

1939

An investigation concerning absence in the Harris Township Consolidated School, St. Joseph County, Indiana

Florence Kiser
Indiana State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.indianastate.edu/etds>

Recommended Citation

Kiser, Florence, "An investigation concerning absence in the Harris Township Consolidated School, St. Joseph County, Indiana" (1939). *All-Inclusive List of Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 2421.
<https://scholars.indianastate.edu/etds/2421>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Sycamore Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in All-Inclusive List of Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Sycamore Scholars. For more information, please contact dana.swinford@indstate.edu.

AN INVESTIGATION CONCERNING ABSENCE
IN THE HARRIS TOWNSHIP CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, INDIANA

BY

Florence Hixon Kiser

Contributions of the Graduate School
Indiana State Teachers College
Number 372

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in Education

1939

INDIANA STATE
T.C. LIBRARY

The thesis of Florence Hixon Kiser,
Contribution of the Graduate School, Indiana State
Teachers College, Number 372, under the title
An Investigation Concerning Absence in the Harris
Township Consolidated School, St. Joseph County,
Indiana is hereby approved as counting toward
the completion of the Master's degree in the amount
of 8 hours' credit.

Committee on thesis:

Olis H. Jamison

E. L. Shell

J. R. Shannon, Chairman

Date of Acceptance May 22, 1939

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---------------|---|
| I. | Introduction. 1 |
| I. | Procedure 1 |
| II. | Importance of Absence 4 |
| III. | Review of Literature on Absence 5 |
| II. | An Analysis of the Causes of Absence.25 |
| I. | Presentation of Tables.25 |
| II. | Individual Cases of Absence35 |
| III. | Environment and Personnel46 |
| III. | Remedial Measures52 |
| I. | Home Visitation and Parent- Teacher Association Relation- ship and Effect On School52 |
| II. | Changes in Curriculum55 |
| III. | Treatment of Absence.60 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY. |64 |
| APPENDIX | |
| I. | Teachers' Bulletin.69 |
| II. | Questionnaire76 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem investigated in this thesis was the problem of absence in the Harris Township Consolidated School, St. Joseph County, Indiana. The causes for absence, the effect of absence on the pupils and on the school, and some remedies already tried were studied and evaluated, together with tentative plans for the beginning of the coming school year.

I. PROCEDURE

Research, interviews, and questionnaires were used by the investigator in making the study. Everything in the library that bore on the subject was studied, a careful digest of the best of the material beginning on page 4.

The investigator, wondering about the problem of absence in other schools in the northern part of the state, sent out questionnaires¹ to

¹See appendix, page

Elkhart, Goshen, South Bend, Mishawaka, Whiting, Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago, and received the following information:

The normal per cent of attendance ranged from Elkhart's 97 or 98 per cent to East Chicago's 94 per cent; Goshen had 97 per cent; Mishawaka considered 96 or 97 per cent normal; Gary, Hammond, and South Bend had 95 per cent; Whiting had 94.7 per cent.

In Mishawaka, the per cent fluctuated, while in Goshen, Hammond, East Chicago, and Gary it remained about the same. In Elkhart, South Bend, and Whiting it was increasing.

South Bend, Mishawaka, Hammond, and Gary reported no marked variation in different localities in the city, Gary adding that weather was most likely to upset attendance. Elkhart reported very little variation, the lowest being in the colored school. East Chicago reported a variation but did not elucidate. Goshen reported more illness in the poorer sections and Whiting stated that the foreign element provided 98 per cent of the attendance problems.

East Chicago, Gary, and Hammond have visiting teachers, and in Whiting and Mishawaka the

director of attendance and the school nurse act in that capacity. South Bend, Goshen, and Elkhart have no visiting teachers.

Goshen and Mishawaka found a good attendance officer to be the best remedy for truancy or non-attendance. Elkhart mentioned contacting the home by phone, note to parents, or a visit to the home. Hammond recommended persistent attention by well-trained people. A psychologist and psychiatrist assist the visiting teachers, where there is also a competent health service to verify reports of illness, in Gary, and a part-time psychiatrist assists in East Chicago. In South Bend each case of truancy is handled as an individual case. In Whiting, parents are told what will happen if truancy or non-attendance continue, and all cases are followed up with court action.

Elkhart reported very little direct connection with social service and public welfare departments. Hammond, Mishawaka, and Gary mentioned close and South Bend and Goshen occasional connection. Whiting reported very definite and splendid cooperation between the schools and all social service and public welfare departments, local, county, and state.

II. IMPORTANCE OF ABSENCE

In all discussions of school administration the problem of absence is conceded to be of great importance. Many authorities, in fact, put it first on the list and even declare that the efficiency of any school can most quickly and easily be measured by its per cent of attendance.² As shown in Table I the per cent of attendance in Harris Township School is lower than that of any other school in St. Joseph county. After a careful two-year survey of the Harris Township School, the investigator decided absence to be of paramount importance in this particular school.

With a decided improvement in attendance, the entire morale of the school would be greatly improved, and matters of discipline and scholarship could then be investigated and readjusted. It is evident that a plan for a large school will not be successful in a small school; and a scheme suited to a city will not bring results in a village or in the country.

²L. C. Halberstadt, "Factors in School Attendance," Teachers College Journal, January, 1931.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON ABSENCE

In Chapter VIII, entitled "A Detailed Study of the Extent of Non-attendance in two Selected Schools," Abbot and Breckinridge³ described in detail their investigation, proving by their first table that children of compulsory school age were less irregular in attendance than the children below and above the compulsory age limits and by their second, that the percentage of girls and boys absent was approximately the same. Questions of nativity of parents and of economic status were discussed, but, since the book was written in 1919, the conclusions would not be of sufficient value to include.

In Chapter IX of this same study, the question of non-attendance at the source was investigated and the reasons tabulated, sickness of the child or of others accounting for 48 per cent. A long list of pitiable cases and reasons for absence was cited.

In Chapter X was a very good discussion of the habitual truant and the schoolroom incorrigible,

³Edith Abbot and Sophonisba Breckinridge, Truancy and Non-attendance in the Chicago Schools. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1917).

with tables showing number by years and age of truant and number committed to parental school. Chapter XI treated of truancy and non-attendance in relation to mental and physical defects of school children.

All discussions and tables were valuable and interesting but, because of the dates, not as usable as others. They did, however, present a phase not always stressed -- that is, that the truants were often the victims of circumstances rather than wilful wrong-doers.

In his "Classroom Management," Bagley⁴ stressed the importance of habit-building in any solution of the problem of absence. There will always be a certain irreducible minimum of absence, but any school showing an average of attendance lower than ninety per cent of its enrollment would be greatly handicapped in doing effective work, and the conditions should be remedied. Only the pupil's illness or a very serious misfortune at home should excuse absence, and the poor commissioners or the

⁴W. C. Bagley, Classroom Management, Its Principles and Technique (New York: Macmillan Company, 1928).

community should remedy any condition which causes non-attendance. Unnecessary delinquencies should be treated as offenses against discipline and order in the school and against the public welfare of society at large.

Regular attendance can be encouraged by material prizes, certificates of perfect attendance, the publication of the names of those whose attendance is perfect or exemptions from school duties. A certain amount of competition in a large graded school, or in a city or county system of schools is often successful, a banner being given to the room showing the best attendance during the term. Care should be taken, however, not to create nervous tension that will prevent even legitimate absence.

Even though the habit of tardiness is worse than an occasional absence because it is apt to be carried over into later life, the child should not be frightened into remaining out of school an entire session because he is late. A judicious use of corporal punishment is an effective remedy when the tardiness is due entirely to the pupil's carelessness. References to the practical value of punctuality in the social and business world are of great help.

It could hardly be recommended that absence should be counted against scholarship standing although it cannot be doubted that absence from class exercises theoretically prevents a pupil from reaching the standard gained by his fellows who have been regular in attendance. If this were not so it would be an unfortunate commentary upon the character of the instruction and training afforded by class work.

Cubberly⁵ pictured and explained an excellent monthly attendance record sheet (discussed at greater length in thesis, page 65) along with a dozen principles to be followed in recording and reporting absence, in arranging for work to be made up, and in taking care of tardiness and absence excuses.

Among the numerous devices mentioned for stimulating better attendance are: blackboard lists and stars for perfect attendance, publication of attendance in the local papers, the use of student attendance officers to find out reasons for tardiness or absence, the requiring of a make-up of time lost

⁵Elwood Patterson Cubberley, The Principal and His School. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923)

by tardiness, special treats such as a school excursion or a nature study trip to rooms having a perfect or nearly perfect score, and interesting opening exercises.

Habitual offenders who are not reached by these means are sometimes stimulated by having a distinctive duty which requires regularity, such as putting up the school flag, ringing the bells, or reporting room attendance. Sometimes bad physical conditions largely explain delinquency, or improper feeding is the cause of the trouble.

Said Dougherty,⁶ "Regular attendance is important from two general viewpoints: that of the school and of the community." For the first, regular attendance is a controlling factor in the educational progress of the pupil, and any irregularity of attendance lowers the general quality and rate of progress of the classes to which he belongs. For the second, the value of the school to the community is directly dependent upon the attendance of the pupils, and

⁶ J. H. Dougherty, et al, Elementary School Organization and Management. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1936)

absences require an extra expenditure of time and money in keeping the necessary records.

