

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF
HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

THESIS

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Amy C. Hazard

State University of New York
College at Brockport
Brockport, New York

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SUBMITTED BY:

Amy C. Hazard 7/12/93
Candidate Date

APPROVED BY:

Merinda Beers 8/31/93
Thesis Advisor Date

Robert B. Pottle 9/1/93
Second Faculty Reader Date

Patricia E. Baker 9/10/93
Director of Graduate Studies Date

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter I	
Statement of Problem.....	1
Purpose.....	2
Hypothesis.....	2
Background and Significance.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	4
Limitations.....	5
Basic Assumptions.....	6
Chapter II	
Review of the Literature.....	7
Early Identification.....	7
Contributing Factors.....	8
Absence.....	11
Summary.....	13
Chapter III	
Methods and Procedures.....	14
Subjects.....	14
Materials.....	14
Procedures.....	14
Treatment of Data.....	15
Summary.....	17

Chapter IV

Analysis of Data.....18
Summary.....31

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations.....32
Conclusion.....32
Recommendations.....33

References.....35

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is an identifiable pattern of absences for elementary school student who eventually drop out of high school. If so, attendance patterns could be used as an indicator for students at risk or dropping out. Using attendance data, the study investigated these absences.

This study examined the elementary attendance records of 42 high school dropouts. All of these students attended school in the Fulton City School District.

The study began by looking at grade levels. For each grade level, the percentage of each day of the week missed was calculated. The purpose of this was to determine if there was one particular day of the week, at each grade level, that was most likely to be missed. The next step was to determine if there was a particular day that was most commonly missed overall.

The results of this analysis indicated that there is no one day that is more likely to be missed.

In addition, a percentage of absences for each grade level was calculated. The purpose was to determine if there is an increase in the number of absences with increase in grade level. Results of the study did not support this idea.

Finally, two students were examined more closely to determine if there was a pattern to their absences over

three or more years. This analysis also failed to find any pattern that would be useful in identifying potential dropouts.

While poor attendance is known to be an indicator of students at risk of dropping out, the specifics of particular days missed does not seem to be useful in identifying these students.

Chapter I

Statement of Problem

Dropping out of school has consistently been seen as a serious educational and social problem. As a result of dropping out of school, most dropouts have educational deficiencies that hinder their economic and social well being throughout adulthood. It has become increasingly difficult to acquire gainful employment without a high school diploma or equivalent. In addition to individual consequences, this has also lead to social costs of billions of dollars (Rumberger, 1987).

In the past several decades, the number of individuals failing to complete high school has diminished, yet this issue has continued to be high priority among educators, policy makers, and researchers. This is because, while long-term incidence of dropping out has decreased, the short term incidence has remained steady, and even increased, especially for some groups (Rumberger, 1987).

A second reason for increased interest is that minority populations are increasing in public schools. These populations have consistently had higher dropout rates than the white population (Rumberger, 1987).

In addition, many states have recently passed

legislation raising academic course requirements for graduation. This may result in higher dropout rates (Rumberger, 1987).

Educational requirements for work may increase in the future. As a result, students who have dropped out of school will face an even greater disadvantage in the work place than they do today (Rumberger, 1987).

As a result of the interest in dropout rates, attempts have been made to determine indicators for students at risk for dropping out of school.

Purpose

In this study, I will attempt to determine if attendance patterns in elementary school can be used to determine the likelihood that a student will drop out of high school. It is known that attendance is a factor in determining if a student will drop out. Many studies have examined the frequency of school absence. I am particularly interested in determining if there is a particular day (or days) of the week that a student who eventually drops out is more likely to have missed.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesis of this writer that there will be

a pattern to the absences, in elementary school, of students who eventually dropped out. I expect to find a higher incidence of absences on Mondays and Fridays, extending the weekend and shortening the school week. I also expect to find an increase in the percentage of days missed with the advance of grade level. This may help determine a students' likelihood of dropping out of high school in the future.

For the purposes of this study, the null hypothesis is that there will be no significant difference in the number of student absences, at each grade level, by day of the week.

Background and Significance

Although poor attendance is only considered to be one of many factors contributing to a student dropping out it was found that "absenteeism and tardiness were found to have a high correlation with dropouts. . . . The more days absent from school, the greater the probability is that the student will leave school early" (Soderberg, 1988, p. 110).

