A longitudinal assessment of the employment productivity of former alternative school students in Iowa

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A longitudinal assessment of the employment productivity of former alternative school students in Iowa

by

Patricia Ann Black

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Administration)

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation of

Patricia Ann Black

has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

Signature was redacted for privacy.

Major Professor
Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Program
Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Graduate College
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family
Father, James Lafayette Black (1900-1988) and Mother, Ruth Kimble Black,
who first gave me roots
and then wings;

my thirteen sisters and brothers;

my two children:
Palanda Annese Brownlow and Rodney James Brownlow, II;

and

my wonderful great-aunt, Abbie Jewel Jordan (1900-1996),
who went to heaven shortly before this study was completed.
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ABSTRACT

This study examined productivity among students who dropped out of alternative schools in Iowa. Productivity was assessed in the areas of employment, political participation and volunteer involvement. Levels of involvement in counterproductive activities such as the public assistance and penal system were also under investigation, along with locus of control of this group. Also, within the scope of this study are comparison data from 1987-1989 graduates of alternative schools in Iowa.

One hundred students who became dropouts during the 1991-1992, 1992-1993 and 1993-1994 academic school years completed the Student Interview Form via telephone interviews during the fall of 1995. Chi-square tests were used to analyze the data.

On employment, participants experienced an unemployment rate that was slightly lower than the national average for this population; and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) involvement was not found to affect the employment rates among the JTPA participants or nonparticipants. Males experienced higher full-time employment rates than females in small, medium and large communities.

No political activity was found within this sample, although there was interest in becoming active in the political process. A small number of volunteers were identified within the group. Only females were involved in the public assistance system, and only males were involved in the penal system. The majority of the participants had an external locus of control.

Concerning alternative school graduates, no difference between graduates and nongraduates was found on post-secondary education and public assistance
involvement. Volunteer involvement and political participation was higher for graduates. Homemakers were more prevalent among the graduates; and more graduates possessed talents and skills which were not utilized on the job. Dropouts were twice as likely as graduates to participate in the penal system.
CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The number of students dropping out of school has become a major national concern because of the nonconstructive behaviors of this population and the limited labor market opportunities that exist for young people without diplomas. Communities across the country are greatly concerned since students who drop out of school are often unproductive in society. Dropouts comprise roughly 60 percent of prison inmates, 87 percent of pregnant teenagers and cost American taxpayers an estimated $75 billion annually in welfare benefits and lost tax revenues (Kunisawa, 1988). According to a study by the William T. Grant Foundation Commission (1988b), "...973,000 dropouts from the nation's high school Class of 1988 will lose $228 billion in personal earning over their lifetimes, while society will lose $68.4 billion in taxes" (p. 6).

The dropout phenomenon is widely viewed as a major educational and economic problem. Overall, these youth are not in the labor force, our educational institutions, or in the military. Their participation in crime, drug dealing, and unemployment seem to be relatively high, and it is estimated that nearly 25 percent of our youth are at high risk of becoming part of this negative profile (Kunisawa, 1988; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko and Fernandez, 1989).

The business sector is also concerned with the dropout epidemic because school failure adversely effects the quality of our labor force. Wehlage and Rutter, 1986 warned that, "...this concern is based on the prediction that serious economic and social consequences will result for those who fail to obtain a high
school diploma. Moreover, it is argued that the civic and economic welfare of the nation is dependent on a universally high level of education attainment” (p. 70).

The authors of Workforce 2000 (1987) predicted that new entrants into the workplace must be more educated and possess greater levels of language, mathematics and reasoning skills. These students must be able to effectively communicate, solve complex problems, deal with change and uncertainty and survive in an increasingly complex and demanding society. Unfortunately, at-risk students rarely master such skills in traditional schools (Crist, 1991).

However, alternative schools throughout the country are providing the possibility of responding directly and personally to students who have not been well-served by mainstream schools. Even with the availability of such schools in Iowa, some students still choose to leave these secondary nontraditional schools and never return.

Statement of the Problem

For many students, America's schools provide the only pathway to a secure and productive life. Choosing to remain in school until graduation may mean the difference between a secure future or an impoverished one. As students leave school, they unwittingly sentence themselves to a precarious life of unemployment, poverty, and perhaps even crime and incarceration. Moreover, once students become dropouts little effort is made to reclaim them, and few institutions assert any accountability for their success or failure.
As Iowa and the rest of the nation attempts to develop skilled workers who can compete in a challenging workplace, the dropout crisis continues to undermine the mission of educational institutions across the country. Personal and economic success is highly unlikely for the high school dropout, because without the minimum educational credential of a high school diploma, educational and employment opportunities do not exist.

A review of the literature revealed many studies that examined personal as well as school characteristics that increased the propensity to dropout. Statistics also provide some indication of the likely consequences of leaving school prematurely. However, no study was found that assessed the level of productivity (e.g., employment, political participation, volunteer activities, etc.) of terminal dropouts.