Among the causes of non-attendance which are not legitimate are truancy, indifference of child and of parents, under some circumstances work, poverty, and bad associates. The school, with an unsympathetic teacher, an unattractive room, an unsuitable curriculum, or a social environment to which the child cannot respond, may be the cause of poor attendance.

In the prevention of non-attendance, two aspects are important: dealing with cases that require correction, and creating such conditions as will largely eliminate needless absence. A careful diagnosis should come first, and positive measures, such as conferences with the pupils and their parents, assignments of a position of responsibility, and encouragement to establish a creditable attendance record are much better than such corrective measures as threatening, keeping after school hours, or during recess periods, or forcing the child to do extra study.

The teacher, if she accepts the problem of the prevention of non-attendance as a challenge is one of the best agencies. She should seek to make the school physically, socially, and educationally

attractive. Other agencies are: adequate attendance records, parent and teacher cooperation, the attendance officer, and the visiting teacher.

Fleming,⁷ Vice-Principal, University High School, Oakland, California, said:

It seems probable that the truancy rate should decline as we progress toward the ideal of the child-centered school. We can never go back and find out what happened in years past but we can, if we think it profitable, keep books on the phenomena of truancy occurrence today, study trends and their implications and find out if practice in handling this part of attendance routine may be modified and major readjustments in educational policy made.

He explained the causes of truancy as:

- (1) love of adventure;
- (2) dissatisfaction at home;
- (3) maladjustment at school.

The records of about two-thirds of the actual truancies for the year 1928-29 in the University High School were studied, showing 1,158 days and 465 half days of truancy. (Truancy was defined as being pupil absence occurring without the consent of the parent or school authorities.) The nine charts given proved that truancy was not a problem encountered in the elementary school; that the mean age of truants

⁷ Paul Fleming, "Truancy--When and Why It Occurs," Nation's Schools, November, 1930.

was fifteen years and six months; the mean grade was the ninth, that is, halfway through the ninth; truancy had some relationship to retardation, though it did not appear to be serious; two schools reported no truants in the school year; truancy was more frequent on Friday; special events, such as the circus and the opening of the baseball season, were responsible for a considerable amount of absence, and "spring fever" caused many boys to play "hookey." No relationship was found between any sort of weather and truancy.

Gideon,⁸ director of the division of Compulsory Education in Philadelphia, whose position gave him a different angle, discussed the Scarponi family which showed the difference in attitude of one family regarding non-attendance. In an effort to stop the truancy of young Tony, it was found that the elder Tony, intoxicated when he first came to the office to avoid another warrant from the magistrate's court, had tuberculosis. The father went to the sanatorium and, after many adjustments, the little Scarponis were all in school, and the father sober and responsible.

⁸ H. J. Gideon, "Police Duties Are a Small Part of Attendance Work," Nation's Schools, September, 1934.

The modern attendance officer has many other duties besides ordering parents to send children to school and prosecuting them if they do not, or rounding up truants and returning them to school, willingly or otherwise. While it is not the school's responsibility to rehabilitate families disreputed through any cause, it is its business to direct the attention of the proper social agencies to home conditions that cause truancy or non-attendance.

The schools should endeavor to deal with the personality difficulties which cause much absence, especially if there be an adequate counseling and visiting teacher staff. Problem children should be transferred to a special class or a special school or helped through guidance clinics.

Medical inspection and nurse service in the schools answer the question as to whether or not the school has any responsibility in matters of health habits for parents and children. An attendance officer should be sympathetic, intelligent, and well-trained in order that she can so gain the confidence of the community in which she works that her opinion will be respected in case of sudden illness or disaster.

If children are excluded from employment until

they are sixteen years of age, every aid should be given them while in school.

Graves⁹ dealt with the problem of absence from a physician's standpoint, one not usually considered sufficiently in a study of non-attendance. He said winter colds cause from 45 to 65 per cent of the ill child's school absences, the exact figure depending on where he lives and where he goes to school. Many figures were given and many helpful suggestions for home hygiene which parents should know. Lack of milk in the child's diet, and misspent week-ends were stressed as causes for absence. A typical week's schedule for little Johnny, eight years old, was given.

This article, written as it was by a physician for parents, would be a very good basis for a talk before the Parent-Teacher's Association early in the fall. It could be reviewed as a whole by a member, or it could be made the basis for a bit of dramatization for the primary or intermediate children, assisted by the pupils in the seventh grade hygiene class.

⁹ G. W. Graves, M. D., "Reducing Absences for Illness," Parents' Magazine, January, 1935.

Hiatt¹⁰ said: Physicians have realized for a long time that health is more important than education, and in certain recent publications educators have said that health is the most important factor in education.

This statement challenged the attention because at the time of the publication of the article he was school physician at Lincoln School, Teachers College, Columbia University.

He reported that for five years a very careful check was made of such absence, the pupil being required to report to the school physician before entering the school room. The absences from causes other than illness ranged from 6 per cent of all school days in 1917-18 to 1.3 per cent in 1921-22. The absence from contagious diseases prove easiest to control, decreasing from 5.4 to .6 per cent.

An epidemic of measles, because carefully watched from the start, resulted in the following deduction: a child who has been exposed may safely stay in school for seven days after exposure, and he may show the first symptoms of measles at any time during the next fourteen days.

The most important group and the most difficult

¹⁰ James S. Hiatt, M. D., "The Truant Problem and the Parental School," U. S. Bureau of Education Bulletin, Number 29, 1915.

to control was that group of absences due to respiratory diseases, nothing about the cause of the common cold or coryza being known. Finally it was decided that children with colds should be kept out as long as they were sneezing or coughing or had any considerable nasal discharge. This kept each child who became ill out of school a day or two longer, but the more favorable figures for 1920-21 indicated that the number of cases was less, as was the total number of days lost.

The school of to-day has not done its full duty in merely offering each individual a chance to enter the doors of learning. It must bring home to him the fact that his opportunity lies in making use of this privilege. The State offers free instruction not only for the sake of the individual, but for the safety of the State. Therefore, says Supt. Brumbaugh of Philadelphia, former Governor of Pennsylvania, "The insistence of the school that children attend regularly and punctually all the sessions is one of the fundamental principles of the educational system."

One hundred cases of the most flagrant and persistent offenders in Philadelphia were studied by the Public Education Association, volunteer investigators and later a trained social worker being used. The

school, the home, the child, and various social agents, which had connection with the child were studied. The nationality of the truants was charted, showing that 54 per cent of the fathers and 56 per cent of the mothers were foreign, while only 24 per cent of the total population of the city of Philadelphia were foreign.

Ninety-five per cent were boys and 5 per cent were girls; 53 per cent of those reported were between twelve and fourteen years of age. Only 6 per cent were normal in their grades, 21 per cent were retarded five years or more, while 51 per cent were retarded three years or over. Sixty-eight per cent of these children, in the judgment of the teacher, were of normal mentality, 26 per cent were backward, while but 6 per cent seemed really mentally deficient. That is, while less than a third appeared to be below normal mental keenness, more than a half were over three years behind grade in school.

According to the investigator's report, 29 per cent of the truancies were the fault of the home, 26 per cent were due to the child's dislike of school, 20 per cent were due to bad companions, 11 per cent were the fault of the boy, 10 per cent were due to the child's desire to be out of school to work, and 4 per cent were due to illness.

A study of home conditions revealed poor, neglected, squalid surroundings, drunkenness, divorce, desertion, low mentality, employment of the mothers, and other pitiable causes of absence.

In only four cases out of the hundred did principals believe that the habits of these truants could be corrected or appreciably improved under ordinary school conditions. Three possible ways for improvement were discussed: boarding the child out in a normal home; committing him to some reformatory institution, or placing him in a parental school. The last-named plan was discussed at length but, because of the year (1915) will not be discussed here.

Kirkpatrick¹¹ said: The whys and wherefores of his /the truant's/ problem clearly become matters of broad importance when one reflects that it is from this group of offenders that a considerable number of more serious delinquencies originate. That truancy is apt to be accompanied by other mischief, and that many cases of adult criminality have had histories involving early truancy are commonplace observations.

This paper considered the school situation of the truant group, in so far as it was reflected in matters of grade placement, two of the questions being: How many truants are in school grades that enable them to

11

M. E. Kirkpatrick, M. D., and T. Lodge, "Some Factors in Truancy," Mental Hygiene, 19:610-18, October, 1935.

maintain normal social relationships with their classmates from the point of view of life age and physical maturity? How well-equipped mentally is the truant to cope with the subject matter of his particular grade?

The study dealt with 752 truants of Cleveland in 1931-33. The higher percentage of girls was attributed to the fact that a special school was maintained for problem boys in which considerable stress was laid on the development of practical skills. The age distribution table showed that the peak for both girls and boys was very definitely in the sixteenth year, and the grade distribution table showed the highest per cent in Grade IX. The average retardation was two years, almost all truants having been subjected to one or more school failures, while about one-fourth of the children were three or more years retarded. Over 50 per cent of the fathers and mothers had five years of school or less, and over 90 per cent had eight years or less.