It is very important that students who are at risk be identified early, in the elementary school years and given assistance at that time. Intervention should occur before a history of negative attitudes and poor academic

performance develop (Barrington and Hendricks, 1989). In their study, Barrington and Hendricks (1989) determined that, based on absences, dropouts could be distinguished from graduates with 66% accuracy. This distinction was possible by the third grade. They also found, that on the average by fifth grade the dropouts were absent twice as often as graduates. This pattern continues on into the high school years.

Definition of Terms

There are conflicting definitions of the term 'dropout'. The term is usually used to indicate someone who has not graduated from, or is not currently enrolled in a full-time, state approved educational program. Therefore, students who have completed the General Educational Development Examination (GED) or receive a high school equivalency diploma from the state are often considered dropouts (Rumberger, 1987).

The census bureau however, does not consider anyone with a regular or equivalent high school certificate to be a dropout nor do they include anyone still attending school (Rumberger, 1987).

For the purpose of this study, I consulted a list of students considered to be dropouts by the Fulton City School District. They were not identified as transfer

students, however it is possible that some or all of these students did or will pursue a high school equivalency diploma or re-enroll.

Limitations

This study has many limitations. As previously stated, it is unknown if students considered to be dropouts, for the purposes of this study, received high school equivalency diplomas or re-enrolled in a public high school program at a later date.

Secondly, finding data was especially difficult. I found old attendance records for 42 students from a list of 78 names. For each of these students the elementary attendance history was incomplete. For most of the individuals I found attendance records for only one or two years. There were two individuals for whom there were records of three or more years.

Finally, the source of the data must be considered when applying the results of this study to other populations. Data was collected in the Fulton City School District. The population is predominantly white, low to middle socioeconomic class. Fulton is a small, industrial city surrounded by farming communities.

Basic Assumptions

It is assumed that this is a representative sample of high school dropouts in the Fulton City School District. It is also assumed that these students did indeed dropout and were not transfers to other districts.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Early Identification

As stated by Nichols and Nichols (1990), "The dropout problem cuts across all ethnic, social class and geographic lines" (p. 2). Warning signals that indicate a problem may be seen as early as elementary school and therefore early intervention is very important (Sween, 1989). Stroup and Robbins (1972) and Lloyd (1978), also found that academic failure and disengagement from school can be identified in the early elementary grades. Lloyd (1978), indicated five dimensions found to be related to dropout or graduation present at the sixth grade level. Four of the five were also present at the third grade level. The five areas are; achievement, ability, socio-economic status/family characteristics, retention and absence. Absence was the factor not observed at the third grade level. In their study, Hunt and Woods (cited in Nichols & Nichols, 1990) found that prevention programs must be implemented in the elementary years in order to be effective. "The earlier a student with a high risk of dropping out is identified, the more likely it is that a sustained effort at dropout prevention will be successful

(Rumberger, 1987, p. 117)." In support of this, Schweinhart, Berrueta-Clement, Barnett, Epstein and Weikart (1985) studied a preschool program. Low socioeconomic class was used as the indicator for students at risk. A preschool program that emphasized how to be a good learner and how to work with adults outside the family was the intervention. They found that this intervention significantly reduced the incidence of dropping out.

Factors Contributing to the Dropout Problem

There are many factors considered to indicate an individuals likelihood of dropping out of school. Nichols & Nichols (1990, pp. 9-12) provide a list of 26 factors contributing to the dropout problem. They are:

- Poor academic performance
- Behind in grade level
- Older than classmates
- Low grades on standardized tests
- Detention, suspension, truancy
- Low self-esteem
- Single parent home
- Dislike of school
- Pregnancy
- Poor socioeconomic conditions
- Attractiveness of work
- Learning disabilities
- Emotional problems
- Language problems
- Lack of friends
- Poor reading skills
- Little extracurricular participation
- Poorly educated parents
- Low aspirations
- High absenteeism

Race/ Ethnicity
 Large city
 Job while in school
 Low personal autonomy
 Alienation
 Marriage

Nichols and Nichols (1990, pp. 13-14), went on to find out what students themselves consider to be the factors relating to dropping out. They are:

Poor academic performance
 Problem getting along with teachers
 Pregnancy/ marriage
 Illness/ disability
 Dislike of school
 Preference for work
 Problem with peers
 Dangerousness of school grounds
 Inability to get into desired program
 Peers dropping out
 Move far from school
 Need to support families
 Expulsion
 Lack of interest
 Desire to travel
 Poor reading ability
 Discipline problems
 High absenteeism

In a study by John Lane (1989), principals identified ten factors that significantly contribute to dropping out of school. These are; course failures, pregnancy, fear of gangs in the neighborhood, fear of gangs in the schools, irrelevant curriculum, peer pressure, teacher absenteeism, student class cuts, truancy, and student language problems.