This knowledge may prove helpful in developing a profile status of these students. Given the magnitude of the dropout problem in terms of personal, social and economic costs, it is important to investigate the likely consequences for this population. This information could be useful to teachers, administrators and legislators in the development and funding of programs for dropouts and potential dropouts.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to examine the nature and extent of the productivity shown by students who left alternative schools without a high school diploma. Productivity components included: employment, post-secondary education, volunteer activity, participation in the political process,
public assistance involvement and penal system involvement. In addition to the productivity components examined in this study, the locus of control of these students was also investigated.

This research emulates an earlier body of work conducted in 1991 by the Iowa Department of Education to assess productive behaviors of alternative school graduates. By conducting similar research with students who dropped out of school prior to graduation, the knowledge base of productivity for varying populations is extended to include this rather elusive group. Also, the information from the 1991 research serves as comparative data for the present study on dropouts.

Students of twenty-four Iowa Alternative schools were surveyed by telephone to determine the extent to which these students have become productive in the workplace and society. The central focus of this study centered on the question, "If students who leave school with a high school diploma seemingly live productive and fulfilling lives, what quality of life exists for students who leave last chance institutions without benefit of a diploma?"

1991 Iowa Study

This section provides a brief overview of the study conducted in 1991 by the Iowa Department of Education. The purpose of the study was to:

a) assess the financial and social costs of dropping out of school for the individual as well as society.

b) survey the productivity benefits of returning and completing a high school education in an alternative school. (Veale, 1991, p. 10)
Two hundred and six students who graduated from 20 Iowa Alternative schools between 1987-89 were randomly selected and surveyed by telephone to study productivity benefits.

Employers of a small subsample of these graduates were also surveyed by questionnaires mailed to the graduate's work site. The employer's questionnaire was developed to assess the graduate's productivity on the job as well as to provide background data about the organization, wages, benefits and the position held by the graduate (i.e. job description).

Based on this survey, graduates had an employment rate of well over 60 percent with an average salary between $10,000 and $20,000 per year. Slightly less than half of the graduates had completed some form of post-secondary education (college or formal training), and more than three-fourths planned to pursue some type of post-secondary education in the future.

Participation in volunteer and political activities was relatively low among the graduates. Low public assistance involvement was also characteristic of these alternative school graduates, and there was almost no involvement with the penal system.

The study also examined graduates' perceptions of alternative education schools. Generally, students made favorable comments about their experience in an alternative setting. The majority felt that the school made a positive impact on their lives.

This study will provide comparison data for the 1991 study to determine whether productivity for students who do not graduate from alternative schools is significantly different from graduates.
Research Questions

In order to focus on the most significant information, several questions were formulated which guided the research conducted in conjunction with this study:

1) Is the employment rate of students who drop out of alternative schools among small, medium and large communities independent of gender?

2) Is the employment rate for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) work experience?

3) Is level of political involvement for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of gender?

4) Is level of involvement in volunteer work for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of gender?

5) Is level of involvement in the public assistance system for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of gender?

6) Is level of incarceration in the penal system for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of gender?
The data set from the 1991 Iowa Department of Education study on alternative school graduates and the 1995 data set were analyzed to answer the following questions:

7) Are productivity levels of graduates and nongraduates of alternative schools independent of educational attainment in the areas of:

- post-secondary education?
- volunteer activity?
- participation in the political process?
- homemaking/child rearing?
- talents and skills not used in job?
- public assistance involvement?
- penal system involvement?

In addition to the aforementioned research questions, locus of control is included in this study as a personal indicator of this population. Although no statistical analysis was conducted on this variable, assessing the presence of either an internal or external locus of control among this group may contribute to the knowledge base of the characteristics of students who drop out of school.

Assumptions of the Study

The basic assumptions of this study included the following:
1) Stratified communities (by size - 3 groups) and subsequent random selection of subjects accurately represented the total population.

2) Interviewers utilized a consistent style during the interview process, and each interviewer possessed similar levels of expertise in conducting interviews.

3) Respondents provided accurate information.

4) Results are not generalizable to other populations.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms are presented to provide clarity of use and meaning in this study:

Alternative schools—an independent or shared facility that offers a nontraditional full service school program characterized by its small scale, community atmosphere and a pronounced departure from traditional programs, school organization and environment (McNabb and Kaufmann, 1994; Raywid, 1994).

At-risk—any student who is at risk of not meeting the goals of the educational program established by the school district. At-risk factors may include, but are not limited to poverty, homelessness, academic difficulties, truancy, etc.
Dropout—any pupil who has been in membership in a school in any of the grades seven through twelve at any time during the 12-month period from July 1 through the following June 30 who withdraws from such school for reasons other than death or transference to another school (Iowa Department of Education, 1991).

Productivity—refers to the ratio of outputs to inputs in a process (Dictionary of Education, 1982, p. 223). In education the inference is that each worker is the product of an educational system and that the knowledge, skills and activities of an individual determine his/her level of productiveness in society. For the purpose of this study, productivity will be used to refer to active participation in the following areas: employment (including homemaking), volunteer work and political involvement.

Terminal dropout—a student who leaves school prematurely and never completes his/her formal schooling as evidenced by the lack of a diploma or General Equivalency Degree.