There has been over-emphasis on subject matter in the schools and too little emphasis on the child as a person. It is far more rational to keep truancy from developing in the first place than it is to try to correct it after it has once appeared. A radical revision will have to take place in the conventional system of

grading.

In his book, *Management of a City School*, Perry¹² said, One of the ever-present duties of the principal is to secure attendance and punctuality on the part of the pupils. The importance of attendance is so clearly recognized by most principals and by all writers on administration that nothing need be said here on that score. What is needed perhaps is a word of caution to the effect that absence may be too severely emphasized, particularly in the case of higher grade girls.

The pupil must feel that absence from school is a loss, his loss; and part of the duty of the principal is to make his school something that pupils cannot afford to lose.

At first, the attendance of the child is a matter of obedience: he must go to school. Later, he will attend as a matter of interest: he ought to go to school.

Schemes for securing attendance were discussed, with the remark, however, that there should be a constant struggle to get away from this to a higher motive. The privilege of remaining beyond the time of the regular session would be a good reward for all pupils who had perfect attendance.

¹²
A. C. Perry, Management of a City School.
New York: Macmillan Company, 1908.

Parents should be notified promptly of absences of pupils. The principal must sympathize with the pupil and understand his attitude, remembering that the nomadic instinct is the natural instinct and that many children have severe handicaps in the form of serious physical defects which result in a mental inertia that must be overcome before the conventional school can hold him against the natural out-of-doors.

If the principal can get into sympathetic relations with one truant, he can often successfully use him as a means of influence with other truants, for it must be remembered that the truant rarely travels alone.

"Discipline" cases of pupils inclined to truancy must be handled with particular skill, lest in reaching a lesser offense the pupil is prompted to commit a greater.

Reeder¹³ said that, according to a recent bulletin of the U. S. Bureau of Education, only 70 per cent of the rural children and 79 per cent of the city children were in average daily attendance at

¹³W. G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School Administration. New York: Macmillan Company, 1931.

school, the percentage varying from state to state, and from community to community. Since the people of the United States now spend over two billion dollars annually for elementary and secondary education, the financial waste when computed on the total school expenditure is colossal. The largest loss, however, is not the financial loss to the public but the educational loss to the pupil.

In city schools the chief causes of non-attendance are: illness of the child or of some member of the family, lack of clothing, death in the family, and work at home. The chief causes of unlawful non-attendance are truancy, parental neglect, work at home, illegal employment, and out-of-town visits.¹⁴

In rural schools, Reavis¹⁵ found that "distance from school" was the largest cause, and that "progress through school" and "daily marks" were next in importance.

When compulsory-attendance laws were first enforced, non-attendance was generally regarded as a

¹⁴F. B. Bermejo, The School Attendance Service in American Cities, p. 97. Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1923.

¹⁵George H. Reavis, Factors Controlling Attendance in Rural Schools, pp. 9-16. Columbia University: Teachers College, 1920.

crime, and there was little or no attempt to find the cause. Many studies have shown that sickness is one of the chief causes of non-attendance. In the rural districts, improvements in transportation facilities have resulted in better attendance, less tardiness, and less fatigue for the children.

Society is obligated to furnish school supplies and clothing to the pupil from poverty-stricken homes, and, in extreme cases, financial aid for food, clothing, and shelter to the family.

Failure or low marks in school if reduced result in better attendance. Several studies have shown that the large percentage of the pupils who are promoted on condition or probation do the work of the next grade very acceptably. Low marks are discouraging to the typical pupil and may develop an inferiority complex or a grudge against the teacher and the school.

In an ideal school organization, each pupil would be given scholastic marks in terms of his ability to accomplish. If a pupil does not have the ability to do more than a certain amount of work in arithmetic, in reading, or in other subjects, it would seem unjust to penalize him when he has done the best he can.

In her article, Teegarden¹⁶ discussed the lack

¹⁶Florence M. Teegarden, "Teachers' Apron Strings," Educational Forum. 1:437, May 1937.

of freedom and self determination which many children formerly had and which some still have, if they are "tied to the apron strings" of an out-of-date school teacher. She stressed the fact that the reason for truancy was the most important thing to find out and cited the case of a truant who stayed out on Tuesdays and Thursdays because his voice was changing and he had been told to sing alto with some of the older girls.

The idea that time missed by absence should be made up was shown to be foolish though a mastery of the work missed should be required. Special cases of old-fashioned treatment of truants were given, one dealing with a high school pupil who was being kept in every day for time he had missed the year before, another of a boy who didn't go to school because he couldn't understand the work and because the others made fun of his clothes, and of a little girl who became ill every morning when she got to thinking of the speed drills the teacher would give as soon as opening exercises were over. Evening visits to the homes were recommended for teachers who honestly wanted to get away from old-fashioned methods and really do something about non-attendance.

CHAPTER II

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF ABSENCE

I. Presentation of Tables

Since the per cent of attendance in the Harris Township School was shown to be lower than that of other schools in St. Joseph County (Table I, page 26) and lower than other schools of northern Indiana considered normal, the investigator set out to make a detailed study of the causes of absence. Data regarding the effect of weather on attendance, the per cent of attendance by grades, and the age, nationality, and per cent of attendance of pupils were gathered and, in addition, a study of individual cases of absence was made. Since the attendance of the first six grades was normal, only the attendance of the Junior High School, grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 was studied.

In an effort to ascertain the causes for absence in the Harris Township School, the effect of weather was first studied. Weather reports for all school days for the school year 1936-1937 and for September to March, inclusive, of the school year 1937-1938 were secured from the weather bureau at

TABLE I
 PER CENT OF ATTENDANCE
 ST. JOSEPH COUNTY SCHOOLS 1937-38

| Township | School | Grade 1-5 | Grade 1-6 | Grade 1-8 | Grade 9-10 | Grade 9-12 |
|----------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Center | Center | | | 96 | | |
| Clay | Stuckey | | 92 | | | |
| Clay | Sunnyrest | | | 100 | | |
| Clay | Ullery | 93 | | | | |
| Clay | Washington Clay | | | 93 | | 96 |
| Clay | Webster | | 95 | | | |
| German- | Mt. Pleasant | | | 96 | | |
| German | Wagner | | | 94 | | |
| Greene | Greene Township | | | 97 | | 98 |
| Harris | Harris Township | | | 94 | 90 | |
| Liberty | North Liberty | | | 95 | | 97 |
| Madison | Madison Center | | | 95 | | 95 |
| Olive | New Carlisle | | | 93 | | 95 |
| Olive | Number 9 | | 94 | | | |
| Penn | Boner | | | 93 | | |
| Penn | Fulmer | | | 94 | | |
| Penn | Kennedy | | | 95 | | |
| Penn | Osceola | | | 96 | | |
| Portage | Ardmore | | | 96 | | |
| Portage | J. Elmer Peak | | | 93 | | |
| Portage | Woodrow Wilson | | | 93 | | 96 |
| Union | Lakeville | | | 96 | | 97 |
| Warren | Crumstown | | | 96 | | |
| Warren | Lydick | | | 96 | | 96 |

South Bend, Indiana. Table II, page 28, shows this. The records of thirty-five days were selected, care being taken to pick out extremes in temperature, clear days, and cloudy days, and different days in the week. The reading at 7:30 A. M. was recorded, that being about the average time when buses would pick up their loads or the few children who walked to school would decide whether or not to come to school for the day.

The following tables prove that weather had no appreciable effect on attendance, the highest per cent being on days of light rain. It was interesting to note that 70 per cent, the all-time low for the ninth and tenth grades, occurred on March 26, 1937, which was Good Friday.

TABLE II.