In his study, Reyes (1989), states that the strongest predictors are; academic failure, school and socialization,

lack of support for academic achievement by family and peers, and socioeconomic class (those in a lower socioeconomic class are more likely to experience isolation and exposure to those who failed in school). He goes on to state that the single most important cause of dropping out is frustration and alienation resulting from academic failure.

In a study by Dougherty (1989), the indicators listed by teachers, principals, counselors and other educational personnel listed indicators as low attendance, poor school performance and grade retention. Teachers also listed passive or disruptive behavior, health or emotional problems, and no extracurricular school activities like clubs or sports.

Cervantes (1965) listed some other characteristics not cited by other studies. They are; performance that is consistently below potential, frequent change of schools, feeling of not belonging, more children than parents can readily control, parents inconsistent with affection and discipline, father figure weak or absent, education of parents is low, few family friends, resentful of all authority, difficulty deferring gratification, poor self image.

Gadwa and Griggs (as cited in Dougherty, 1989), lists truancy, poor attendance and suspension as important factors when looking at the likelihood of a student to drop out.

Sexton (as cited in Dougherty, 1989) reports that schools with a higher than average suspension rate have a higher dropout rates than schools with average suspension rates.

Absence

Soderberg (1988) reports that absenteeism and tardiness are indicators of possible dropouts. The more days a student is absent, the more likely they are to dropout. Nachman, Geston and Ogdens (as cited in Soderberg, 1988, p. 110) "found that the absenteeism rate of dropouts correlated inversely to the grade in which students dropped out." They also found that missed about twice as many days from seventh grade until the time they dropped out as they had in first through sixth grade.

In their study, Barrington and Hendricks (1989) collected data on absences for first, third, fifth, ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. They found that using absence rates they could determine, by the third grade, which students would drop out of school with 66% accuracy. They also found that by the fifth grade, dropouts were absent an average of twice as often as graduates. By ninth grade that had increased to three times as often.

Lane (1989) also listed events in the community that are considered by Principals to contribute to poor attendance by students. They are bad weather, gang

activity, locally high unemployment rates, family upheavals like divorce or death, and teacher strikes. Karweit (as cited in Galloway, 1985) found the absence rate to be higher on rainy days. In his study, Lane (1989) stated that principals also identified five months that typically have high truancy rates. These are June, May, December, January, and September. Sandon (as cited in Galloway, 1985) found absence rates to be highest in January and February.

Sandon, Tregg, and Jackson (as cited in Galloway, 1985) all found, in separate studies, that attendance is higher at the beginning of the week than the end. Jackson (as cited in Galloway, 1985) went on to say that there is a tendency for attendance to deteriorate, not only at the end of the week, but also at the end of the day and the end of the school year. The differences were statistically significant except the comparison of afternoons to mornings.

One should consider that an elementary student who is absent is so with their parent's consent, whether they are ill or just don't want to go that day. A parent who does not take an interest in their child's attendance is probably not concerned with achievement either. It is likely that these values are conveyed to the child. This parent is probably also agreeable when a child decides to leave high school (Barrington & Hendricks, 1989).

It is important to add that, as stated by Dougherty

(1989), low intelligence is not a cause. Fine and Rosenberg (as cited in Dougherty, 1989) state that, in fact, many dropouts have academic ability which is higher than the mean and are self motivated. Warner (as cited in Soderberg, 1988) found that dropouts typically have an IQ ranging from 80 to 110. Only 19% were determined to have an IQ of less than 80, while 11% were tested above 110.

Summary

Rumberger (1987) points out that "no one really knows what causes students to drop out of high school" (p. 109). There is a wide variety of reasons as described previously. Some of these should probably be considered symptoms rather than causes. In any event, it is widely agreed that identification and intervention need to occur as early as possible in a students' school experience.

Chapter III

Methods and Procedures

Subjects

The sample was made up of 24 male and 18 female students from the Fulton City School District. All of them dropped out of school between 1990 and 1992. All subjects were between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one when they dropped out of school.

Materials

Materials for this study consisted of elementary attendance cards for each of the 42 subjects identified.

