High School that have better or poorer attendance than others, and how does the school's situation compare with others of the nation? (4) What are the best and poorest attendance months at the Toppenish Junior High School and how does this compare with other schools of the nation? (5) Is there a relationship between grades and absences at the Toppenish Junior High School, and if there is some relationship, does this apply to some nationalities more than others?

It is expected that the results of this study will aid the writer in the performance of his duties in the attendance department of the Toppenish Junior High School. It is also expected that the results and implications of this study will not only aid others working with the attendance department, but will be of value to classroom teachers as well.

School Census and School Revenue. How to maintain optimal school attendance has always been, and probably always will be, a country-wide problem. It is the duty of the school personnel to know and to understand the state laws governing attendance, and to uphold those laws to the best of their ability. Most of the school's revenue is based on the attendance of the students. Consequently, student absence means that the school must subsist on less money than is needed for the best operation.

In order for the school to collect daily attendance money from state funds it must keep an accurate record of the school attendance. However, according to Lewis, many schools fall short of having a good school census.

The development of an efficient program of child accounting may be hampered by the fact that: (1) school officials often lack a proper understanding of the legal status of child accounting; (2) school officials often adhere to haphazard policies in accounting for school population; (3) there is little uniformity in child-accounting practice; and (4) in some cases, state school laws hinder the proper functioning of child-accounting programs.¹

One of the greatest difficulties that any school system faces when it attempts to enforce school attendance regulations is the absence of proper records as to which children reside in the community and who should be in school. The Toppenish School District

¹Russell A. Lewis, "All Present and Accounted For?" The School Executive, 61:15-16, September, 1941.

faces this problem probably more acutely than many other school districts in the state. This district is made up of students of many racial and cultural groups. It has many Mexicans, Indians, Negroes, Filipinos, and Japanese Americans as well as whites within the district. The Mexicans, especially, move in and out of the district because of their seasonal employment with crop harvesting. It is extremely difficult for the school to find the new Mexicans who have moved in, or to find where they go when they suddenly leave. Cubberley clarifies the problem within a wider context when he writes:

In the absence of any accurate data as to ages, number, or location of the children of school age in a school district, neither the attendance officer nor the principals can know, with any degree of accuracy, what children should report for school at the beginning of any school year. Neither do they know, usually, what children are attending private or parochial schools instead of the public schools, nor how regularly they attend such schools. The lack of accurate age and residence data, and the somewhat general lack of cooperation between public and private educational agencies in the enforcement of attendance laws, are serious defects which need to be remedied.²

School Attendance and the Attendance Department. Every child in the school district should attend school for a period of time long enough to enable him to fit into a form of life or occupation that

²Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), p. 582.

he will eventually find suited for him. It is the purpose of the attendance department to see that children of the community attend regularly in order that they do not impair their chances to obtain this necessary education.

One of the purposes of the school is to develop well-rounded individuals. To do this it is desirable that the child not have an unqualified teacher, or be forced to follow a curriculum that is not adapted to his needs. Even a gifted child, in an unsuitable curriculum, may become an attendance problem.

In order to prevent non-attendance of pupils the school must be made an interesting place for the students to attend. School activities prove to be among the most interesting features of the school, and many times will hold a student in school when nothing else will. Many times a student will endure the part of school he dislikes in order to participate in the part he likes.

When pupils are absent the greatest loss is not the financial loss to the school. It seems reasonable that the greatest loss is the educational loss to the student himself. When a pupil does not attend school it suggests that he never gains some of the education that is rightfully his. The people of the school districts have spent large amounts of money to build schools, provide classrooms, hire teachers, buy books, and purchase supplies for the benefit of the students. They have the right to expect optimal application of these funds.

Many times the schools criticize the students and the parents of the students when the pupils do not come to school. Often, however, the blame for non-attendance rests on the school itself. Many of our schools have not adjusted to the present day needs of youth. Sometimes the schools try to force too many things on the students without knowing whether the students want them or not. Allen summarizes this very well when he writes:

School laws and school rules require regular attendance, but there is something in human nature that balks at compulsion, even in affairs conducted for the welfare of the individual and society. Consequently, it is often better judgment to urge the advantages of the public schools rather than to emphasize the legal requirements in attempts to improve attendance.³

One of the sad plights of our modern schools is that as students progress to higher grades, absences and drop-outs increase. The schools need to do something to vitally interest all of the children starting at the elementary school level. Allen asserts that:

If pupils are encouraged to develop in responsibility, cooperation, and social concern as they grow older, it should be possible to maintain attendance in secondary schools to even a greater extent and degree than in the elementary schools. The chief requisite and duty is to organize the promotion of attendance, not for attendance alone but as an educational project through which it is possible to develop a high degree of responsibility, coopera-

³Richard D. Allen, "Forced Attendance: Harmful to School and Community," The Clearing House, 13:15, September, 1938.

tion, and social concern, the qualities of character which form the very foundation for social living and good citizenship.⁴

The Attendance Officer. Many of our modern school districts now have either a part time or a full time attendance officer. Most of the attendance officers selected by the schools are well educated men with an interest in their work.

The early schools, in most cases, and the modern schools, in some cases, had poor attendance officers. However, most school systems now try to hire the most qualified person they can obtain to handle the job of seeing that the children are in school.

Cubberley states:

In no respect has the enforcement of attendance at school changed more than in the type of attendance officers employed and the conception of his work. The old time truant officer concerned himself with cases, but seldom with causes. He relied chiefly on fear, and but little on understanding and cooperation. He went on the theory that if a pupil were absent from school it was because of some perversity that called for punishment, and he forced the pupil back into school without an attempt to change conditions.⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 19.

⁵Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 588-89.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has several limitations. First, the study is limited to the school year of 1956-57 at the Toppenish Junior High School. Second, although many authors have written on attendance, most of their writings are very similar thus making comparative analysis difficult. Third, the study did not include students who transferred into the Toppenish system after school started, or those students who transferred out of the system during the school year. Fourth, there are so few Indian and Negro students in the school system that the statistical results gathered on them might not be as reliable as the results gathered from other groups. Fifth, the main part of the research deals with the relationship between absences and grades, and the question frequently comes up, "Are absences the cause of poor grades, or are poor grades the cause of absences?" Relationship, or lack of relationship, can be shown, but cause and effect can only be inferred.

The limitations of this study are very important in considering the final analysis of the study. The Toppenish Junior High School is a medium-sized junior high with an average enrollment of slightly over 500 students at the time of the study. Also, Toppenish is primarily an agricultural community with few other stable industries.

For this reason Toppenish gets many migratory or seasonal workers of all nationalities. The children of these workers move in and out of the school with the seasons, and as a result have made it extremely difficult to get and interpret the data correctly.

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Attendance Officer. The person employed by the school district to work in a liaison capacity between the school and the homes of the students.

School Census. The daily attendance record that is kept on each student for as long as he is in the school.

School Records. The official records kept by the school that reveal the history of the student from the day he enters the school to the day he leaves.

Student. A person who is enrolled in school and not a person who is merely of school age.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to the laws of the state of Washington, every child is required to attend school from the age of eight to the age of sixteen, or until he has finished the eighth grade. It is the duty and obligation of the state, the community, the school, and the child to see that regular school attendance is kept.

The School Census. In order for the school to determine whether or not all of the children of school age are in school, there is a need for a complete school census. Reeder gives us the characteristics of a good school census when he writes:

An efficient census may be characterized as one which aids in carrying out the purposes for which the census has been established. Historically the census has three purposes: (1) to afford a basis for distributing school funds; (2) to aid in carrying out the educational program; (3) to assist in enforcing the compulsory attendance laws.¹

The school should have records of all children in school and keep up-to-date records of school enrollment. The school should

¹Ward G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School Administration (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 488.

also have and keep records of children attending nearby parochial schools. Public school authorities are responsible for seeing that when a child leaves for a parochial school he actually enters that school. The school is also responsible for seeing that when a child reports to the school that he is leaving the school district that he enrolls in the school system of the district to which he is moving.

School Attendance and Compulsory Attendance Laws. The compulsory attendance laws that require his attendance in school are one of the child's greatest protections against forces acting upon him from all directions. This protection by the compulsory attendance laws may be hindered by (1) poor enforcement of the attendance laws by the school; (2) farm work or other types of labor forcing the school board to shorten the term of the school year; (3) lack of interest in the public schools by the parents; (4) a negative attitude by the community towards the schools; (5) children living a long distance from the school; (6) migrant families who move out of one community into another community where their presence is unknown to the school; and (7) employers who hire children to work for them even though the state law forbids it.

Since every man's property is subject to taxation for the support of the public schools, and the state requires the children to attend the schools, it is the duty of the schools to give the children

the best education possible. It has been a long and hard struggle for schools to secure compulsory attendance laws for the states. The gains that have been made were made slowly and with much sacrifice, and the battle is not yet won. Dougherty gives us four reasons why regular attendance of the student is both important and necessary:

- (1) It is a controlling factor in the educational progress of the pupil. Whatever the cause of his absence, the pupil who returns after a day or a week from school usually finds that his work is harder, that he has lost contact with the activities of the class, and that his interest is lower. His feeling of belonging is less. It is no wonder that the pupil who is frequently absent becomes indifferent to school, loses his respect for it and for learning, and leaves as soon as he has reached the compulsory age limit.
- (2) Regular attendance is necessary for the good quality and rate of educational development of the class. Children who attend irregularly take the time of the teacher that should be given to the advancement of the class. Their absence disrupts the learning activities of the group because it results in their failure to fulfill the obligations they assume when present.
- (3) The value of the school to the community is directly dependent upon the attendance of the pupils. The educational advantages provided by the community cannot be received by the absent child.
- (4) In those states where the school apportionment of certain public moneys is based upon the average daily attendance or total numbers of days attended, absences cause an appreciable financial loss to the school.²

When compulsory school laws were enacted throughout the United States, they gave the school the legal right to obtain information about pupils and to enforce the attendance laws. Many states

²James Henry Dougherty, Elementary School Organization and Management (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), pp. 56-57.

have child labor laws which forbid the child to work except at minor tasks such as delivering newspapers or mowing lawns. Laws are also in existence which will not allow a child to work for any industry engaged in interstate commerce. Labor unions are also strongly against the adverse competition which exists when industries compete with each other for child labor. The people of the United States are also beginning to realize that only through appropriate education of our children can our nation remain as a world power. Cubberley summarizes this realization when he writes:

The educational problem which faces any community today is how best to educate all of its boys and girls until they have completed the period of required school attendance.³

Enforcement of school attendance is definitely a school and not a police problem. If the school can adjust its program to meet the problems of the individual, and secure parental understanding of the values and purposes of the school, the school has met and complied with its main goal. When the community does not care for the compulsory attendance laws, and the parents do not aid the school in enforcing them, the school then has trouble with the non-attendance of children.

³Elwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), p. 595.

The effectiveness of the attendance department in the schools can be greatly improved by providing the parents and the pupils with information on the compulsory attendance laws of the states. There are many ways in which this information may be provided, among them being (1) a letter from the school to each home when the school year begins, (2) an announcement in the community newspapers and over the local radio, (3) a discussion of the state attendance laws before the P. - T. A. groups, citizens committees, or other school groups.

Many difficulties have been overcome in the enforcement of the attendance laws. Cubberley gives three main needs for this enforcement. They are, namely:

- (1) Better plans for the registration of children of the compulsory attendance ages.
- (2) Better means and methods for the enforcement of the attendance and child labor laws.
- (3) Provision of specialized instruction to meet the needs of the new children brought into the schools.⁴

It costs as much to run a school system when many students are absent as when there are few absences. The teachers' salaries, the cost of supplies, and the cost of running the school plant remains as high even with a large number of children absent. Also, checking on excessive absences is difficult and expensive. However, many students deserve much credit for their ambition and desire to improve themselves in the school. Some of these students come from many

⁴Ibid., p. 581.

miles on days when the weather is bad or when they are not feeling well, because they do not want to miss school.

The Principal and Attendance. Jacobsen, Reavis, and Logsdon⁵ write that while the school board and the superintendent are responsible for seeing that good school attendance is observed, they usually pass this responsibility on to the principal. Jacobsen et al.⁶ also state that the keeping of records pertaining to the attendance of pupils is, in most states, a legal duty for which the principal is held responsible by the local school authorities.

The attendance officers do have enforcement powers, but the attendance program depends to a very high degree upon the efforts of the principal. Both the school board and the superintendent will look to the principal for explanations of the attendance violations that will come up. With this thought in mind, the principal should know and understand thoroughly the state attendance laws. If possible, he should have a copy of the laws in his desk with the important pages dealing with school attendance marked in a fashion that will allow him to find them easily. Smith, Standley, and Hughes elaborate on this

⁵Paul B. Jacobsen, William C. Reavis, and James D. Logsdon, The Effective School Principal (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 456.

⁶Ibid., p. 456.

when they write:

The principal should also be thoroughly familiar with the report and record plan forms that the school uses to report their attendance. These attendance records should provide for (1) collecting attendance data for every pupil for each period of the day, (2) recording data so it is readily available to teachers and counselors, (3) reporting each absence to parents, and (4) receiving parental excuses for each absence.⁷

The Attendance Officer. Even though the final responsibility for good attendance falls upon the principal, most schools hire an attendance officer who handles most of the routine attendance administration. Cubberley⁸ writes that it is the business of the attendance officer to guard the educational rights of the children, and in doing so he represents the superintendent of instruction, the teachers, and the state.

The work of the attendance officer as analyzed from sources too numerous to give credit to each individual author or source is to (1) receive reports each day from the school and other sources as to the absence of students, (2) visit the homes of the absent children when it becomes necessary, (3) bring about better relations between the school and home, (4) "sell" the idea of education to the parents who have not appreciated the full value of what education can do for their

⁷Maurice M. Smith, L. L. Standley, and Cecil L. Hughes, Junior High School Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1942), p. 359.

⁸Cubberley, op. cit., p. 586.

children, (5) find out, in all cases, the reasons for non-attendance, (6) be ready and willing to work long hours at any time of the day or night when the situation demands it, (7) help to take and keep up to date, the school census, (8) talk with parents, teachers, and pupils and attempt to help them understand the value of his work, (9) cooperate with the private and parochial schools to see that all children who should be in school are registered and attending a school, (10) work closely with health, welfare, and social workers in an effort to improve community conditions that lead to non-attendance of children, (11) watch closely for any and all violations of child labor laws, and issue work permits to those children who find it necessary to work during school hours, (12) work closely with parents in the cases of non-attendance and attempt, by persuasion, to have them send their children back to school. If they consistently refuse to cooperate, he must resort to legal measures to insure that the children are in school, (13) serve notices on parents as to violations of the laws and, in extreme cases, to enter and follow up prosecution, (14) follow up the transfer of students from one school to another to see that these children actually do enroll in the school to another to see that these children actually do enroll in the school to which they transfer, (15) know and understand the state and local school laws so that he can work in cooperation with other school officials, (16) make case studies

of students who are habitually absent, (17) keep a complete and accurate set of records of his daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly activities and services, and (18) check the enrollment at the beginning of the school year with the list of students who should be in school.

The present-day attendance officer tries to make his job a preventive rather than a corrective one. By his very presence on the job he is able to prevent non-attendance to a great extent. One of the greatest changes in the modern school systems has been the change in qualifications and thinking of the attendance officers. Formerly he was a truant officer who suspected every absence as being for an improper purpose. He was generally guided by the thought that if a pupil was absent from school it was because he was trying to skip his classes and therefore punishment was called for in most cases. His main weapon was fear, not understanding. Today in the cities and communities where the best attendance work is being done most of this is a thing of the past. The American School Board Journal sums this up very well in an editorial, part of which is extracted as follows:

It is an old fact that the work of the attendance officer is no longer primarily that of a policeman; the job of running down a boy and bringing him into court is only a final incident to the real job of discovering the cause of the truancy and of correcting both the personal and social conditions which have caused the youngster to be irregular. There is sound reasoning for selecting for the job an experienced teacher who has been given some training in social work and who has

the special abilities needed to discover the real family and personal causes that have led the child to 'skip' his classes. There are similarly good grounds for drawing the attendance officer from among the trained and experienced social workers, of accepting him for his sympathy and tact in handling the children.⁹

Reeder¹⁰ also states that educational qualifications in the attendance officer are now deemed more important than physical strength. The modern attendance officer must be, in the main, a social servant.

The attendance officer of today is a far different type of person that he was many years ago. From a consensus of broad reading and other sources too numerous to give credit to all concerned the writer has found that today's attendance officer must, and can, meet the following requirements: (1) He must have a good education. (2) He must have a personality which appeals to, and is respected by children and young people. (3) He does not wear a "cloak of authority." (4) He is able to make the right decision in cases which require decision. (5) He concerns himself more with causes than cases. (6) He will use tact when discussing cases with parents. (7) He is the type of person who can "sell" education to parents. (8) He usually has the qualifications

⁹Editorial, The American School Board Journal, 114:47, March, 1947.

¹⁰Ward G. Reeder, An Introduction to Public School Relations (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), p. 165.

and in many cases the experience of a teacher. (9) He uses good judgment. (10) He is a social servant. (11) He has executive ability. (12) He has an appreciation of the importance of school. (13) He has the ability to use force when force is necessary.

If the attendance officer is truly interested in children and in his job, the record forms he uses will not seem to be stark and naked information such as names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Instead the card should come to life and allow the attendance officer to see many things he might otherwise miss. From the address he might get some indication of the family's social and economic status. From the names on the card he might recognize whether the family or guardians are friendly or unfriendly toward the schools.

Many of our present-day authors in the field of education agree that the modern attendance officer has many ways which can help him do his job effectively. A combined analysis of many of their thoughts on this subject follows:

(1) He can consult all records of the pupil. The modern school system has records of each pupil from the time he entered the school system, and in most cases these records are carefully kept. Most school systems not only have grade cards and attendance cards for each pupil, but they also have a folder on each pupil which contains everything which has been learned or observed about that pupil from the

time he first entered school.

(2) He can consult the home background of the pupil. Many times the file on the student will contain information as to the home environment of the student. If there is little in the file as to the student's home life, the officer has other sources of information including the school nurse, police or detention files, teachers, friends of the student, counselors, the principal, the local banks or credit unions, and visits to the homes of the students.

(3) The attendance officer can check the scholastic ability of the pupil to see if he is a good, average, or poor student. If he is a poor student, he may be absent because he does not care for school.

(4) The behavior of the student at school can be easily checked to see how he gets along with the teachers and the other students.

(5) The interests of the student can be checked to see if there are interests nurtured by school to help the student enjoy being in school.

(6) Most students have a desire to do something or be something when they become adults. The attendance officer can work along this line to attempt to help the student want to come to school.

By using the above-mentioned points either singly, or in combination, the modern attendance officer attempts to find out why a

student is an attendance problem. He then does his best to help prevent it in the future. If, in some cases of non-attendance, none of the above mentioned aids works, he is then forced to take more extreme measures to insure the attendance of the students.

Reasons for Absences. According to Yeager¹¹ it was found that the responsibility for the absence of students from school could be divided among (1) the home, (2) the school, (3) the pupil, and (4) the community.