THE EFFECT OF WEATHER ON ATTENDANCE

| Date | Weather | Temperature | Grades One and Two | Grades Three and Four | Grades Five and Six | Grades Seven and Eight | Grades Nine and Ten |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1936 | | | | | | | |
| October 1 | Clear | 56° | 100 | 97 | 91 | 93 | 96 |
| October 15 | Clear | 56° | 100 | 97 | 91 | 93 | 96 |
| October 21 | Light Rain | 57° | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 92 |
| October 27 | Clear | 27° | 97 | 97 | 88 | 89 | 88 |
| November 19 | Clear | 20° | 97 | 97 | 94 | 89 | 81 |
| November 30 | Clear | 18° | 100 | 100 | 100 | 92 | 93 |
| December 7 | Overcast | 10° | 97 | 100 | 97 | 94 | 92 |
| December 14 | Clear | 29° | 94 | 100 | 94 | 86 | 88 |
| 1937 | | | | | | | |
| January 11 | Clear | 16° | 74 | 95 | 94 | 94 | 92 |
| January 26 | Overcast | 10° | 88 | 95 | 97 | 92 | 77 |
| January 29 | Clear | 25° | 91 | 97 | 91 | 80 | 88 |
| February 10 | Light Snow | 8° | 88 | 89 | 94 | 87 | 87 |
| February 19 | Overcast | 36° | 94 | 89 | 94 | 83 | 87 |
| February 25 | Med. Snow | 9° | 85 | 92 | 88 | 89 | 87 |
| March 4 | Light Rain | 40° | 88 | 89 | 91 | 91 | 91 |
| March 11 | High Clouds | 14° | 94 | 92 | 91 | 89 | 90 |
| March 26 | Snow | 15° | 97 | 81 | 84 | 78 | 70 |
| April 2 | Cloudy | 32° | 97 | 97 | 97 | 93 | 90 |
| April 14 | Overcast | 55° | 94 | 100 | 97 | 95 | 90 |
| April 26 | Overcast | 47° | 97 | 100 | 100 | 98 | 90 |
| September 16 | Cloudy | 50° | 98 | 100 | 100 | 95 | 88 |
| September 24 | Cloudy | 74° | 98 | 98 | 100 | 93 | 84 |
| October 5 | Cloudy | 65° | 93 | 89 | 93 | 100 | 96 |
| October 28 | Clear | 36° | 91 | 96 | 97 | 93 | 96 |
| November 8 | Cloudy | 56° | 84 | 90 | 90 | 98 | 83 |
| November 23 | Cloudy | 10° | 83 | 87 | 95 | 98 | 80 |
| November 30 | Clear | 11° | 93 | 100 | 95 | 93 | 81 |
| December 7 | Cloudy | 7° | 77 | 80 | 80 | 64 | 71 |
| December 22 | Cloudy | 35° | 95 | 96 | 95 | 100 | 86 |
| 1938 | | | | | | | |
| January 17 | Cloudy | 32° | 96 | 94 | 98 | 93 | 86 |
| January 28 | Cloudy | -4° | 89 | 82 | 93 | 83 | 86 |
| February 9 | Cloudy | 51° | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 | 95 |
| February 25 | Cloudy | 21° | 94 | 96 | 95 | 88 | 81 |
| March 4 | Cloudy | 20° | 92 | 94 | 95 | 88 | 90 |
| March 21 | Clear | 54° | 94 | 96 | 100 | 95 | 90 |
| March 22 | Cloudy | 64° | 94 | 94 | 100 | 86 | 95 |

TABLE III
SYNOPSIS OF THE EFFECT OF WEATHER ON ATTENDANCE

| Weather | Grades One and Two | Grades Three and Four | Grades Five and Six | Grades Seven and Eight | Grades Nine and Ten | Average |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| Clear | 94% | 98% | 94% | 91% | 89% | 93% |
| Light Rain | 94% | 95% | 96% | 96% | 92% | 95% |
| Overcast | 94% | 97% | 97% | 92% | 87% | 93% |
| Light Snow | 88% | 89% | 94% | 87% | 87% | 89% |
| Medium Snow | 85% | 92% | 88% | 89% | 87% | 88% |
| High Clouds | 94% | 92% | 91% | 89% | 90% | 91% |
| Snow | 97% | 81% | 84% | 78% | 70% | 82% |
| Cloudy | 92% | 94% | 95% | 91% | 87% | 92% |

Table IV showed the lowest per cent of attendance to be in the ninth grade, just as Kirkpatrick¹ found in his study. This may be due to the fact that the lessons are more difficult in that grade, or it may be because many pupils are almost sixteen and are merely marking time until they are old enough to quit school.

¹M. E. Kirkpatrick, M. D., and T. Lodge, "Some Factors in Truancy," Mental Hygiene, 19:610-18, October, 1935.

TABLE IV
PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE BY GRADES

| 1st Period | 2nd Period | 3rd Period | 4th Period | 5th Period | 6th Period | Average |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------|
| 10th Grade | | | | | | |
| 93% | 91% | 92% | 95% | 92% | 95% | 93% |
| 9th Grade | | | | | | |
| 88% | 89% | 89% | 88% | 91% | 89% | 89% |
| 8th Grade | | | | | | |
| 92% | 91% | 94% | 93% | 91% | 92% | 92% |
| 7th Grade | | | | | | |
| 96% | 97% | 97% | 95% | 94% | 91% | 95% |

Table V gives the age, per cent of attendance, and parentage of the pupils. Of the eighteen children of foreign parentage, fifteen, or 83.3 per cent, had a per cent of attendance lower than 95 per cent, while of the fifty-four children of American parentage, only twenty-nine, or 53.7 per cent, had less than 95 per cent. From this it would seem that the foreign patrons had a much lower regard for the importance of regular school attendance. The usual excuse was "Work at home," and the pupils when questioned often said, "Well, the work has to be done and there's nobody else to do it." That the work at school had to be done also never seemed to occur to them.

Table V was also made the basis for a study regarding the age and grade of pupils. Ages twelve, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen were regarded as the normal ages for grades seven, eight, nine, and ten, respectively. It was found that of the forty pupils who had lower than 95 per cent attendance, twenty-five, or 62.5, were retarded. Of the thirty-two pupils who had 95 per cent or more attendance, twelve, or 37.5, were retarded. A very definite connection between absence and retardation was therefore shown, but it was not possible to prove whether the absence caused retardation or the retardation caused absence.

AGE, PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE, AND NATIONALITY OF PUPILS

| | Age | Percentage of Attendance | Foreign |
|------------------|-----|--------------------------|---------|
| <u>8th Grade</u> | | | |
| Pupil Number 28 | 13 | 96 | |
| Pupil Number 29 | 13 | 97 | |
| Pupil Number 30 | 14 | 87 | |
| Pupil Number 31 | 14 | 90 | |
| Pupil Number 32 | 14 | 98 | |
| Pupil Number 33 | 13 | 96 | * |
| Pupil Number 34 | 14 | 88 | * |
| Pupil Number 35 | 13 | 97 | |
| Pupil Number 36 | 14 | 89 | |
| Pupil Number 37 | 15 | 91 | * |
| Pupil Number 38 | 14 | 94 | |
| Pupil Number 39 | 13 | 99 | |
| Pupil Number 40 | 13 | 99 | |
| Pupil Number 41 | 13 | 91 | * |
| Pupil Number 42 | 13 | 94 | * |
| Pupil Number 43 | 13 | 89 | |
| Pupil Number 44 | 14 | 76 | |
| Pupil Number 45 | 15 | 93 | |
| Pupil Number 46 | 13 | 92 | * |
| Pupil Number 47 | 14 | 76 | * |
| Pupil Number 48 | 13 | 98 | |
| Pupil Number 49 | 15 | 90 | * |
| Pupil Number 50 | 14 | 73 | |
| Pupil Number 51 | 13 | 99 | |
| Pupil Number 52 | 14 | 97 | |
| Pupil Number 53 | 14 | 94 | |
| Pupil Number 54 | 14 | 98 | * |
| Pupil Number 55 | 14 | 96 | * |
| <u>7th Grade</u> | | | |
| Pupil Number 56 | 12 | 96 | |
| Pupil Number 57 | 13 | 97 | |
| Pupil Number 58 | 13 | 95 | |
| Pupil Number 59 | 13 | 92 | |
| Pupil Number 60 | 12 | 99 | |
| Pupil Number 61 | 12 | 99 | |
| Pupil Number 62 | 12 | 98 | |
| Pupil Number 63 | 15 | 93 | |
| Pupil Number 64 | 12 | 89 | |
| Pupil Number 65 | 12 | 100 | |
| Pupil Number 66 | 12 | 91 | |
| Pupil Number 67 | 12 | 93 | |
| Pupil Number 68 | 13 | 89 | * |
| Pupil Number 69 | 14 | 89 | * |
| Pupil Number 70 | 13 | 94 | * |
| Pupil Number 71 | 12 | 100 | |
| Pupil Number 72 | 12 | 87 | |

TABLE V--CONTINUED

AGE, PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE, AND NATIONALITY OF PUPILS

| | Age | Percentage of Attendance | Foreign |
|-------------------|-----|--------------------------|---------|
| <u>10th Grade</u> | | | |
| Pupil Number 1 | 15 | 92 | |
| Pupil Number 2 | 16 | 94 | |
| Pupil Number 3 | 15 | 97 | |
| Pupil Number 4 | 14 | 99 | |
| Pupil Number 5 | 15 | 94 | * |
| Pupil Number 6 | 16 | 94 | |
| Pupil Number 7 | 17 | 73 | |
| Pupil Number 8 | 16 | 99 | |
| Pupil Number 9 | 15 | 79 | |
| <u>9th Grade</u> | | | |
| Pupil Number 10 | 14 | 73 | * |
| Pupil Number 11 | 14 | 91 | |
| Pupil Number 12 | 14 | 100 | |
| Pupil Number 13 | 15 | 96 | |
| Pupil Number 14 | 14 | 94 | |
| Pupil Number 15 | 14 | 94 | * |
| Pupil Number 16 | 15 | 73 | |
| Pupil Number 17 | 15 | 91 | |
| Pupil Number 18 | 14 | 94 | |
| Pupil Number 19 | 15 | 73 | |
| Pupil Number 20 | 14 | 100 | |
| Pupil Number 21 | 16 | 98 | |
| Pupil Number 22 | 15 | 70 | * |
| Pupil Number 23 | 15 | 98 | |
| Pupil Number 24 | 14 | 94 | |
| Pupil Number 25 | 14 | 93 | |
| Pupil Number 26 | 15 | 54 | |
| Pupil Number 27 | 15 | 75 | * |

II. INDIVIDUAL CASES OF ABSENCE

1. The Allemanti-Tagliepetra problem. Two typical offenders of attendance among the Polish population of Harris Township were Angelina Allemanti and Maria Tagliepetra, members of the freshman class. Angelina, (Pupil Number 22) was large for her age, and her grade, and she was a poor student. At first some clothing had been supplied to different members of the large family, and books were always demanded. In reply to the principal's polite suggestion that Theresa, her sister, should have a safety workbook, some member of the family wrote that if the school wanted her to study safety, the school would have to furnish the book. This younger sister, Theresa, (Pupil Number 46), while conspicuous for her size, was quite different in attitude. She wrote nicely and responded well to appreciative comments on the papers she handed in. Her per cent of attendance was 92 as compared with Angelina's 70. But Angelina was counting the days until she could quit school and help at home. Her mother worked in the fields until all the corn was husked in the fall, and someone was needed to care for an older girl who had "fits."