Procedure for Collecting Data

I received a list of 78 students who had dropped out of school in the Fulton City School District, between 1990 and 1992. With this information I sought their old attendance cards. I was only able to locate cards for 42 students and did not find a complete record for any of them. For two subjects I found records of three or

more years. The remainder were limited to two or less. For each subject, I recorded the grade in school and the number of each day of the week missed. For example, I recorded the number of Mondays missed, Tuesdays missed, etc. I also recorded how many of each day of the week there were in the school year. For example, how many Mondays in the school year, how many Tuesdays in the school year etc.

The old attendance cards were not well organized. This made locating all the cards especially difficult. In addition, the designated subjects did not necessarily complete all of their education in the Fulton City School District.

Treatment of the Data

After collecting the data, I broke it down by grade level. I recorded all the information I had for Kindergarten. For each subject that I had Kindergarten records for, I recorded the number of Mondays missed and the number of possible Mondays. Based on this information I calculated the percentage of Mondays missed in Kindergarten by students who eventually dropped out of school. I did the same for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. From there, I repeated the process for grades one, two, three, four, five, and six. In this way I could

determine which day, if any, was most likely to be missed at each grade level.

In addition I then calculated the percentage of Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays missed for all the subjects together, regardless of grade level. The purpose of this was to determine which day, if any, was more commonly missed overall.

Next, I calculated the percentage of days missed at each grade level. I did this by adding up the total number of days missed and dividing by the total number of days. The purpose of this was to determine at which grade level students missed the most or the fewest days.

Finally, I examined the data for the two students for whom I had three or more years of data. For each individual I calculated the percentage of days missed. For student A, I had three years of attendance data. I calculated the percentage of Mondays missed in Kindergarten, second grade and sixth grade. I then calculated the percentage of Mondays missed over the three years. I repeated the process for the other days of the week. For student B, I had four years of attendance data. I followed the same procedure for this subject that I did for student A.

Summary

This study examined the elementary school attendance patterns of 42 students who dropped out of high school. By calculating percentages of days missed during the school week and at each grade level, the possibility of using attendance patterns as indicators for students at risk of dropping out was considered.

Chapter IV

Analysis of Data

The attendance data for each grade level was examined. There was data for nine students at the kindergarten level. First, the number of Mondays missed by kindergartners as well as the number of possible Mondays were totaled. (See Table A) Based on this information a percentage of Mondays missed was calculated. The process was then repeated for each day of the school week. Kindergartners missed 3.7% of Mondays, 1.8% of Tuesdays, 4.6% of Wednesdays, 6.3% of Thursdays and 3.8% of Fridays. The difference between the day most missed and the day least missed was 5.5%. The observed absences were compared to the expected absences using the Chi Square Goodness of Fit Technique. The expected values were calculated assuming that absences would be equally distributed over all five days of the week. There was no significant difference between the expected and the observed absences at the kindergarten level. This process was then repeated at each grade level. (See Table B)

Table A
Attendance Data

Grade	Sample Size	Day of Week	Number of Days missed	Possible Days	Percentage Missed
K	9	Monday	12	321	3.7%
K	9	Tuesday	6	332	1.8%
K	9	Wednesday	16	347	4.6%
K	9	Thursday	21	335	6.3%
K	9	Friday	12	313	3.8%
1	10	Monday	14	356	3.9%
1	10	Tuesday	13	366	3.6%
1	10	Wednesday	14	382	3.7%
1	10	Thursday	15	365	4.1%
1	10	Friday	11	350	3.1%
2	9	Monday	13	317	4.1%
2	9	Tuesday	15	336	4.5%
2	9	Wednesday	9	339	2.7%
2	9	Thursday	12	325	3.7%
2	9	Friday	10	314	3.2%
3	8	Monday	13	271	4.8%
3	8	Tuesday	14	295	4.7%
3	8	Wednesday	11	302	3.6%
3	8	Thursday	11	293	3.8%
3	8	Friday	11	278	4.0%
4	6	Monday	11	201	5.5%
4	6	Tuesday	19	207	9.2%
4	6	Wednesday	20	233	8.6%
4	6	Thursday	9	226	4.0%
4	6	Friday	8	210	3.8%
5	14	Monday	24	465	5.2%
5	14	Tuesday	23	484	4.8%
5	14	Wednesday	23	544	4.2%
5	14	Thursday	23	525	4.4%
5	14	Friday	23	490	4.7%
6	12	Monday	19	399	4.8%
6	12	Tuesday	11	416	2.6%
6	12	Wednesday	24	466	5.2%
6	12	Thursday	15	452	3.3%
6	12	Friday	19	420	4.5%