Yeager further lists the following as being the primary reasons for absences:

Single causes of non-attendance in which the home is primarily responsible are:

- Both parents employed
- Church services
- Domestic social maladjustments
- Emergencies at home
- Family moved out of the district
- Funerals
- Geographical location of the home
- Illness of others in the home
- Lack of proper or adequate clothing
- Malnutrition
- Parental apathy
- Poverty of economic mismanagement in the home
- Private lessons
- Pupil accompanying parents on vacations
- Pupil belonging to a migratory family
- Quarantine of home
- Weddings

¹¹William A. Yeager, Administration and the Pupil (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 95.

Causes of non-attendance traceable to the school's responsibility are:

- Age 14 and has passed highest grade offered
- Age 15 and is employed as domestic or as farm hand
- Age 16 (or legal age) and holds employment certificate
- Allowable transfer to another school district
- Emergencies of the school plant and equipment
- Exempt by completion of secondary school
- Inability to secure a teacher
- Instruction at the expense of teaching (certification vs. qualification)
- Lack of orientation or guidance
- Lack of school facilities
- Quarantine of school building
- Regular school vacations
- Strikes of pupils or teachers or similar occurrences
- Too few pupils in district (legal limits)
- Transportation deficiencies
- Unattractive school program
- Unwise location of school

Causes of non-attendance for which the pupil is responsible are:

- Pupil-pupil controversy
- Pupil strikes
- Shame (or pride) of pupil in which may be involved probation
- Parole
- Immorality
- Alcoholism
- Crime of parent, self, or relation
- Temporary unconfining absence of pupil
- Transportation by individual pupil
- Truancy of group of pupils
- Truancy of individual pupil

Causes of non-attendance traceable to the community are:

- Explosions
- Fires that disrupt community routine

Impassable highways and detours
Strikes affecting the community
Transportation emergencies (traffic accidents or tie-ups)
Wars and insurrections¹²

A large number of the single factors listed above do not in themselves cause a student to be absent from school. It is rather a combination of several of these causes occurring at the same time that usually result in the student's being absent. However, some of the above-mentioned reasons for absences are far more prevalent than others. It is the duty of the community, the home, the school, and everyone concerned with the school to exercise extensive effort to prevent these absences. Reeder analyzes the problem very well when he writes:

Many studies have shown that sickness, especially the common cold, is the chief cause of non-attendance. Teachers and school officials can do much to remove this cause by helping the pupils to maintain a high standard of health. Other factors being equal, school systems which have a thorough going plan of health supervision have a smaller amount of sickness, and consequently a less amount of non-attendance than school systems which do not have an efficient plan of health supervision.

Distance from school is another frequent cause of non-attendance, especially among the pupils in rural schools. Statistics show that school transportation reduces non-attendance, and that it reduces it considerably during severe winter months.

¹²Ibid., pp. 95-96.

Necessity for the pupil to do work at home is another chief cause of non-attendance. If such work is necessary for the support of the child's family, society is obligated to give financial assistance to such a child and his family.

Slow progress in school and low marks constitute another great cause of non-attendance. The pupil who has failed, or who is not getting along well at school, is likely to become discouraged and to want to quit school. The school, therefore, should do everything possible to help the child to succeed. Failure of pupils should be reduced to a minimum; in fact, under ideal conditions it would be eliminated. Promotions on condition or probation should be practiced frequently, because several studies have shown that a larger percentage of pupils who are promoted on condition or probation, do the work of the next grade very acceptably. It is more humane to give the pupil a chance to succeed than to fail him before giving him that chance.¹³

Attendance Statistics. Moehlman¹⁴ has found that illness in the home and illness of the child account for almost 60% of all absences. He has also found that "economic and social incapacity of parents or the child, and maladjustments in school-child relationships account for approximately 20% each." Maladjustment is also expressed as truancy, although the latter cause, defined as "willful absence" seldom exceeds 2% of the total absence. In the same study he has found that attendance varies by age, month, and sex, with girls showing a slightly better record.

¹³Reeder, op. cit., pp. 477-79.

¹⁴Arthur B. Moehlman, School Administration, Its Development, Principles, and Function in the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), pp. 182-83.

Reeder¹⁵ has found that approximately 15 per cent of the students around the nation are absent daily. Also, according to studies conducted by Reeder,¹⁶ he has found that the percentage of daily attendance varies from state to state and from community to community. He has found that attendance in the Northern states is generally better than attendance in the Southern states, and that some communities within the same school system, and that specific teachers within the same school have better and worse attendance than others.

Gillis and Hearn¹⁷ in studies conducted in an Oregon high school have found that attendance has varied inversely with the grade level (i. e., the higher the grade level the lower the attendance). They also found that students who take part in extracurricular or school activities have better attendance records than those who do not. Poorest attendance months for the Oregon high school were December, January, and February; the best attendance month was May. Also, they found that the poorest attendance days were Mondays and Fridays with Tuesdays and Thursdays showing better attendance. Wednesday was the best attendance day of the week.

¹⁵Reeder, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 475-76.

¹⁷Earl Gillis and Arthur C. Hearn, "An Oregon High School Studies Its Attendance Problems," The Clearing House, 31:27, September, 1956.

Truancy. Although truancy is responsible for only a very small percentage of the total absences, it is probably the most difficult for the school to deal with. There are many reasons why a student will be a truant from school. Some of these are: (1) The student would rather get a job than go to school. (2) The student does not like school. (3) The student is unable to learn as fast as other students. (4) The student is failing and does not want to repeat the grade. (5) The student feels that he can learn more outside of school than he can in school. (6) The student needs more money to buy clothes and for extra spending money. (7) The student does not want to come to school on fine spring or fall days.

Yeager asserts:

Truancy is a symptom, not a disease, since, unless corrected, it leads to further complications. It is principally a problem of adolescence--of the junior high school and the lower years of the senior high school.¹⁸

Yeager¹⁹ has also found that boys are more guilty of truancy than girls, and that the mean age of truants is about fifteen and one-half years. He has found that the mean grade is the ninth and about half way through it, and that most truants are single offenders. Second and third offenders tend to become habitual. He has also found

¹⁸Yeager, op. cit., p. 92.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 92-93.

that truancy rises with the beginning of a new semester and declines as the semester draws to a close.

All of our schools use many methods to help them gain better attendance of the students. Some of these methods are successful and others are not. Reeder gives several methods that have been used successfully. They are:

(1) The names of pupils who have been perfect in attendance for a week are listed on the blackboard. Each week thereafter when a pupil is perfect in attendance a star is placed after his name. (2) A contest may be started between two or more rooms to secure the highest percentage of attendance. The results are graphed each week, comparing all rooms in the contest. (3) A banner or pennant can be provided which goes each week to the room having the highest percentage of attendance. (4) Some teachers report that they have their class organized for the purpose of improving attendance. The student officers then check up on causes of poor attendance and do what they can to remove them. (5) Sometimes offending youngsters, those with bad attendance records, are called upon to assume some responsibility or duty in connection with the management of the class. (6) Interesting opening exercises are often resorted to with good effect. (7) In the smaller communities the newspapers print the names of those children who have had perfect attendance during the last school month, semester, or year. An old custom still used in some places is to give a half day holiday every four weeks to those who have been perfect in attendance.²⁰

Summary of Literature. The state of Washington requires every child to attend school from the age of eight to the age of sixteen,

²⁰Reeder, op. cit., p. 480.

or until he has finished the eighth grade. An accurate school census is needed to ascertain if every child who should be in school is attending a school. Every man's property is taxed to support the schools and it is the duty of the schools to see that the children are in attendance and receiving a good education. The schools have the legal right to enforce the attendance laws, but they should work toward attendance understandings with the parents and pupils rather than stress legal requirements.

In most states the principal is held responsible for keeping accurate attendance records, but most schools employ an attendance officer to handle the routine attendance problems. The attendance officer of today is a changed man from the "truant" officer of yesterday. Today he works toward understanding the children rather than autocratic attendance enforcement.

The responsibility for absences from school can be divided among the home, the pupil, the school, and the community. Illness would seem to be the chief single cause for absences, followed closely by home maladjustments and work. Truancy comprises only a small percentage of absences.

CHAPTER III

SOURCES OF DATA AND METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The sources of data used in this survey of attendance at the Toppenish Junior High School as related to national trends included books, periodicals, official student records kept at the Toppenish Junior High School, and interviews with people connected with the attendance department of various other schools.

The writer studied many books and periodicals written by prominent men in the field of attendance in order to help gain a better understanding of the attendance problem before a definite procedure was established. To become better acquainted with the over-all state picture on attendance the writer interviewed several people who were connected with the attendance departments of other schools.

After the above sources had been consulted, the writer made charts of the following seven items that were part of his research.

(1) The grades and attendance records of all students in the Toppenish Junior High School for the school year of 1956-57.

(2) The total absences of both boys and girls by the month and by the days of the week.

(3) The total days of truancy recorded by both boys and girls.

(4) The total number of days present and absent for all students in the junior high school.

(5) The total number of absences for each grade (7, 8, and 9).

(6) The number of boys and girls taking part in school activities and their total number of days present and days absent.

(7) The total number of days of absence because of illness, work, and truancy.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the findings from an analysis of the research on the five separate attendance problems that were chosen for study. Much of the data in this study of attendance in the Toppenish Junior High School is presented in tabular or graphic form.

Average Daily Attendance. The average daily attendance for the Toppenish Junior High School during the school year of 1956-57 was 94.0 per cent.¹ This is far better than the national average of only 85 per cent.² The figure of 94.0 per cent was easily obtained by dividing the total number of days of school attended by the students in the junior high by the total number of days it was possible for them to attend. The figure obtained by the author through independent research was identical with the figure obtained by the school superintendent.

¹Figure obtained from the office of the Superintendent of Schools, Toppenish, Washington.

²Ward G. Reeder, An Introduction to Public School Relations (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), p. 192.