Maria's (Pupil Number 27) family, on the other hand, had more "to do with." They were all industrious

and hard-working, but Maria's dream was to get a job where she could make money. An older brother had quit as soon as he was old enough and he was farming. Maria's school clothing was quite conspicuous among the plainer, more suitable dress of the other pupils, and she seem older and more sophisticated than most of the other girls. Many Fridays she and Angelina were absent without leave but with the excuse, "Oh, I had to help my mamma clean up the house for Sunday." Her per cent of attendance was 75. A brother in the seventh grade (Pupil Number 29), with an attendance of 89 per cent, stayed out as often as he dared and had to be spoken to by the priest. His excuse was always "Work." The family never furnished books for their children, and the attendance officer was never able to persuade them to do so.

The Tagliepetras and the Bonomos were all out on Good Friday, dropping the attendance to 79 and 70 per cent in grades seven to eight and nine to ten, respectively. Probably most of them did go to mass, but the Allemantis were out in the yard, playing, and they had been known to miss church when they were supposed to be there.

2. The Martin family problem. Five of the Martins stayed out for the flimsiest of reasons. "Delbert, (Pupil Number 7), was sick yesterday." "Edgar (Pupil

Number 19), wasn't well enough to come three days." "Ernestine (Pupil Number 44), had a very sore throat." "The little boy didn't feel well when he first got up." But Delbert had better health when his teacher commented favorably on his health workbook, and Edgar didn't miss any school while he was hall monitor. Delbert's and Edgar's per cent of attendance was 73, and Ernestine's 75. For a while the parents attended the Parent-Teachers Association meetings and professed themselves much interested in the work of the school, but their offer to coach a minstrel show never amounted to anything and their children's attendance had not improved up to the time they moved away before the end of the first semester. One visit to their home was enough to explain almost everything about the children that had been puzzling, but the appalling dirt and disorder seemed to worry the mother and daughter not the least little bit.

3. The Monniger family case. Another absentee from an American family was Hubert Monniger (Pupil Number 66), reluctant pupil of the seventh grade. His sixth-grade teacher reported him to be a "nice boy," and, during the first of the school year, his attendance was regular. But early in the fall his older sister was brutally murdered on a by-road not far from Granger. The

family was in quite straitened circumstance, the father being out of work most of the time, and neighbors and charitable organizations had to come to their rescue at the time of the tragedy. Of course the shock of the sister's almost instant death must have been a terrible experience to Hubert, but the subsequent notoriety was equally bad for him. Photographs and publicity in the New York and Chicago papers do not come to many residents of a little country village like Granger, and the boy's attendance and entire attitude changed. He went away "on visits," he did not feel well, and his studies were no longer interesting to him.

During the summer he got into some sort of neighborhood trouble with boys from two families who had been in many previous difficulties, but it was not definitely decided who was to blame.

His father refused W. P. A. work most of the time, made fun of those who did work, and was downright abusive to the trustee when he went to his house for help.

4. The Sontag-Baker cases. Meredith Sontag (Pupil Number 8), of the cheerful disposition and loquacious tongue, had not missed a single day until one Saturday well along in the spring. He came to

school in the bus as usual, but he did not go to his first class and the news spread like wildfire that he and his cousin, Earl Baker (Pupil Number 21), had skipped school. They were back for the return trip on the bus, but Meredith did not repeat the offense. The mother in a telephone conversation promised much in the way of discipline, and Meredith reported that she kept her word. "Of course," the mother conceded, "Meredith probably wouldn't have gone if it hadn't been for Earl!" No doubt they enjoyed that day in South Bend, the hitch-hiking in, the shows, and the hot dogs! Poor Meredith! Alton, the older brother, had been an excellent student, quiet and dependable, and Meredith had already lost all chance to go out evenings because of some misdemeanor. (The principal had called up to request that he be allowed to attend a square dance since the proceeds went to charity.)

5. The Madeline King case. Madeline King (Pupil Number 16) entered the Harris Township School from Mishawaka High School on the first day of the new semester. Her record at that school showed a persistent non-attendance, and her attendance did not improve. She missed the final examinations though she knew her work would be marked incomplete if she did not take them. When questioned by other horror-stricken freshmen she said she

didn't care as she would be sixteen before school started in the fall, anyway. Her 22 days of absence were so scattered throughout the semester that she never really got into the swing of the work, but was out a day, in two or three, and out again. She was a girl of pleasing appearance and good manners who fitted in well in the new environment and was much-liked by the other pupils, but she evidently had not the slightest interest in school subjects. The first semester she studied guidance and had had physical education in addition to the English and biology, which she continued after her transfer to the Harris Township School.

6. The Adrian Adams case. Another freshman who did not even try to take the finals was Adrian Adams (Pupil Number 26), with a record of 84 days present and 75 absent, but all the teachers could do was to feel sorry for him. It was his first year at Harris Township School and the problem of transportation was one which the principal, the trustee, and the attendance officer could never get straightened out. He had to ride a bicycle or drive an old car two miles to meet the school bus and he often missed connection or, because of snow drifts, did not even start. His brother, with whom he lived, was polite in reply to notes from the

principal, and wrote that they tried to help him at home with work that he missed, (but the average patron would not be of much help in biology, algebra, English, and general business,) and, through it all, there was their feeling that he would soon be old enough to quit, anyway, so it really didn't matter. The attendance officer investigated the case but reported that no legal steps could be taken since the transportation facilities were so poor, and those could not be improved since he was a transfer.

7. The James Adams case. A cousin of Adrian's, James Adams (Pupil Number 9), in the tenth grade, was a different type and his absence was wilful, his sister announcing that he "felt bad" just before the bus came. His boy friends reported that his health improved as soon as the bus was out of sight and that he was sufficiently strong to go hunting on several different days. The distribution of his absence was interesting, being three, six, five, seven, ten, and one day for the respective grading periods. Outdoor sports at school at the first and last of school played a much greater part in his schedule than any weather or other determining factors. The second semester he carried only three subjects, having flunked geometry because of absolute indifference and

laziness. His final examination grades were indicative of his attitude: English 74, world history 71, health 79, geography 79, the norms being quite low in the state. Mr. C. reported that one time he made the highest grade on a geography test and that he could easily have made excellent grades all the time if he had studied. Mrs. A. reported his remark that health was the only thing he was studying that would do him any good, anyway.

The thing that made his case unusual was the blindness of his parents to his subterfuges. They expressed a desire for him to attend school regularly but, out of his 124 days attendance and 32 days absence possibly only six successive days were legally excused though signed excuses were not infrequent. On those days he was really ill, being in bed practically all the time with a bad cold and, as reported by his friends, too sick to "cut up any."

His sisters, both younger than he, were good students and regular in attendance, but Jimmie seemed to be the "black sheep" of the family. The preceding year he had taken the family car away from the school house where a fall festival was in progress and with several of his friends had gone joy riding. Speeding along, he had lost control of the car and had practically

demolished a neighbor's car and had damaged another, his own escaping without much injury. His parents claimed he had a car key of which they knew nothing, but there were rumors that that was not true but a clever way of evading responsibility for wrecking the other car.

8. The Bonomo family case. Marcella and Mary Bonomo (Pupils Number 5 and 15), sisters in the tenth and ninth grades, respectively, each had a per cent of attendance of 94, missing 9 days out of the 157 total. Their excuses usually stated "work," the church and occasional trips to town accounting for a few. The family consisted of eight people. Since their grades were very high, Mary's being by far the best in her class, and since their parents were very industrious and conscientious, not much was said to them about absence.

9. The Sperrato-Karonvitch cases. Two little Polish girls of the eighth grade, Vera Sperrato (Pupil Number 54), and Ruth Mary Karonovitch (Pupil Number 55), set a record for attendance: 98 and 96 per cent, respectively, but as shown on Table V, they stand out from the rest of the foreigners.