Table B
Chi Square
Goodness of Fit

Grade	Day	Observed Days Missed	Expected Days Missed	Chi-Square
K	M	12	13.4	0.150
K	T	6	13.4	4.090
K	W	16	13.4	0.500
K	R	21	13.4	4.310
K	F	12	13.4	0.150
Total Chi square=				9.19
1	M	14	13.4	0.030
1	T	13	13.4	0.010
1	W	14	13.4	0.030
1	R	15	13.4	0.190
1	F	11	13.4	0.430
Total Chi square=				0.69
2	M	13	11.8	0.120
2	T	15	11.8	0.870
2	W	9	11.8	0.660
2	R	12	11.8	0.000
2	F	10	11.8	0.280
Total Chi square=				1.93
3	M	13	12	0.080
3	T	14	12	0.330
3	W	11	12	0.080
3	R	11	12	0.080
3	F	11	12	0.080
Total Chi square=				.667
4	M	11	13.4	0.430
4	T	19	13.4	2.340
4	W	20	13.4	3.250
4	R	9	13.4	1.450
4	F	8	13.4	2.180
Total Chi square=				9.64
5	M	24	23.2	0.030
5	T	23	23.2	0.002
5	W	23	23.2	0.002
5	R	23	23.2	0.002
5	F	23	23.2	0.002
Total Chi square=				0.034

Table B (continued)

Grade	Day	Observed Days Missed	Expected Days Missed	Chi-Square
6	M	19	17.6	0.110
6	T	11	17.6	2.480
6	W	24	17.6	2.330
6	R	15	17.6	0.380
6	F	19	17.6	0.110
Total Chi square=				5.41
Critical Chi square ($\alpha = .05$, $df=4$)= 9.49				

The sample size for first graders was ten. They missed 3.9% of Mondays, 3.6% of Tuesdays, 3.7% of Wednesdays, 4.1% of Thursdays, and 3.1% of Fridays. The difference between the most missed day and the least missed day was 1%. The Chi Square Goodness of fit analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the expected and the observed absences at the first grade level.

The sample of second graders was nine. They missed 4.1% of Mondays, 4.5% of Tuesdays, 2.7% of Wednesdays, 3.7% of Thursdays, and 3.2% of Fridays. The Chi Square Goodness of Fit analysis showed no significant difference between the observed and the expected absences at this grade level.

Third graders missed 4.8% of Mondays, 4.7% of Tuesdays, 3.6% of Wednesdays, 3.8% of Thursdays, and 4% of Fridays. The difference between the most missed and least missed day was 1.2%. The sample size for third graders was eight. The Chi Square Goodness of Fit analysis showed no significant difference between the observed and the expected absences.

The sample of fourth graders was 6. Fourth graders missed 5.5% of Mondays, 9.2% of Tuesdays, 8.6% of Wednesdays, 4.0% of Thursdays and 3.8% of Fridays. The difference between the most missed and least missed day was 5.4%. The Chi Square Goodness of Fit analysis showed that there is a significant difference between the observed

and the expected absences at the fourth grade level.

The sample of fifth graders was made up of 15 students. They missed 5.2% of Mondays, 4.8% of Tuesdays, 4.2% of Wednesdays, 4.4% of Thursdays and 4.7% of Fridays. The difference between the most missed and least missed day was 1%. The Chi Square Goodness of Fit analysis showed that there is no significant difference between the observed and the expected absences at this level.

The sample size of sixth graders was 12. They missed 4.8% of Mondays, 2.6% of Tuesdays, 5.2% of Wednesdays, 3.3% of Thursdays and 4.5% of Fridays. The difference between the most and least frequently missed day was 2.6%. The Chi Square Goodness of Fit analysis showed that there is no significant difference between the observed and the expected absences at the sixth grade level.

The fourth grade data was the only data which showed a significant difference in the observed and the expected absences. A possible explanation for this is the low sample size. For the fourth grade level there were only six students to collect data from. Therefore, fourth grade absences may be poorly represented by this sample.