Average Number of Students Absent Per Day for Each
Month of the Year. Table I shows that there were 15 days during the month of September in which attendance was kept. During those 15 days there was a total of 351 students absent representing an average of 23.4 students absent per day. Other months can be interpreted similarly from inspection of Table I.

From these figures it is found that April was the poorest attendance month in the Toppenish Junior High School for the year of 1956-57. The best month for attendance was September. The first four months of the school year (September, October, November, and December) were far better attendance months than the last five months (January, February, March, April, and May). From interest initiated by the study, the author informally investigated the 1958-59 school year attendance and found great similarity suggesting the reliability of the one-year index.

These findings compare favorably with those made by Gillis and Hearn³ in their studies of attendance in an Oregon high school, except they found May to be the best attendance month. Table I shows it to be one of the poorest attendance months in Toppenish.

³Earl Gillis and Arthur C. Hearn, "An Oregon High School Studies Its Attendance Problems," The Clearing House, 31:27, September, 1956.

TABLE I

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ABSENT PER DAY
FOR EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR
DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1956-57
AT THE TOPPENISH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Month	Number of Days Attendance Was Counted	Total Number of Students Absent	Average Number of Students Absent Per Day
September	15	351	23.4
October	23	651	28.3
November	20	556	27.8
December	15	459	30.6
January	21	788	37.5
February	19	741	39.0
March	21	799	38.0
April	20	824	41.2
May	20	747	37.4

Average Number of Students Absent Each Day of the Week.

Table II shows that there were 36 Mondays during the school year of 1956-57 during which 1377 students were absent. This is an average of 38.2 students absent on each Monday of the school year. Other days of the week can be analyzed from Table II by following this same procedure.

The figures show that Monday was the poorest attendance day of the week in the Toppenish Junior High School during the school year of 1956-57. Monday was closely followed by Friday. The best attendance day would seem to be Tuesday closely followed by Wednesday and Thursday. These figures compare quite favorably with those offered by Gillis and Hearn⁴ in their study of attendance in an Oregon high school.

School Activities and Attendance. A study was also made of 125 students who took part in school activities to see if they had better attendance records than the average of all students in the junior high school. All students who took part in any club or sport except boys' league or girls' league were included in the survey. The se two were omitted because all students in the junior high school belonged to them.

⁴Ibid., p. 27.

TABLE II

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ABSENT EACH DAY OF THE WEEK
 DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR OF 1956-57 AT THE
 TOPPENISH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Day of the Week	Total Number of Each Day of the Week during which Attendance was Kept	Total Number of Absences during this Day of the Week	Average Number of Students Absent Each Day of the Week
Monday	36	1377	38.2
Tuesday	36	1116	31.0
Wednesday	35	1098	31.4
Thursday	34	1071	31.5
Friday	33	1231	37.3

The 125 students selected had a total of 21,586 days present and 799 days absent. This is an average of 96.5 per cent days present. By comparing this figure with the 94.0 per cent figure on absences for all students attending the Toppenish Junior High School during the school year of 1956-57 it is suggested that there is a slight tendency for students who are interested in taking part in school activities to attend school more regularly than the students who do not.

Reasons for Absences. Illness was the chief cause for absences of both boys and girls in the Toppenish Junior High School during the school year of 1956-57. During the school year the boys turned in 1,871 explanations for being absent. Of these, 1,304 or 69.7 per cent were for illness, 150 or 8.0 per cent for work, 391 or 20.9 per cent were for other reasons, and 1.4 per cent were for truancy. The girls turned in 2,248 explanations for being absent. Of these, 1,538 or 68.4 per cent were for illness, 28 or 1.2 per cent were for work, 29.4 per cent were for other reasons, and 1.0 per cent were for truancy. These figures do not agree wholly with the studies made on attendance by Moehlman,⁵ but in the cases of illness and truancy they are very similar.

⁵Arthur B. Moehlman, School Administration, Its Development, Principles, and Function in the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), pp. 182-83.

Grade Averages by Class and by Sex. The main part of this study was to find out if a relationship existed between grades and absences in the Toppenish Junior High School during the school year of 1956-57 on the assumption that one year would be a good indication of other years. In order to do this the grades and absences of every student attending full time during that school year were analyzed. Students who attended Toppenish Junior High School part of the year and then transferred to other schools were omitted. Also, students who transferred into the Toppenish Junior High School from other schools during the school year were omitted. The reason for omitting them was the difficulty of receiving accurate attendance and grade reports from the other schools.

In setting up the tables the grades have been assigned on the following basis: An X = 0 points, a D- = 1 point, a D = 2 points, a D+ = 3 points, a C - = 4 points, a C = 5 points, a C+ = 6 points, a B - = 7 points, a B = 8 points, a B+ = 9 points, an A - = 10 points, and an A = 11 points.

Using the above figures as a basis, it was found that the grade point average for the entire Toppenish Junior High School for the year of 1956-57 was 6.1 or slightly better than a C+. When this was broken down by classes and by sex it is found that the 9th grade boys had a grade point average of 5.2 or slightly better than a C, and

the 9th grade girls had an average of 6.0 or C+. The 8th grade boys had an average of 6.3 or slightly better than a C+, and the 8th grade girls had an average of 6.6 or between a C+ and a B-. The 7th grade boys had an average of 5.8 or almost a C+, and the 7th grade girls had an average of 6.6 or between a C+ and a B-.

From the examination of the above figures it would appear that the girls have better grade averages than the boys in the Toppenish Junior High School for the year of 1956-57. Also it seems that as the students advance in grades their over-all grade averages drop. At least these were the cases for the classes enrolled during this study.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of All Students.

Table III, page 40, shows that there were 68 students who were present from 179 to 180 days. The grade point average of these students was 6.8 or .7 of a point higher than the average of all junior high students. There were 69 students who were present from 177 to 178 days. The grade point average of these students was 6.7 or a slight drop from the average of those who had perfect or near perfect attendance. There were 42 students who were present from 175 to 176 days. Their grade point average was also 6.7 or a slight drop from those with perfect or near perfect attendance. There were 50 students who were present from 173 to 174 days. Their grade point average was 6.8 or equal to those with 179 to 180 days attendance. There were 34 students who

TABLE III

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN THE TOPPENISH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956 - 57

Days Present	G r a d e s											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180			1	4	9	8	10	9	9	8	8	2
177 - 178	1	1		6	6	9	8	11	8	9	9	1
175 - 176			1	4	3	5	8	4	5	5	7	
173 - 174		1		2	7	5	9	6	8	3	8	1
171 - 172				3	2	5	2	5	10	3	4	
169 - 170			2	3	3	6	6	9	5	2	6	1
167 - 168			3	1	1	4	2	5	3	1	3	
165 - 166			6	2	2	5	2	5	6	2	2	
163 - 164			3	1	1	6	4	1	1	3	1	
161 - 162				2	2	5	1	4	4		1	
160 and below	1	6	8	10	12	8	4	7	2		1	

were present from 171 to 172 days. Their grade point average was 6.9 or .1 of a point better than those who had perfect or near perfect attendance. There were 43 students who were present from 169 to 170 days and these students had a grade point average of 6.6 which is lower than those students who had better attendance. There were 23 students who were present from 167 to 168 days. These students had a grade point average of 6.2 which is lower than any of the students with better attendance records, but it is still .1 of a point better than the over-all average. The 165 to 166 days present bracket had 32 students in it with a grade average of 5.8. This is the lowest average yet encountered, and is .3 of a point below the average of all students. There are 21 students in the 163 to 164 days present bracket with a grade point average of 5.7 which is .4 of a point below the average of all students. There are 19 students who were present from 161 to 162 days. These students had a grade point average of 6.1 which is the same as the over-all average. There were 59 students who were absent 20 or more days. These students had a grade point average of 4.1 which is 2.0 points below the average of all students and is far below the averages made by those students who had better attendance records.

To further clarify the figures in Table III, a graphic approach is also used. Graph 1, page 42, shows how the line starts at the 6.8

Grades

11.0
10.5
10.0
9.5
9.0
8.5
8.0
7.5
7.0
6.5
6.0
5.5
5.0
4.5
4.0
3.5
3.0
2.5
2.0
1.5
1.0
0.5

160 161 163 165 167 169 171 173 175 177 179
below 162 164 166 168 170 172 174 176 178 180

Graph 1. Relationship between Grades and Absences of all Toppenish Junior High School Students for the Year of 1956-57

grade average for all students who were present from 179 to 180 days. Tracing the line back towards fewer days in attendance we notice that the line then drops .1 of a point for all students who were present from 177 to 178 and 175 to 176 days. The line then goes up .1 of a point to the 6.8 grade average of all students who were present either 173 or 174 days. The line then climbs another .1 of a point to the 6.9 grade average of all students who were present from 171 to 172 days. The line then drops off gradually past the 6.2 grade average of all students who were present from 167 to 168 days to the 5.8 grade average of all students who were present from 165 to 166 days. The line continues dropping to the 5.7 grade average made by all students who were present from 163 to 164 days. The line then climbs to the 6.1 grade average made by all students who were present from 161 to 162 days. The final drop of the line is down to the 4.1 grade average made by all students who were present 160 days or less. Inspectionally it appears that there is little relationship between attendance and achievement, as indicated by grades, except that students absent more than 20 days achieve significantly lower than those with fewer than 20 absences.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Ninth Grade

Boys. Table IV, page 44, shows the total number of ninth grade boys

TABLE IV

TOTAL NUMBER OF NINTH GRADE BOYS IN THE TOPPENISH
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH
GRADE IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET
FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	G r a d e s										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180			1	1	3	5	1	1	3		
177 - 178				2	1	1	2				
175 - 176				1				1	1		
173 - 174					1	1	1	1			
171 - 172			3		1		1	1			
169 - 170			1	1	3	3	1				
167 - 168					1			1			
165 - 166			1		2		2	2			
163 - 164		2	1	1	2						
161 - 162					1						
160 and below	2	2	3	4		2					

receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. As may be seen in the table, the 179 to 180 days present bracket contained more ninth grade boys than any other attendance bracket. This bracket was closely followed by the 160 and below days present bracket. They had fifteen and thirteen students respectively. It also can be seen that the 161 to 162 days present bracket had only one ninth grade boy, and the 167 to 168 days present bracket had but two.