10. The Dan Kopic-Curtis Brown cases. Dan Kopic (Pupil Number 47), had a per cent of 76, his excuses being "work," almost invariably. His absence

was in such scattered days that he never had a chance to really get into the work of the school, and failure would have been inevitable had the examination norms been higher. Since he is only fourteen, renewed efforts will be made to appeal to his pride this year. Another boy in the eighth grade, Curtis Brown, (Pupil Number 30), was frequently out to work and had a per cent of 87. His mentality was not nearly so good as his physical strength, and one wondered sometimes if he didn't accomplish much more in his farm work when he was out of school than he did in his education when he was present.

11. The John and Ray Carter case. (Pupils Number 2 and 11), John and Ray Carter were out frequently but often only in the afternoon so that their per cent of attendance was 94 and 91, respectively. Their mother worked in South Bend, and their father, a world war veteran, was so crippled that he could hardly move about and he was never left alone all day. Sometimes he was not so well and one of the boys had to stay home with him, or something had to be done with the car, and John had to take it to the garage. The mother was such a plucky little body and the father so cheerful and polite that the investigator felt the boys were only doing their duty by remaining out of school.

These studies do not deal with such lurid surroundings or with such examples of cruelty and neglect as do those in Chicago,¹⁷ or in any other large city, but they, too, are hard to deal with. The children were not "truant" in the strict sense of the word, because nearly always the parents knew of their children's absence and either commanded or upheld it.

Work at home was felt to be more necessary and more valuable than the same time spent in school. Many of the pupils had no sense of responsibility regarding attendance and no feeling of loss because of days missed. This the investigator felt before the study was made, and this she set out to prove or disprove, her remedial measures to be based on the findings of the study.

¹⁷ Edith Abbot, and Sophonisba Breckinridge, Truancy and Non-attendance in the Chicago Schools.

III. ENVIRONMENT AND PERSONNEL

Granger, where the Harris Township Consolidated School is located, is a very small village situated ten miles northeast of South Bend, and four miles from the University of Notre Dame. Many of the patrons are farmers, though a number work in nearby factories, and a few do not work at all. A large percentage are foreigners, mostly Polish, or of foreign extraction.

The Harris Township School is a consolidated school with an enrollment of 136 in grades one to six, 43 in grades seven to eight, and 22 in grades nine to ten. There are three teachers in grades one to six, and three teachers in grades seven to ten, the work in the upper four grades being departmentalized.

The real solution for the problem of absence is, of course, a curriculum so interesting that the pupils will not wish to stay away from school, with added interest for extra-curriculum methods of teaching, and school administration. Before improvement can be carried on, a careful study of the limitations of the Harris Township School must be made. The faculty is too small to permit a full-time music or art teacher. Consequently, no art is taught in the school, and no music except

orchestra and band work by a part-time teacher. No physical education is offered, except what the science teacher can give at some time during his six-hour teaching day. No industrial arts or commercial work is given. The library is so pitiably meager that one does not care to discuss it. The children have had no training whatever in supervised reading, except in the small amount which St. Joseph County requires in the seventh and eighth grades. The lower grade teachers have been allowed to believe and to practice the theory that library books should not be read unless the child's grades are up to a certain standard. So far, the dramatic work has consisted of some organized or uncorrelated contribution to the Parent-Teacher Association programs and a play given in the spring by the ninth and tenth grades.

Not much to begin with, one might say, but a further inventory will show many favorable circumstances. The same faculty will return next year, and the teachers are all conscientious and industrious. The principal, Mrs. A., has had a varied experience in teaching, ranging from 1-C work in a city system, through all the grades, and a number of high school subjects. She is a firm believer in the value of the small school, and her background is such that her sympathies are with the rural

community. She likes foreigners, and is tolerant toward all religions. Her relations with the Parent-Teacher Association are very pleasant. Her county superintendent grades her high on cooperation. The differences between her daughter and son have given her a thorough respect for individual differences and their effect on school life. Best of all, her graduate work has been done under teachers thoroughly trained in their work, and outstanding in their profession.

Miss B., the English and mathematics teacher, is a charming young woman of good background. Her manners are unusual, and she has a well-balanced social life, which gives her a cheerful and integrated personality. Best of all, she is a Catholic and much in demand in all the parish young people's social life. Nothing is too much trouble for her to do for anyone. She coaches the sophomore play for the school and she solicits help for the fall festival, driving miles and spending hours in an effort to make it a success. She gives helpful suggestions when asked and has been in this school for so long that she is a great help, especially to a newcomer.

Mr. C., the science and mathematics teacher, has had two years' experience and bids fair to make a fine record. He is very good looking, but, strange to say, is

not conceited. He is, fortunately, married, and has a most pleasing and discreet attitude toward all pupils. He is well-prepared in his major subjects and will spend some time in school this summer. His attitude toward suggestions is a valuable trait, and his military training at Purdue a decided asset.

Miss D., the fifth and sixth grade teacher, has been in the community for fourteen years and is well acquainted with practically all of the families, most of whom like her very much. She is more than willing to do everything that is required of her and spends most of her time doing school work. She has a great interest in children and is very kind and sympathetic with them. In fact, her most glaring fault is that she does too much for them. When they come into the seventh grade, they are unable to pick out the important facts in a lesson because she has made out questions for them and helped them too much in their assignments.

Miss E., the third and fourth grade teacher, is a young woman with three years' experience in teaching. She is very conscientious about her school work and devotes most of her time to it. Both she and Miss D. stay until late after school every evening. Her discipline is very good, her worst fault being that she

persists in keeping her pupils in at noon to do their work. Many patrons complain, and rightly, about this.

The primary teacher is a woman of about sixty-five, who is well-liked by all the patrons. Many of them remark, "Two of my children started to school to Mrs. F. and did so well that I do hope she's still teaching when the others start." She has an unusual sympathy for the underprivileged children in her care and often helps out with pencils or lunch money. She is very firm with the children and makes them get their writing exactly right. Every paper is corrected and every work-book is marked, although it means hours of work after school.

The janitor, Mr. G., is quite an asset to the school. Himself a grandfather, he takes a fatherly interest in all the pupils, the younger ones, especially. At noon in bad weather he plays his violin so a group can square-dance. He keeps the building in good shape and always has it warm by the time the teachers come in the morning. He thinks so much of the faculty that in the winter he gave an oyster supper for them and for the bus drivers and their wives.

The trustee, Mr. H., is a young man, a graduate of Notre Dame, who has had some law practice and is now in relief work in a nearby city. He has been very

pleasant to work with, always standing by any decision made by the principal and the teachers. His mother is a woman of good common sense who smooths out many difficulties along the way.

CHAPTER III

REMEDIAL MEASURES

I. Home Visitation and Parent-Teacher Association Relationship and Effect On School

The principal believed that a closer cooperation between patrons and school would lessen the absence so, during the year 1937-1938, she called on some two dozen families who had children in grades seven to ten. It was previously announced at a Parent-Teacher Association meeting and at the school that the calls of the principal were entirely friendly and would be made as rapidly as opportunity offered. The parents, without exception, were pleased at the innovation, expressing their pleasure in varying ways, ranging from kind words to wine. One particularly surprised patron remarked, "Why, I just can hardly believe that you would think enough of me to come to see me!" This lady is to be the new president of the Parent-Teacher Association for the year 1938-1939. Another whose daughter is in the sixth grade said, "I'm so glad you came. You're the first one of Mabel's teachers I've seen."

Three years ago the principal and the Parent-

Teacher Association could not agree on anything and, partly because of this, the trustee decided to try a woman as the head of the school. For the past two years, relations have been very cordial, and the Parent-Teacher Association has been of much service. The ladies meet early in the opening month of school to can tomatoes for the school lunch, they advance money for the poor children who cannot buy even the three-cent hot dish, and they sponsor one or two money-making schemes throughout the year and the free "pot luck" supper which is a feature of the last meeting of the school year.

One of the most successful events of the school year, 1937-1938, was the "Fall Festival" which was sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Association, the school, and the St. Joe Parish. The nearby merchants were solicited and dozens of prizes, ranging from a ton of coal to a five-year diary, were donated. These served as door prize, prize for the largest family present (consisting of only eleven, one family of thirteen having gone home before the prize was given) and prizes for Bingo. The St. Joe Farm people helped wonderfully, each family taking twenty tickets, and several spending a great deal of time in soliciting and in getting rallied around their family and their friends for the affair. Best of

all, most of them came that night and seemed to have a fine time.

An effort will be made during the year 1938-1939 to make some changes in the programs of the Parent Teacher Association. Many good speeches by outsiders have been given, but the organization has been allowed to believe that it was the duty of the teachers to "put on a show" each time to entertain the association, and no organized study of any sort has been attempted. In the future some investigation of a selected problem in a question of interest to the community will be made from time to time, or, if the organization prefers, at each meeting additional work will be done on the same subject.

A further effort will be made to interest all the patrons in the school. Those who do not attend Parent-Teacher Association will be urged to do so. Different people will be placed on committees for the Fall Festival. When a pupil is ill, his classmates and teachers will write letters and make calls and try in every way to show him that he is a valuable member of the school and is missed when forced to be away. Even such a simple kindness as the sending of a library book to a stranger in the community will help to demonstrate a spirit of friendliness.