Next, the percentage of days missed at each grade level was calculated. (See Table C)

Table C
 Percentage of Days Missed
 Per Grade

Grade	Sample Size	Number of Days Missed	Number of Possible Days	Percentage of Days Missed
K	9	67	1648	4.1%
1	10	67	1819	3.7%
2	9	59	1631	3.6%
3	8	60	1439	4.2%
4	6	67	1077	6.2%
5	14	116	2508	4.6%
6	12	88	2153	4.1%

Kindergartners missed 4.1% of the possible school days. First graders missed 3.7% of possible days, second graders missed 3.6%, third graders, 4.2%, fourth graders, 6.2%, fifth graders, 4.6% and sixth graders missed 4.1% of possible days. The Chi Square Goodness of Fit technique was used to determine if there was a significant difference in the number of absences at each grade level. The analysis showed that there was not a significant difference in absences rates for each grade level. The findings do not support the hypothesis that absence rates for students who drop out of school increase with an increase in grade level.

Finally, the percentage of each day of the school week missed, across all grade levels, was calculated. (See Table D).

Table D
Percentage of Days Missed
Per Day of Week

Day of Week	Days Missed	Possible Days	Percentage of Days Missed
Monday	106	2330	4.5%
Tuesday	101	2436	4.1%
Wednesday	117	2613	4.5%
Thursday	106	2521	4.2%
Friday	94	2375	4.0%

It was found that students who eventually dropped out of school missed 4.5% of Mondays, 4.1% of Tuesdays, 4.5% of Wednesdays, 4.2% of Thursdays, and 4.0% of Fridays. This disputes the hypothesis that the majority of absences occur on Mondays and Fridays. Instead, Monday and Wednesday were the days with the highest rate of absence. However, the difference between the highest rate of absence and the lowest was only half a percent. The Chi Square Goodness of Fit technique was used to determine if there was a significant difference in absences for each day of the week, across all elementary grade levels. This analysis showed that there is no significant difference. There is no one day of the week that is more likely to be missed than any other. For this study, the null hypothesis was that there was no significant difference in the number of absences by day of the week for elementary students. This study failed to reject the null hypothesis. Also, the percentage of days missed peaked in the fourth grade level and then dropped off again, disputing the hypothesis that absences increase from kindergarten to sixth grade.

In addition, the attendance records of two students in particular, who there were three or more years of data for, were examined. The first of these, Student A (See Table E), missed a total of 7.7% of possible Mondays for three years. In kindergarten they missed 8.6% of Mondays, in second grade, 5.6%, and 9.1% of Mondays in sixth grade.

Table E

Student A
Attendance Data

Grade	Day of Week	Days Missed	Possible Days	Percentage Missed
K	Monday	3	35	8.6%
K	Tuesday	2	36	5.6%
K	Wednesday	2	39	5.1%
K	Thursday	6	39	15.4%
K	Friday	4	35	11.4%

2	Monday	2	36	5.6%
2	Tuesday	3	37	8.1%
2	Wednesday	2	38	5.3%
2	Thursday	4	36	11.1%
2	Friday	1	35	2.9%

6	Monday	3	33	9.1%
6	Tuesday	2	34	5.9%
6	Wednesday	4	39	10.3%
6	Thursday	2	38	5.3%
6	Friday	6	35	17.1%

Total	Monday	8	104	7.7%
	Tuesday	7	107	6.5%
	Wednesday	8	116	6.9%
	Thursday	12	113	10.6%
	Friday	11	105	10.5%

Over a three year period, this student missed 6.5% of Tuesdays. In kindergarten 5.6% were missed, 8.1% were missed in second grade, and 5.9% in sixth grade. This student missed a total of 6.9% of Wednesdays for three years. In kindergarten they missed 5.1%, 5.3% in second grade, and 10.3% in sixth grade. This student missed 15.4% of Thursdays in kindergarten, 11.1% in second grade and 5.3% in sixth grade. Overall, 10.6% of Thursdays. In kindergarten, 11.4% of Fridays were missed. 2.9% of Fridays were missed in second grade, and 17.1% were missed in sixth grade. A total of 10.5% of Fridays were missed overall for the three years. This does not support the hypothesis That Monday and Friday are the days most likely to be missed by students who drop out of school.

Student A missed 9.2% of school days in kindergarten. In second grade this student missed 6.6% of the possible days and in sixth grade 9.5% of days were missed. This does not support the hypothesis that absence rates increase with an increase in grade level.

The second subject, Student B (See Table F), missed a total of 2.2% of possible Mondays for four years.