It is interesting to note that there were no ninth grade boys with grade averages of A, A —, or X. The C bracket, as probably should be expected, with fifteen boys was the leader in numbers of all the grade brackets.

The graph showing the relationship between absences and grades for the ninth grade boys is graph number 2, page 46. The line starts at the 6.3 grade average of all boys who were present 179 or 180 days. It then drops to the 5.5 average made by those boys who were present 177 or 178 days. From there the line climbs to the 7.0 average made by those boys who were present 175 to 176 days, and then drops slightly to the 6.5 average made by those boys who were present 173 or 174 days. The graph then takes a sharp drop to the 4.8 average made by the boys who were present from 171 to 172 days, and then climbs slightly to the 5.2 average made by those boys present from 169 to 170 days. The graph then climbs sharply to the 6.5

Grades

11.0

10.5

10.0

9.5

9.0

8.5

8.0

7.5

7.0

6.5

6.0

5.5

5.0

4.5

4.0

3.5

3.0

2.5

2.0

1.5

1.0

0.5

Days	160	161	163	165	167	169	171	173	175	177	179
Present	& below	162	164	166	168	170	172	174	176	178	180

Graph 2. Relationship between Grades and Absences of the Ninth Grade Boys of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

average made by those boys who were present from 167 to 168 days, and drops off slightly to the 6.1 average made by those present from 165 to 166 days. The graph then drops very sharply to the 3.5 average made by those who were only present from 163 to 164 days. It then climbs to the 5.0 average made by the single student who was present 161 or 162 days. Finally it drops off to the 3.3 average made by the students who were absent 20 or more days. Generally, a slight but highly inconsistent relationship is suggested between grades and attendance.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Ninth Grade

Girls. Table V, page 48, shows the total number of ninth grade girls receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. As may be seen by the table the 177 to 178 days present bracket had eleven girls and was the leader in the attendance groupings of the ninth grade girls. The majority of the remaining attendance brackets had from six to eight girls in each bracket. The least number of ninth grade girls are found in the 171 to 172 and 167 to 168 days present brackets. Each of these brackets had only two girls.

It may be seen from the table that there was only one ninth grade girl with an A average. There was also only one ninth grade girl who had an X average. The modal grade bracket for the ninth grade girls was the B — bracket with 14 girls.

TABLE V

TOTAL NUMBER OF NINTH GRADE GIRLS IN THE TOPPENISH
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE IN EACH
ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	G r a d e s											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180						1		3			3	
177 - 178	1				2	2		1	2	1	1	1
175 - 176			1	1			1		2	1	1	
173 - 174		1			2					3	1	
171 - 172						1		1				
169 - 170			1			2	1	4				
167 - 168									1		1	
165 - 166			1	1		1		2				
163 - 164						1	1	1		2		
161 - 162			1			2	1	1				
160 and below		1	2			1		1	1		1	

Graph 3, page 50, shows the relationship between absences and grades for the ninth grade girls. The line starts at 8.0 which is the grade point average made by the ninth grade girls who were present 179 or 180 days. The graph then drops to 6.5 which is the average made by those girls who were present from 177 to 178 days, and then rises slightly to 6.6 which is the average made by both the 175 to 176 and 173 to 174 days present brackets. The line then drops to 6.0 which is the average of those girls who were present from 171 to 172 days, and rises to 6.6 which is the average of those girls who were present 169 to 170 days. The line then makes a big jump up to 9.0 which is the average of those girls who were present from 167 to 168 days. The line then makes an even larger drop down to 4.8, the average of all girls who were present from 165 to 166 days. A sharp rise up to a 7.2 average is then seen for those girls who were present from 163 to 164 days. The line then falls once again to 5.0 which is the average of the girls in the 161 to 162 days present bracket. As can be seen 5.0 is also the grade point average of those girls who were present 160 days or less. Again, somewhat as with ninth grade boys, there seems to be a slight but highly inconsistent relationship between attendance and achievement.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Eighth Grade

Boys. Table VI, page 51, shows the total number of eighth grade boys

Grades

11.0

10.5

10.0

9.5

9.0

8.5

8.0

7.5

7.0

6.5

6.0

5.5

5.0

4.5

4.0

3.5

3.0

2.5

2.0

1.5

1.0

0.5

Days	160	161	163	165	167	169	171	173	175	177	179
Present	& below	162	164	166	168	170	172	174	176	178	180

Graph 3. Relationship between Grades and Absences of the Ninth Grade Girls of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

TABLE VI

TOTAL NUMBER OF EIGHTH GRADE BOYS IN THE TOPPENISH
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE
IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	G r a d e s											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180			1		2	2	2	1	3	1	2	
177 - 178				2		1	3	3	2		3	
175 - 176							1	1		1		
173 - 174					1	1	1	2	3			1
171 - 172					1	1	2		4	1	2	
169 - 170					1		1	1	2		2	
167 - 168			1				1				1	
165 - 166			2		1				1	1	1	
163 - 164						1			1			
161 - 162				1		2		1	1			
160 and below		1		2	3	1		1	1			

receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. The leading attendance brackets were the 179 to 180 and 177 to 178 days present brackets. Each of these brackets had 14 eighth grade boys. The poorest attendance bracket was the 163 to 164 days present bracket. This bracket was closely followed by the 175 to 176 and 167 to 168 days present brackets. Each of these brackets had three boys.

There was only one eighth grade boy who had an A average, and there were no eighth grade boys with an X average. It may also be seen from the table that the B — grade bracket was the leading grade bracket for the eighth grade boys. There were eighteen boys in this bracket.

Graph 4, page 53, shows the line starting at the 6.6 grade average for those boys with 179 to 180 days present and then gradually heads upwards past the 6.9 average made by those boys who were present 177 or 178 days until it reaches the 7.3 grade average made by those boys who were present 175 or 176 days. The graph then slopes downward to the 7.1 grade average made by those present from 173 to 174 days and then rises to the 7.5 grade average of those who were present 171 or 172 days, and continues up to the 7.6 grade average made by those who were present from 169 to 170 days. The graph then drops sharply to the 6.0 average made by those boys who were present from 167 to 168 days. Those boys who were present from 165 to 166 days

Grades

11.0

10.5

10.0

9.5

9.0

8.5

8.0

7.5

7.0

6.5

6.0

5.5

5.0

4.5

4.0

3.5

3.0

2.5

2.0

1.5

1.0

0.5

Days	160	161	163	165	167	169	171	173	175	177	179
Present & below	162	164	166	168	170	172	174	176	178	180	

Graph 4. Relationship between Grades and Absences of the Eighth Grade Boys of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

then cause the graph to take a small drop to 5.8 grade average after which the graph rises to the 6.5 grade average made by those who were present from 163 to 164 days. The graph then once again drops to the 5.8 grade average made by those present from 161 to 162 days, and continues down to the 4.3 grade average of those boys who were absent 20 or more days. Although boys with as few as ten absences tended to perform better than those with near perfect attendance, heavy absence still affected poor performance so that a very slight positive relationship seems to exist between achievement and attendance.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Eighth Grade

Girls. Table VII, page 55, shows the total number of eighth grade girls receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. The best attendance bracket for the eighth grade girls was the 167 to 168 days present bracket. This bracket had eleven girls. Strangely this bracket was followed in numbers by the 160 and less days present bracket which had nine girls. The poorest attendance brackets were the 165 to 166, the 163 to 164, and the 161 to 162 days present brackets each of which had four girls.

There were no eighth grade girls who had either A or X averages, and there was but one girl with a D — average. There were

TABLE VII

TOTAL NUMBER OF EIGHTH GRADE GIRLS IN THE TOPPENISH
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE
 IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	Grades											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180					1			2	2		2	
177 - 178				1		1		1	1		3	
175 - 176				1	1		3		1	1	1	
173 - 174					1		1	1			3	
171 - 172					1			1	2	2		
169 - 170					1			1	2		4	
167 - 168			1		1	2	1	4		1	1	
165 - 166						2			1	1		
163 - 164			1			1	1				1	
161 - 162			1	1					1		1	
160 and below		1	2	1	1	2	1	1				

sixteen girls with A — averages which, interestingly, was the modal number in any of the grade brackets. The remainder of the grade brackets ranged from two girls in the D + bracket to eleven girls in the B — bracket.

Graph 5, page 57, shows the line starting at the 7.7 grade point average made by those girls who were present from 179 to 180 days and then drops slightly to the 7.6 grade average made by those girls who were present from 177 to 178 days. The line then takes a sharp drop down to the 6.5 grade average made by those girls who were present from 175 to 176 days, and then rises to the 7.8 average made by those girls who were present from 173 to 174 days. The line then takes a little dip to the 7.5 average made by those girls who were present from 171 to 172 days, and rises to the 8.4 average made by those girls who were present 169 or 170 days. The graph then drops steeply to the 6.3 average made by those girls who were present from 167 to 168 days and rises again to the 6.8 average made by those girls who were present from 165 to 166 days. The line then takes another sharp drop to the 5.8 averages made by both the 163 to 164 days present group and the 161 to 162 days present group. Finally the graph drops all the way down to the 3.9 grade average made by those girls who were present 160 days or less. Here the general trend of positive relationship between achievement and attendance is more

Grades

11.0

10.5

10.0

9.5

9.0

8.5

8.0

7.5

7.0

6.5

6.0

5.5

5.0

4.5

4.0

3.5

3.0

2.5

2.0

1.5

1.0

0.5

Days	160	161	163	165	167	169	171	173	175	177	179
Present & below	162	164	166	168	170	172	174	176	178	180	

Graph 5. Relationship between Grades and Absences of the Eighth Grade Girls of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

definite but there is still the characteristic gross inconsistency as seen in previously discussed grade levels.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Seventh

Grade Boys. Table VIII, page 59, shows the total number of seventh grade boys receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. The most frequented attendance bracket for the seventh grade boys was the 177 to 178 days present bracket. This bracket was represented by fourteen boys. This bracket was followed closely by the 175 to 176 and the 173 to 174 days present brackets. Each of these brackets had twelve boys. The poorest attendance bracket was the one showing the boys who were present either 163 or 164 days. This bracket was followed closely by the 167 to 168, the 165 to 166, and the 161 to 162 days present brackets. Each of these brackets had but two boys.