II. CHANGES IN CURRICULUM

In the curriculum of the Harris Township School not much has been done thus far to provide for individual differences in the first six grades. Some one hundred thirty-six children are fed into the hopper on September tenth, and on April thirtieth one hundred thirty-six little paragons containing exactly the same knowledge are expected to emerge. All this is somewhat similar to Mr. Gradgrind's theory of pedagogy, except that the children are not taught about a horse by learning to rub it down because that might fit them for life.

Leon Ederle, little violinist of the fourth grade, whose dimples and blue eyes have won the hearts of many palpitating maidens in his room, is supposed to act exactly like the phlegmatic Max who hasn't a talent or a frivolous thought. Ludwig's teacher tried for two years to fit him into the accepted pattern of behavior, but she wore herself and the pupils threadbare and had her trouble for her pains.

1. Grades one through six, inclusive.

Perhaps the teaching of arithmetic is most at fault in the Harris Township School. At least, the teachers complain most about their pupils' inability to grasp that subject. Since the county superintendent has already

expressed himself as averse to the use of arithmetic work-books in grades one and two, a reform will be started there this fall, and an effort will be made to vitalize the subject in grades three to six, also. Much that is unnecessary will be omitted if the teachers find themselves too hurried, and greater stress will be placed on the useful and interesting portions. For instance, the making of change is certainly a worthwhile and motivated part of arithmetic, but it is usually slighted while the teacher drills on difficult problems in long division. As Julia Richman remarks, "A child's soul cannot be reclaimed by means of the multiplication table or long division."¹ One might add further that a child's horror of mathematics and many an inferiority complex regarding it can be traced to his too-early introduction to the subject.

As one step in this reform, the teachers will be asked to give an unhurried review of the essential facts and to refrain from such remarks as, "Why, you've forgotten everything you ever knew! I taught you that

¹Julia Richman, "What Share of the Blame for the Increase in the Number of Truants and Incurables Belongs to the School," Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association, 1909, p. 231.

last year!" An effort will be made to convince the teachers that there is more to teaching than mere training the pupil to pass certain examinations, but it will take a long time to do this because two of the teachers taught in St. Joseph County when success grades were made out on the basis of the average the pupils made on the state examination.

As a beginning, the teachers in grades one to six will be asked to read that portion of Management and Learning in the Elementary Schools by Tiegs,² which will be most beneficial to them. If St. Joseph County is fortunate enough to have a visiting day this year, these teachers will be sent to carefully selected rooms to visit. They must be shown that results can be obtained by methods which eliminate the strain of the constant horror of examinations. During the year, the principal will teach a few demonstration lessons and also arrange a period in which the teacher may visit either the room to which her pupils have gone or the one from which they have come.

² Ernest W. Tiegs, The Management of Learning in the Elementary Schools. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1937. 306 pp.

At the first teachers' meeting a carefully prepared bulletin³ of the objectives of the school year will be handed out. In addition, each teacher will receive an individual summary of her two years' work in which ways for improvement are suggested and in which her good points are stressed. This second item will be referred to at times and, if St. Joseph County still issues success grades at the end of the school year, will be used as a basis from which the principal and teacher can evaluate her work for the year.

Owing to the fact that most of the pupils come on buses, the hours for the primary children are far too long: 8:30-11:30 A. M. and 12:30-3:30 P. M. With such lessening in requirements as has been suggested in arithmetic, for example, more time can be spared for recreation than the skimpy recess periods now allowed. The playground, not large enough for all the children at the noon hour, will be a great joy to the little ones when they can have it all to themselves. Mrs. F., Miss E., and Miss D. are either not sufficiently well-prepared in playground supervision or they still cling to the outmoded ideal of "book-learning" to the exclusion of

³See Teachers' Bulletin, page , in Appendix.

everything else. At certain periods older girls can be asked to assist in games, as they did in an occasional work or number drill last year.

2. Grades seven to ten, inclusive.

In grades seven through ten greater freedom and more recreation are given the pupils. Baseball, basketball on outdoor courts, softball, table tennis, the school paper, the two school plays, a social science trip through Studebaker's, the jail, and a newspaper office, biology excursions, new books for those who care to read, square dancing at noon on bad days, class parties chaperoned by the teachers, and a dancing club sponsored by Miss B. are some of the activities which give the pupils something to enjoy and help broaden their interests. Scrapbooks or notebooks in certain English and social science classes were introduced last year and were much enjoyed by those who cared to make them. The community has not been accustomed to extra-curriculum activities, so such things will be added gradually as the pupils request them.

III. TREATMENT OF ABSENCE

Among the remedial measures to be used in the lessening of absence, the following have been planned:

1. Any pupils who have been absent will be sent to the principal at the beginning of the school day. Probably those from grades one to six will still be required to bring excuses from home or at least the word of an older brother or sister, but those in the upper grades will be asked to sign a statement giving the reason for their absence.⁴ In this way, the forged excuses so often prevalent will not be necessary and the pupil will be put on his honor.

2. When the teacher takes the attendance for the day, she will make pencil notations on a large sheet containing her room enrollment for a six weeks' period, giving the reasons for the absence if she knows it. The principal's notations will be in ink, among them being the penalty for unexcused absence which that particular pupil has to pay.⁵

⁴William Cook, High School Administration. Baltimore: Warwick and York, Inc., 1926, pp. 212-13.

⁵Elwood P. Cubberly, The Principal and His School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923, p. 571.

3. Since pupils cannot be "kept after school," some other time not too burdensome to the teacher will have to be arranged. In the case of the conscientious or seldom-absent pupil, but little make-up work will be required, but if a child's subsequent test grades show that he does not understand the work which he missed, he will have to be helped in it.

4. At least for the first month or two, when there will probably be no epidemics, a fair degree of competition between the rooms will be fostered. Each day a notice will be posted on the downstairs bulletin board showing what rooms have perfect attendance. This plan, however, may be abandoned when bad weather comes because many smaller children might come when they should not do so. Every precaution will be taken to show the pupil that a child who is really ill has no place in the school room until he has recovered, since it is poor citizenship to give another child a disease by returning to school too soon.⁶

5. On the first full day of school, a talk will be given in which the plans regarding the drive

⁶ Leo Martin Chamberlain, The Teacher and School Organization. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1936, p. 484.

against absence will be discussed. Last year's per cents will be posted and compared with those from other schools. Some instances of low grades of absentees will be cited, but not by name. At the first Parent-Teacher Association meeting during the opening week of school a talk will be given on the same subject, stressing not only the importance of good attendance⁷ but the proper attitude between home and school.⁸

6. Every effort will be made to maintain friendly relations, but since the worst offenders are known to the faculty and to the attendance department, much time will be saved if chronic non-attendance be nipped in the bud among all former pupils or new pupils whose record from other schools shows them to be delinquent. In this school of St. Joseph County, because of the occupation of so many patrons, a vast amount of farm and garden work is to be done by the boys and girls in the fall. Often the father and perhaps an older boy

⁷ Julia Richman, "What Share of the Blame for the Increases in the Number of Truants and Incorrigibles Belongs to the School?" Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association. 1909, p. 225.

⁸ R. E. Langfitt, et al, The Small High School at Work. New York and Cincinnati: American Book Company, 1936, p. 139.

or two work at Studebaker's or Bendix, leaving the wife and the younger children to see to affairs at home. In several cases the mother is employed. If one of these patrons were fined, he would decide that it would be cheaper to take some of his salary and hire someone to do the work that his boy could not do on Saturday or after school than it would be to keep him out of school.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbot, Edith, and Sophonisba Breckinridge, Truancy and Non-attendance in the Chicago Schools. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917. 472 pp.
- Bagley, W. C., Classroom Management, Its Principles and Technique. New York: Macmillan Company, 1928. 306 pp.
- Bursch, J. F., "Factors Associated with Non-attendance of Pupils in Secondary Schools," Department Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, 20:26-32, March, 1936.
- Butler, C. H. "School Achievement and Attendance," School Review, 33:450.
- Chamberlain, Leo Martin, The Teacher and School Organization. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1936. 656 pp.
- Church, H. V., "Attendance Procedure," School Review, 29:273-77, April, 1921.
- Cockrell, E. T., "How Absence Affects Quality of Work," Educational School Journal, 24:135.
- Cook, William Adelbert, High School Administration. Baltimore: Warwick and York, Inc., 1926. 378 pp.
- Corey, Arthur F., "Economic Cycle in Secondary Education," High School Teacher, 242-244, October, 1934.
- Crider, Blake, "Effects of Absences on Scholarship," School and Society, 30:27, July 6, 1929.
- Cubberley, Elwood Patterson, The Principal and His School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923. 571 pp.
- Dougherty, J. H., et al, Elementary School Organization and Management. New York: Macmillan Company, 1936. 453 pp.
- Feingold, G. A., "Intelligence and Persistency in High School Attendance," School and Society, 18:443.