Table F
Student B
Attendance Data

Grade	Day of Week	Days Missed	Possible Days	Percentage Missed
K	Monday	1	35	2.9%
K	Tuesday	1	36	2.8%
K	Wednesday	0	39	0%
K	Thursday	3	39	7.7%
K	Friday	0	35	0%

2	Monday	1	36	2.8%
2	Tuesday	1	37	2.7%
2	Wednesday	0	38	0%
2	Thursday	0	36	0%
2	Friday	0	35	0%

3	Monday	0	33	0%
3	Tuesday	2	38	5.3%
3	Wednesday	0	36	0%
3	Thursday	0	37	0%
3	Friday	1	35	2.9%

5	Monday	1	33	3.0%
5	Tuesday	0	34	0%
5	Wednesday	1	39	2.6%
5	Thursday	1	38	2.6%
5	Friday	1	35	2.9%

Total	Monday	3	137	2.2%
	Tuesday	4	145	2.8%
	Wednesday	1	152	.7%
	Thursday	4	150	2.7%
	Friday	2	140	1.4%

In kindergarten Student B missed 2.9% of Mondays, in second grade, 2.8%, 0% of Mondays in third grade, and 3% of Mondays in fifth grade. Overall, 2.8% of Tuesdays were missed for the four years. 2.8% were missed in kindergarten, 2.7% were missed in second grade, 5.3% in third grade, and 0% in fifth grade. This student missed a total of .7% of Wednesdays for four years. There were no Wednesdays missed in kindergarten, second grade, or third grade, and 2.6% were missed in sixth grade. 7.7% of Thursdays were missed in kindergarten, 0% in second grade, 0% in third grade and 2.6% in fifth grade. 2.7% of Thursdays were missed overall. No Fridays were missed in kindergarten or second grade, while 2.9% of Fridays were missed in third grade, and 2.9% were missed in fifth grade. A total of 1.4% of Fridays were missed overall for the four years. This does not support the hypothesis that the highest rates of absence occur on Monday and Friday.

Overall absence rates for Student B do not show the expected increase in absence with increase in grade level. In kindergarten, this student missed 2.7% of the possible days. This decreased to 1.1% in second grade. In third grade this student missed 1.7% of school days and 2.2% in fifth grade. This data disputes the hypothesis that absence rates increase with an increase in grade level.

Summary

The results of this data analysis do not indicate that there is an easily identifiable pattern to the elementary school absences of students who drop out of school. It can be concluded that there is not a particular day of the school week that a student who will drop out of school is most likely to miss. Overall, the findings do not support the hypothesis that absence rates increase with an increase in grade level.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

After calculating the percentage of each day of the week missed, the results indicated that there was not a significant difference in which day of the week was more likely to be missed. It was expected that there would be an increased percentage of absences on Mondays and Fridays but this was not the case. The greatest difference was only half a percent. Friday had the lowest percentage of absences at 4% while Monday and Wednesday shared the highest number at 4.5%.

The data for third graders and for fifth graders showed Monday as the day most often missed. Kindergarten and first grade had the highest absence rates on Thursday. Second and fourth had the most absences on Tuesday, and Wednesday was the day most missed by sixth graders. Friday did not have the highest rate at any grade level.

This data disproves the hypothesis that Monday and Friday are the days of the week that are most likely to be missed by a student who will eventually drop out of school.

When looking at each grade level and the percentage

of days missed overall for that grade level, the highest percentage of days missed was at the fourth grade level. It was expected that there would be an increase in days missed from kindergarten to sixth grade. In fact, the same percentage of days were missed in Kindergarten as in sixth grade. The findings do not support the hypothesis that absence rate increases with an increase in grade level.

The case study of Student A did show a higher percentage of absences on Thursday and Friday than any other day of the week. The same was not true for student B. Neither student showed an increase in absence rate with an increase in grade level.

Based on the findings of this study, absence patterns can not be used as an indicator for students at risk of dropping out of high school.

Recommendations

It would be useful to look at absences of students who graduated from high school to see if a difference in absences can be determined. This might be useful in establishing an indicator for students at risk of dropping out. It may also be helpful to look at absences around holidays or long weekends. Another point of interest would be the type of absence. Were they excused or unexcused absences? How many were due to illness or family vacation?

It might also be helpful to learn more about the family situations of these students. Also, it has to be wondered if some or all of these subjects returned to school or received an equivalency. If some did, what was different about their situation than those who did not return?

This is a subject that has received a lot of attention and will probably continue to do so. More important than the cause is an effective intervention.

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