There was but one seventh grade boy who had an A average, and but one boy who had an X average. There were only two boys with D — averages and but one boy with a D average. This indicates that most of the seventh grade boys were average students or better.

Graph 6, page 60, shows the relationship between grades and absences for the seventh grade boys. The graph starts at the 5.2 average made by those boys who were present from 179 to 180 days. The line then rises slowly to the 5.6 average made by those boys

TABLE VIII

TOTAL NUMBER OF SEVENTH GRADE BOYS IN THE TOPPENISH
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE
 IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	G r a d e s											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180				2	4		2	1				1
177 - 178		1		2	1	2	3	3		2		
175 - 176				2	1	4	1	1	1		2	
173 - 174					1	2	2	2	2		3	
171 - 172						2		2	3		1	
169 - 170			1	1		1	1	1		1		
167 - 168				1		1						
165 - 166								1	1			
163 - 164							1					
161 - 162								1	1			
160 and below	1	1		2	1	2	1					

Grades

11.0

10.5

10.0

9.5

9.0

8.5

8.0

7.5

7.0

6.5

6.0

5.5

5.0

4.5

4.0

3.5

3.0

2.5

2.0

1.5

1.0

0.5

Days	160	161	163	165	167	169	171	173	175	177	179
Present & below	162	164	166	168	170	172	174	176	178	180	

Graph 6. Relationship between Grades and Absences of the Seventh Grade Boys of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

present from 177 to 178 days, and continues slowly up to the 5.9 average made by those boys who were present 175 or 176 days. The graph then makes a steep rise to the 7.2 and 7.3 grade averages made by the 173 to 174 and 171 to 172 days present brackets. The graph then drops steeply to the 5.3 and 4.0 averages made by the 169 to 170 and 167 to 168 days present brackets, and then rises sharply to the 7.5 average made by those in the 165 to 166 days present bracket. The line then drops to the 6.0 grade average made by the one boy who was present either 163 or 164 days. The line rises once again to the 7.5 average made by those who were present 161 or 162 days, and finally drops to the 3.4 average made by those boys who were absent 20 days or more. With the exception of poor performance by students absent over 20 days there seems to be a slight trend toward a negative relationship between attendance and achievement.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Seventh

Grade Girls. Table IX, page 62, shows the total number of seventh grade girls receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. The best attendance bracket for the seventh grade girls was the 177 to 178 days present bracket with sixteen girls. This bracket was closely followed by the 179 to 180 days present bracket with fifteen girls. The poorest attendance bracket for the seventh grade girls was the 171 to 172 days present bracket with one girl. This was closely

TABLE IX

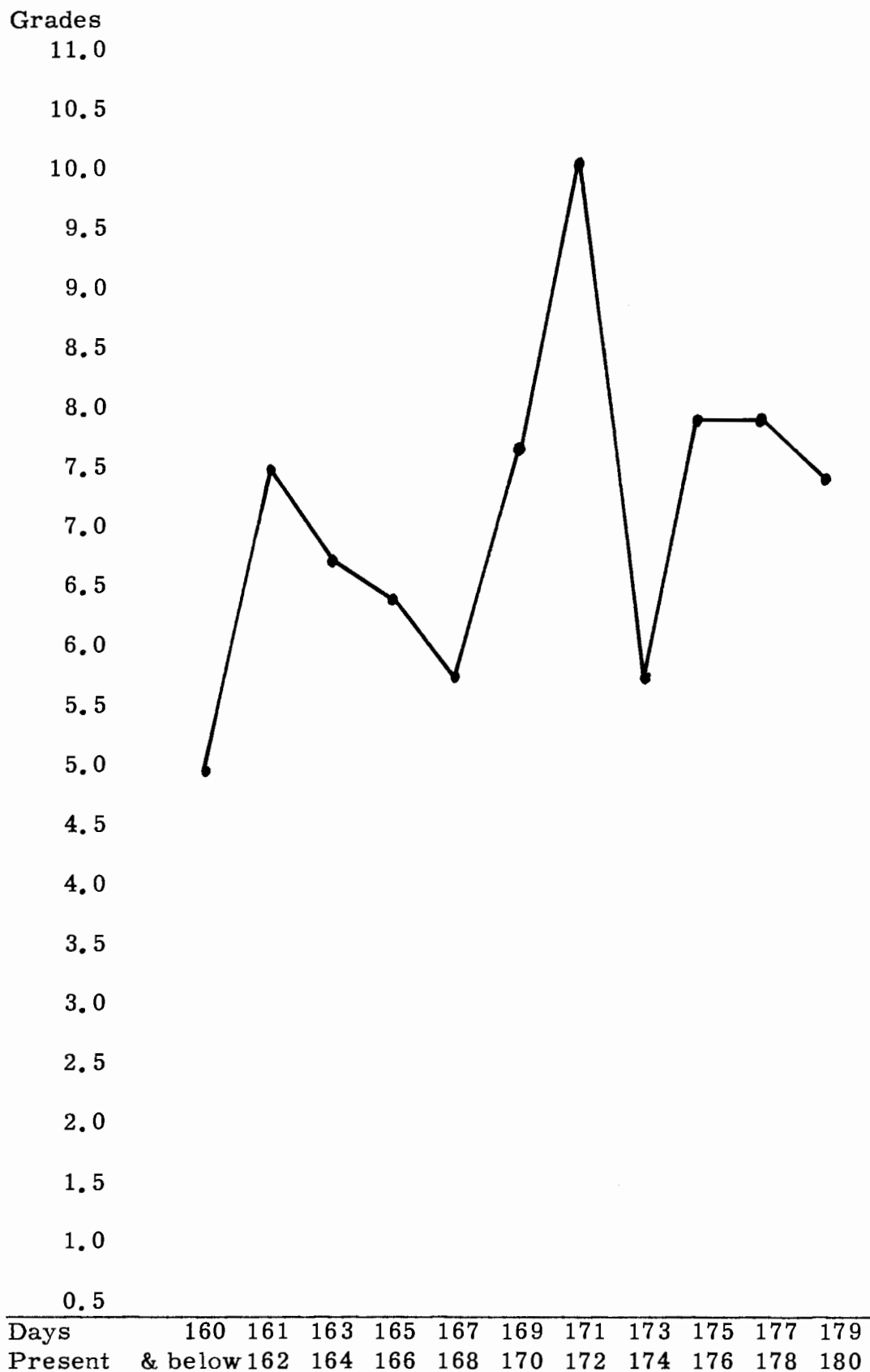
TOTAL NUMBER OF SEVENTH GRADE GIRLS IN THE TOPPENISH
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE
IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	G r a d e s											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180				1	1	2	1	1	3	4	1	1
177 - 178					1	2	1	1	3	6	2	
175 - 176						1	2	2		1	3	
173 - 174				2	2	1	1		2		1	
171 - 172											1	
169 - 170				1				1	1	1		1
167 - 168			1					1	1			
165 - 166			1				2		1		1	
163 - 164						1	1			1		
161 - 162								1	1			
160 and below			2	1	3	2		4	1			

followed by the 161 to 162 days present bracket with but two girls.

There were two girls with A averages but no girls had either an X or a D — average. More girls are found in the B and B \neq brackets than any other brackets for seventh grade girls. Each of these brackets has thirteen girls.

Graph 7, page 64, shows the relationship between grades and absences for the seventh grade girls. The graph starts at the 7.4 grade average made by those girls who were present either 179 or 180 days and then rises to the 7.8 grade averages attained by both the 177 to 178 days present group and the 175 to 176 days present group. The graph then dips sharply to the 5.7 grade average made by those who were present either 173 or 174 days, and then rises steeply to the 10.0 average made by the one person who was absent either 171 or 172 days. The graph then drops off to the 7.6 average made by those girls who were present either 169 or 170 days, and continues dropping steeply to the 5.7 average made by those girls who were present from 167 to 168 days. From there the graph rises to the 6.4 average made by those who were present either 165 or 166 days and then rises slightly more to the 6.7 average made by those girls who were present either 163 or 164 days. The graph then continues rising to the 7.5 average made by the 161 to 162 days present group and finally falls to the 5.0 average made by those girls who were present 160 days or less.



Graph 7. Relationship between Grades and Absences of the Seventh Grade Girls of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

As characteristic of many of the classes a slight positive relationship between grades and attendance is indicated but still with gross individual variation.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Non-White Students. The grade point average of all non-white students in the Toppenish Junior High School was 4.8 during the school year of 1956-57. When this is broken down into the chief races we find that the Mexican race had a 5.0 grade average, the Indian race a 4.6 grade average, and the Negro race a 4.1 grade average.

Table X, page 66, shows the total number of non-white students receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. The top attendance bracket for all non-white students was the 160 and below days present bracket. This bracket had nineteen students. It was followed by the 169 to 170 days present bracket with nine students. The attendance brackets with the least number of non-white students were the 171 to 172 and 175 to 176 days present brackets. Each of these brackets had four students.