- Fleming, Paul, "Truancy--When and Why It Occurs," Nation's Schools, 6:31, November, 1930.
- Flint, E. M., "First Absences and Pupil Elimination," National Education Association Journal, 15:48.
- Foster, Frank, "Study of Elimination in a Boys' Technical Vocational High School," School Review, 36, 58, January, 1928.
- Foster, Herbert Hamilton, High School Administration. New York, and London: The Century Company, 1928. 665 pp.
- Gideon, H. J., "Police Duties Are a Small Part of Attendance Work," Nation's Schools, 14:27-30, September, 1934.
- Graves, G. W., M. D., "Reducing Absences for Illness," Parents' Magazine, January, 1935.
- Halberstadt, L. C., "High School Truants: Survey of Attendance Literature," Nation's Schools, 21:33-4, April, 1938.
- Hall, Bert, "Truancy, a Few Causes and a Few Cures," Proceedings of National Education Association, 1909.
- Harris, G. L. "Attendance Control in the High School," American School Board Journal, 45, November, 1926.
- Hawes, Ida E., "The Attendance Department, a Laboratory of Citizenship," School Review, 32:265-75, April, 1924.
- Heck, Arch Oliver, Administration of Pupil Personnel. Boston, New York: Ginn and Company, 1929. 479 pp.
- Henderson, Louise, "A Study of Absences on Account of Sickness Among High School Girls," School and Society, 36:797, December, 1932.
- Hiatt, James S., M. D., "The Truant Problem and the Parental School," U. S. Bureau of Education Bulletin, Number 29, 1915.

- Johnson, W. H., "Problem of Truancy in the Chicago Public School," School and Society, 45:665072, May 15, 1937.
- Kirkpatrick, M. E., M. D., and T. Lodge, "Some Factors in Truancy," Mental Hygiene, 19:610-18, October, 1935.
- Langfitt, R. E., et al, The Small High School at Work. New York and Cincinnati: American Book Company, 1936. 651 pp.
- Mason, H. W., "Health and School Attendance," Teachers College Record, January, 1923, p. 26.
- Maxwell, C. R., and L. R. Kilzer, High School Administration. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1936. 514 pp.
- Morgan, John J. B., The Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child. New York: Macmillan Company, 1936. 339 pp.
- Odell, C. W., "Effect of Attendance upon Achievement," Journal of Educational Research, 8:422.
- Palmer, C. W., "Absences, Lateness and Drop-Outs in the North-east High School, Philadelphia," School and Society, 34:68, July 11, 1931.
- Patty, W. W., "Provisions for Voluntary and Compulsory attendance upon Public Secondary Schools," American School Board Journal, December, 1925, p. 43.
- Perry, A. C., Management of a City School. New York: Macmillan Company, 1908. 350 pp.
- Reeder, W. G., The Fundamentals of Public School Administration. New York: Macmillan Company, 1931. 579 pp.
- Richman, Julia, "What Share of the Blame for the Increase in the Number of Truants and Incurables Belongs to the School?" Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association, 1909, pp. 222-232.

- Rugg, Harold, American Life, and the School Curriculum; Next Steps Toward Schools of Living. Boston, New York: Ginn and Company, 1936. 471 pp.
- Strayer, George Drayton, et al, Problems in Educational Administration. New York City: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1925. 755 pp.
- Sullinger, T. E., "Some Social Factors in School Non-Attendance," School and Society, 41:238-40, February 16, 1935.
- Teagarden, F. M., "Teachers' Apron Strings," Educational Forum, 1:437-49, May, 1937.
- Tiegs, Ernest W., The Management of Learning in the Elementary Schools. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1937. 306 pp.
- Wetzel, W. A., "School Attendance and Scholarship," School Review, 36:118, February, 1938.

TEACHERS' BULLETIN

This year we are trying out a new scheme in the conduct of our school. It will not be exactly "the child-centered school," about which you have learned so much in your college work. We do not have the equipment nor the faculty to carry out all the best of the new ideas about education and, in addition, too drastic a change is never good. It is with ideals and atmosphere that we must first work in order to achieve any worth-while results.

It is true that with our set-up we have not had much time to devote to a study of individual differences in children. This year, however, with less crowding we have a great advantage at the start and, if we really want to improve our technique of teaching, we can go far in a single year.

As I have studied the situation for two years, I have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. We expect too much at the beginning of school.
2. We worry more than necessary about covering a certain number of pages.
3. We are not original enough.

4. Our days are filled with nervous excitement because of exams.
5. Our per cent of absence (8% for last year and 8% for the preceding year) is too large.

In discussion, and to return to the first statement, one must remember that any normal child forgets a great deal in a vacation of four months. Too often we start him with a complex because we spend valuable time nagging about what he has forgotten during the summer. Our problem is to review the material as rapidly or slowly as the case requires. Arithmetic and English will have to be reviewed before new work can be begun, but we should use our ingenuity to make the review interesting. Too much of our time has been spent in marking papers and too little in teaching or planning new ways of vitalizing the subject matter.

The second statement has to do with the weeding out of a few of the non-essentials and concentrating on the important parts of our texts. We know what the children are going to need in the next grades and we ought to know what they will need in life. When I emphasized that, the teachers began to understand why

they should divide the valuable time of the term into learning periods, and to separate the subject matter of the book accordingly.

The third statement, dealing with the originality of the teachers, simply attempts to show that the teachers, if they are not careful, might fall into a rut of intellectual learning. In other words, year after year, they give the same lessons and present them in the same way, satisfied only that the knowledge is being taught, and not how it is taught. Modern methods are much different than those formerly used. Little Mary might have been called a problem child, or a student that had little or no learning capacity, in the old days of teaching methods. Now, give her the books that she is really interested in, and let her solve her problems by working with subject matter that is not too deep for her, and she will no longer prove troublesome.

Of course our days will be a nervous strain because of exams if we believe that our success grades depend on the grades the pupils make. However, since that is not true at all, we can just forget about the success grades and really get somewhere this year.

This problem of absence is of vital importance

to the school, and I shall enlarge upon it as I go into a discussion of what I think we can do to make our school better. The children are often absent because the school is not interesting enough to hold their attention and liking. As I recall some of the lessons I have taught I don't blame them for wanting to be in a more interesting and entertaining environment.

We are not going to try to compete with the radio or the movies but we are going to make our school more a part of the real life of the child. If a boy is interested in farming, we are going to let him do something in geography or science to display his knowledge. If a girl likes pictures of movie stars, there is no reason why she should be prevented from collecting them. On the border of a South Bend school room I saw such an intriguing collection of baseball pictures that I came back and took down Browning's and Tennyson's pictures from my own room border. I have had excellent compositions from students regarding their hobbies--papers on which they were only too glad to spend a vast amount of time because they knew they had something to say and they were desirous of saying it the best way.

A pupil here at our school spends some six or seven hours in the school room. It must be made attractive. The downstairs rooms are notably neat and, to a certain extent, attractive, but they are not sufficiently the work of the children. We are greatly handicapped because of our lack of art, but newspapers and magazines are full of the finest pictures we could want. The bulletin boards this year must show more cooperation on the part of the teacher and pupil. As a start, I would suggest that we change our decorations more often and not try to have so many of them. To my mind, no school room looks home-like without flowers. Children will be glad to bring in slips in the fall. Some child who perhaps cannot shine in anything else can water and take care of them in all rooms except the primary, and an older pupil or two can be assigned to that pleasant task.

In addition, pictures of interest in different subjects should be displayed. I would suggest that during the first week of school an informal discussion should be held in which each room decides on one certain subject or line of work. You teachers will know how to direct their decisions because you know, by experience,

what subjects will fit best into your curriculum. If you have been dissatisfied with your pupils' attitude toward geography, health, or history, by all means start a collection of pictures for that subject, either for a room scrap book or for bulletin board display. It is surprising how many things even a very small child can find which relate to school life if he is properly encouraged. In later years a real, live interest in science or history will be one of the most worth-while bequests we can make to any pupil and one that he will acquire much more readily by outside reading than by the monotonous memorizing of too many facts.

We must do more for the mental and physical health of our children if the school is to function properly. With the aid we can receive from the school nurse, from the Anti-Tuberculosis League, and from the Red Cross we can go far. The health teaching required in the grades and the texts now being used are getting to be very worth while. Perhaps no subject in the curriculum is of more permanent value to the child, and we must not forget that right here at Granger we are giving a great many people all the education they will ever receive. A carefully worked-out schedule of play

activities will be given to you at a later date.

This year we are going to use The Management of Learning in the Elementary Schools by Ernest W. Tiegs as a basis for study and discussion. Below I am listing a few of the most valuable references which we shall need right at the beginning. I believe you will find the book so interesting and so practical that you will want to read a great deal of it rapidly, and study carefully the portions you feel you most need. These we can discuss in different teacher's meetings throughout the year.

Goals of education, pp. 6-8,

Educability, pp. 17-23,

Opposite Poles in Educational Theory,

pp. 26-27,

Classroom Management, pp. 46-49,

Mental and Physical Health, Chapter XV,

pp. 273-298.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Is your per cent of attendance increasing or decreasing?
2. Have you made any recent study of causes and results of non-attendance and of remedies for it?
3. What do you consider a normal per cent of attendance?
4. Is there any marked variation in attendance in different localities in your city?
5. What has proved your best remedy for truancy or non-attendance?
6. Do you have visiting teachers?
7. What connection do the schools have with social service and public welfare departments?