There were no non-white students with either A or X averages. There was only one non-white student with a D — average, and but two students with A — or B + averages. The C bracket had more non-white students than any other bracket. The C — and D + brackets with fourteen and twelve students respectively closely followed this bracket.

TABLE X

TOTAL NUMBER OF NON-WHITE STUDENTS IN THE TOPPENISH
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE
 IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	Grades											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180					3	1	1		1			
177 - 178					1		1	2		1		
175 - 176				1		1			1		1	
173 - 174				1	3	2		1				
171 - 172				1	1	2						
169 - 170			1	1		3	1	2	1			
167 - 168			1	1		1	1	2			1	
165 - 166			2		1	1		1				
163 - 164			1		1	2	1			1		
161 - 162			1	1		3						
160 and below		1	3	6	4	3	1	1				

Graph 8, page 68, shows the relationship between grades and absences of all non-white students in the Toppenish Junior High School for the school year of 1956-57. The line starts at the 5.2 average made by those non-white students who were present either 179 or 180 days. The graph now climbs sharply to the 6.6 average made by those students who were present 177 or 178 days, and then drops off slightly to the 6.5 average made by those students who were present 175 or 176 days. The graph then drops very steeply to the 4.6 and 4.3 averages of those students who were present either 173 to 174 days or 171 to 172 days. The graph then climbs up again to the 5.3 and 5.7 averages made by those students who were present 169 to 170 days or 167 to 168 days. It then drops to the 4.0 average made by those who were present 165 to 166 days, and climbs up to the 5.2 average made by those non-white students who were present 163 to 164 days. The line next drops off to the 4.0 average made by those who were in attendance 161 or 162 days, and finally drops to the 3.6 average made by those students who were present 160 days or less. There is the suggestion that a slight but definite positive relationship exists between attendance and grades for non-white students. However, gross inconsistencies occur at various attendance levels.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Mexican Students. Table XI, page 69, shows the total number of Mexican

Grades

11.0

10.5

10.0

9.5

9.0

8.5

8.0

7.5

7.0

6.5

6.0

5.5

5.0

4.5

4.0

3.5

3.0

2.5

2.0

1.5

1.0

0.5

Days	160	161	163	165	167	169	171	173	175	177	179
Present	& below	162	164	166	168	170	172	174	176	178	180

Graph 8. Relationship between Grades and Absences of all Non-White Students of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

TABLE XI

TOTAL NUMBER OF MEXICAN STUDENTS IN THE TOPPENISH
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE
 IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	G r a d e s											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180					2	1			1			
177 - 178								1		1		
175 - 176									1		1	
173 - 174				1	3	2		1				
171 - 172					1							
169 - 170			1	1		3	1	1	1			
167 - 168				1								1
165 - 166			2					1				
163 - 165					1	1				1		
161 - 162			1			3						
160 and below			1	5	3	2	1	1				

students receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. The top attendance bracket for the Mexican students was the 160 and below days present bracket showing the greater trend toward poor attendance than for the student body as a whole. This bracket was represented by thirteen students. Following closely behind were the 169 to 170 and 173 to 174 days present brackets with eight and seven students respectively. The bracket with the least number of Mexican students was the 171 to 172 days present bracket with but one student. This bracket was followed by the 177 to 178, the 175 to 176, and the 167 to 168 days present brackets. Each of these brackets had two students.

There were no Mexican students with A, X, or D — grade averages. There were only two students each in the A —, the B +, and the C + brackets. The bracket with the largest number of Mexican students was the C bracket. This bracket had twelve students. The C — and the D + brackets followed closely with ten and eight students respectively. As attendance was below average for Mexican students, so likewise are grades.

Graph 9, page 71, shows the relationship between grades and absences of all Mexican students in the Toppenish Junior High School for the school year of 1956-57. The graph starts at the 5.3 average made by all Mexican students who were present either 179 or

Grades

11.0

10.5

10.0

9.5

9.0

8.5

8.0

7.5

7.0

6.5

6.0

5.5

5.0

4.5

4.0

3.5

3.0

2.5

2.0

1.5

1.0

0.5

Days	160	161	163	165	167	169	171	173	175	177	179
Present	& below	162	164	166	168	170	172	174	176	178	180

Graph 9. Relationship between Grades and Absences of Mexican Students of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

180 days. It then climbs sharply to the 8.0 and 9.0 averages made by those students who were present either 177 to 178 days or 175 to 176 days. The graph then takes a very steep drop to the 4.6 and 4.0 averages made by those students who were present either 173 to 174 days or 171 to 172 days. The graph then starts to climb once more and reaches the 5.1 average made by those Mexican students who were present either 169 or 170 days. It then keeps climbing sharply until it reaches the 6.5 average made by those Mexican students who were present 167 or 168 days, and falls off to the 3.7 average made by those students who were present 165 or 166 days. The graph now climbs back up to the 6.0 average of those students who were present 163 or 164 days and falls to the 4.3 and 4.0 averages made by those students who were present either 161 or 162 days or were absent 20 or more days. As with students as a whole, Mexican students show that there is a slight relationship between their grades and their attendance but still individual variations are great at the various attendance levels.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Indian Students.

Table XII, page 73, shows the total number of Indian students receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. The top attendance bracket for the Indian students was the 167 to 168 days present bracket with five

TABLE XII

TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIAN STUDENTS IN THE TOPPENISH
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE
 IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	G r a d e s											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180												
177 - 178							1	1				
175 - 176				1								
173 - 174												
171 - 172						2						
169 - 170												
167 - 168			1			1	1	2				
165 - 166					1							
163 - 164						1	1					
161 - 162				1								
160 and below			2	1		1						

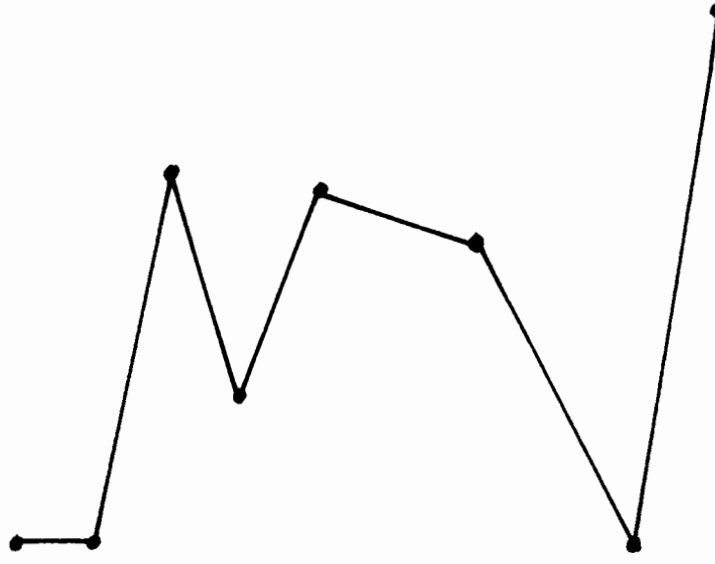
students. This was followed by the 160 and below days present bracket with four students. There were no Indian students in the 179 to 180, the 173 to 174, and the 169 to 170 days present brackets.

There were no Indian students with A, A-, B+, B, D-, or X averages. There was only one Indian student with a D+ average. The top grade bracket for the Indian students was the C bracket with five students.

Graph 10, page 75, shows the relationship between grades and absences of all Indian students in the Toppenish Junior High School for the school year of 1956-57. The graph starts at the 6.5 average made by the Indian students who were present either 177 or 178 days. The graph then drops very steeply to the 3.0 average made by the one student who was present 175 or 176 days. The graph then climbs to the 5.0 average made by those students who were present 171 or 172 days, and then continues climbing to the 5.4 average made by the Indian students who were present from 167 to 168 days. It then falls sharply to the 4.0 average made by the one Indian student who was present either 165 or 166 days and rises sharply to the 5.5 average made by those students who were present 163 or 164 days. The graph then falls steeply to the 3.0 averages made by both the 161 to 162 days present group and the 160 and less days present group. With a smaller number of Indian students trends

Grades

11.0
 10.5
 10.0
 9.5
 9.0
 8.5
 8.0
 7.5
 7.0
 6.5
 6.0
 5.5
 5.0
 4.5
 4.0
 3.5
 3.0
 2.5
 2.0
 1.5
 1.0
 0.5



Days 160 161 163 165 167 169 171 173 175 177 179
 Present & below 162 164 166 168 170 172 174 176 178 180

Graph 10. Relationship between Grades and Absences of Indian Students of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

are harder to determine. Still, there is the general indication of slight grade-attendance relationship as with all students or any of the other subgroups.

Relationship Between Grades and Absences of Negro

Students. Table XIII, page 77, shows the total number of Negro students receiving each grade in each attendance bracket. The top attendance brackets for the Negro students were the 179 to 180 and the 160 and below days present brackets. Each of these brackets had but two students. There were no students in the 173 to 174, the 167 to 168, and the 161 to 162 days present brackets.

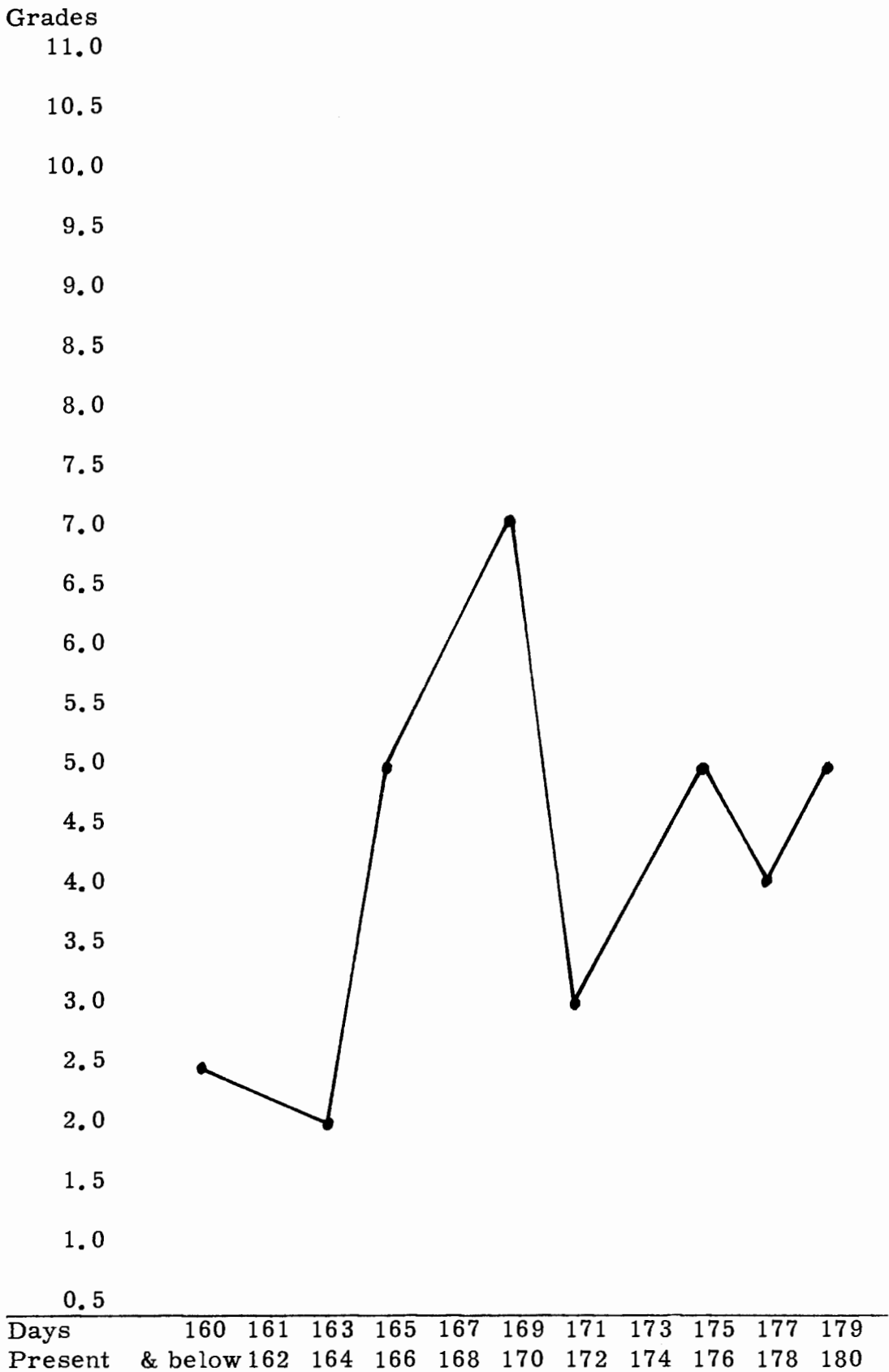
There were no Negro students with A, A -, B +, B, or X averages. The top grade bracket for the Negro students was the C - bracket. It had three students. No other bracket had more than one Negro student except the C bracket which had two. As with other non-white groups both attendance and achievement is below that for white students.

Graph 11, page 78, shows the relationship between grades and absences of all Negro students in the Toppenish Junior High School for the school year of 1956-57. The graph starts at the 5.0 average made by the Negro students who were present from 179 to 180 days. It then drops to the 4.0 average made by the one Negro who was present either 177 or 178 days, and rises to the 5.0 average made by

TABLE XIII

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEGRO STUDENTS IN THE TOPPENISH
 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING EACH GRADE
 IN EACH ATTENDANCE BRACKET FOR THE YEAR 1956-57

Days Present	G r a d e s											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
179 - 180					1		1					
177 - 178					1							
175 - 176						1						
173 - 174												
171 - 172				1								
169 - 170								1				
167 - 168												
165 - 166						1						
163 - 164			1									
161 - 162												
160 and below		1			1							



Graph 11. Relationship between Grades and Absences of Negro Students of the Toppenish Junior High School for the Year of 1956-57.

the one Negro who was present either 175 or 176 days. It then drops to the 3.0 average made by the one Negro who was present either 171 or 172 days, and rises steeply to the 7.0 average made by the one Negro who was present either 169 or 170 days. The graph now drops to the 5.0 and 2.0 averages made respectively by the one Negro who was present either 165 or 166 days, and the one who was present 163 or 164 days. The graph then rises to the 2.5 average made by those Negroes who were absent 20 or more days. The Negro group shows a trend toward a positive relationship between attendance and achievement which is somewhat consistent with each of the other subgroups. This suggests no real differences in race or age groups as to the relationship between grades and attendance.

Correlation Between Attendance and Achievement. In order to obtain a numerical coefficient expressing the degree of relationship existing between achievement and attendance a calculation was made by setting up a scattergram and obtaining the correlation by the Pearson Product-Moment Method.

The coefficient of correlation between grades and absences using 460 students at the three grade levels in the Toppenish Junior High School for the school year of 1956-57 was $r = .12$. This, when checked on a table for statistical significance, shows it to be a positive relationship existing at or near the 1 per cent level of confidence.

The relationship is so low, of course, that it would be of no practical predictive significance unless used in a situation using multiple variables.

We can see that this low correlation, $r = .12$, between grades and absences fits very well with the gentle slope of the line in Graph 1. It also fits well with the average slopes of the lines in most of the other graphs. It is easy to see that in the Toppenish Junior High School during the year of 1956-57 there was little relationship between attendance and achievement.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the data obtained from an examination of student records for all Toppenish Junior High School students for the school year of 1956-57 has been analyzed. Data obtained from the study appears to justify the following summarization dealing with the attendance of students in the Toppenish Junior High School:

1. When the junior high school is taken as a whole, there seems to be little relationship between attendance and grades until a student has been absent at least ten times. There is a slightly more pronounced relationship between grades and absences for those students who were absent between eleven and twenty days, but the relationship is still small. When a student was absent more than twenty days the odds go up considerably that his achievement is affected by his absence.

2. Although the girls were absent more than the boys, the girls had higher grade averages than the boys. This suggests factors other than attendance to be the prominent determining variables affecting achievement.

3. The seventh grade appears to have a better attendance record than the eighth grade and the eighth grade appears to have a better attendance record than the ninth. An examination of the excuses turned in by the students for each absence indicates that the higher the students get in school the more they are called on to work to help support the family. Also, there is a tendency for upper grade students to be less interested in school than the students in the lower grades if attendance can be used as a criterion.

4. When the junior high school is broken down by grades and by sex, there seems to be little relationship between grades and absences until a person has been absent at least twenty times. Beyond 20 absences appears to be definitely handicapping.

5. It would appear that students with perfect or near perfect attendance records often have poorer grade averages than those with poorer attendance records. One reason for this could be that the homes and home-life of some of the students is so poor that the students would rather be in school than to stay at home even when they are not feeling well.

6. The non-white students have poorer attendance and poorer grade averages than the white students. Most of their parents are engaged in manual labor and move around over the country following the crops. Consequently, their children do not have the same educa-

tional opportunities the average white children have.

7. Of the non-white students, the Mexican race has the best attendance and grade averages. The Negro students have the poorest grade averages, and the Indian students have the poorest attendance.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has left many incompletely drawn impressions and conclusions on the mind of the writer. The authorities who have written on the field of attendance have stressed the importance of good attendance and its effect on the students. It is the duty of the administration to see to it that the state attendance laws are completely and properly supported. They must take advantage of any opportunity they have to see that the children who should be in school are attending school. Yet, from the empirical evidence shown in this study attendance seems to have only a very slight positive relation with achievement.

The conclusions and recommendations the writer is listing below are based on an analysis of the writings of authorities in the field of attendance and results of the writer's own study.

1. When the school district hires a man for the job of attendance officer, he should be a man of the highest character and best education that is obtainable.

2. Complete files on every student should be kept by each school district. These files should show everything known about the student from the day he enters the school.

3. Many students are absent from school for reasons other than sickness.
4. Truancy cases are but a very small total of the absences, but they are the hardest to deal with satisfactorily because in all cases they show a maladjustment of some type.
5. Students who are absent too frequently from school for any reason should be referred to a counselor. The home of these students should also be visited by the attendance officer.
6. Every school should have counselors who are released from teaching assignments during the periods when they are counseling.
7. A method should be set up that will allow the school to locate any new children who enter the district and allow the school to keep track of any students that leave the district to enroll in other schools.
8. The communities and the school districts should be more friendly and take more interest in the non-white students than they do now. Many of the brightest students in the schools are non-white, but they have little inclination to work or study because they feel there is little or no use trying to compete with the whites for the good jobs of the future.
9. Students who cannot afford to pay dues to join various school clubs or organizations should be allowed to join these clubs free

of charge because there seems to be some relationship between school activities and school attendance.

10. The school should be made especially attractive to the students on Mondays and Fridays because these are the days of the week that we find the largest percentage of absences. This can be partially solved by scheduling as many as possible of the school's ball games, plays, and other features that interest the students on Mondays and Fridays.

11. School should be made more attractive for the students during January, February, March, April, and May because these are the months when the largest percentage of absences take place. Most of the school assemblies and activities could be held during these months. The administration and the teachers could take added pains to do their best work during these months.

These conclusions are held by the writer in support of most authorities currently writing on attendance despite his findings that little relationship exists between attendance and achievement. This is held partly because it is believed that grades do not reflect all of the kinds of learning gained from school attendance. It is believed that further study of the criteria of achievement is needed and future research in this area is one of education's greatest needs.

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