Locus of Control—refers to the belief or perception that outcomes (positive or negative) are the result of either one's own actions (effort and ability) or external forces (luck, fate, or significant individuals). Although locus of control is presented in this study as only an observed variable, its significance lies in serving as a personal characteristic indicator to further extend the profile of dropouts.
CHAPTER II.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In September 1988, the first high school graduating class of the 21st century entered first grade (Edleman, 1988). Among these ranks are the future workers, homemakers, college students and political leaders of the next century. Also, among them are the poor, the teen parent and the dropout. Edleman offered the following statistics for this class, "Today, one in four of them is poor, one in five is at risk of becoming a teen parent, one in two has a mother in the labor force, but only a minority have safe, affordable, quality child care, and one in seven is at risk of dropping out of school" (1988, p. 1).

Dropping out of school has become a problem of great proportion for educational institutions throughout America. So much so that in 1989, high school completion was adopted as the second of the nation's ambitious education goals. Goal 2 states that "By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent."

While this phenomenon has received increased attention, the problem of leaving school prematurely is not new. Over the years, public schools have made continuous gains in the areas of retaining and graduating students from high schools. In 1900 only 10 to 17 percent of students who attended public high schools graduated. Thirty-five years later this figure had increased to thirty-five percent. By 1965, sixty-six percent of American students graduated from high school; and by 1974 over three-fourths of America's school-age youth completed
high school (Jones, 1977; Kunisawa, 1988; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986). Moreover, eighty-six percent of the 25 to 29 year olds surveyed by the William T. Grant Foundation reported having a high school diploma or its equivalent (1988b).

Although the majority of America's youth leave school with a high school diploma, many students do not. Davis and McCaul (1990) reported that the dropout rate in America was approximately one million students each year. And, while this figure seems exceptionally high, the dropout rate has remained somewhat stable from the late 1960s through the mid-1980s (McDill, Natriello and Pallas, 1985). Although there was a slight decline between 1981 and 1993 when the dropout rate for 16 to 24 year olds fell from 14.1 percent to 11 percent, it has by no means reached acceptable limits.

For Asians and whites, school completion is estimated to exceed 85 percent; African-Americans are at approximately 80 percent; and Hispanics and American Indians have completion rates that are significantly lower than all other categories (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1993). In 1981, 18 and 19 year old white males were 17.9% of all dropouts and white females were 13.2% of the same age group. African-American males and females of the same age group were 18.9% and 19.7%, respectively, and along with the white female classification, represented the lowest figure for these three groups in fifteen years (McDill, Natriello, Pallas, 1985). The proportions of the total dropouts for Hispanic males and females in the same age group were 44.2% and 29.3%, respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982).

In summary, racial and ethnic disparities were very pronounced in dropout rates. McDill, Natriello and Pallas (1985) observed,

Hispanics are much more likely to drop out of high school than are blacks or whites; in turn, blacks are more likely to drop out than whites. For
whites and Hispanics, females are substantially less likely to drop out than males. Black females, are slightly more likely to drop out of school than black males. (p. 417)

While the national figures are considered a conservative estimate and fluctuate slightly from year to year, they say a great deal about the magnitude of the dropout problem. Whether African-American, white, Asian or American Indian, the dropout rate is high for all students.

Personal Characteristics and Family Background

Studies have shown that dropouts are often products of low-income (Bachman, Green and Wirtanen, 1971) and minority families. They are normally the pregnant teenager out of wedlock (Earle, Roach and Fraser, 1987). They lack basic academic skills (Barber and McClellan, 1987) and are usually from single parent families (Frase, 1988). Their parent(s) is unlikely to be a high school graduate and tends to show little or no interest in the educational program of the student (Kunisawa, 1988). These students are frequently older than their classmates, exhibit poor attitudes toward school (Hahn, 1987), have a history of behavior or discipline problems, and are more likely to be male (Barber and McClellan, 1987; Frase, 1988). Youth for whom English is not a primary language are also prone to leave school early (Steinberg, Blinde and Chan, 1984).

Early school leavers report many reasons for dropping out of school. Using the National Center for Education Statistics' High School and Beyond data base, Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack and Rock (1986), found that males were more likely to leave school because of behavior problems and economic issues, such as
being suspended or to help support a family. Females reported getting married or having a child as the major reasons for leaving school. Hahn (1987) states, "Four out of five girls who become pregnant in high school drop out, while less than 10% of those who do not become pregnant do so" (p. 259).

Another study examined the influence of various environmental, psychological and behavioral factors on the propensity to drop out for separate race (African-Americans, whites, and Hispanics) and gender groups (Rumberger, 1983). Family background was a powerful predictor of dropping out, however the effects varied among ethnicity and gender groups. Family income reduced the probability of dropping out for whites only, however whites were the only group in which the dropout rate increased with family size. Higher educational levels of the mother reduced the likelihood of dropping out for young African-American females and males, and white females. High levels of educational attainment for the father reduced the likelihood of dropping out for all three male cohort groups. Additional predictors of dropout behavior were psychological factors such as educational aspirations, ability and locus of control. Both higher levels of educational aspirations and higher educational aspirations of a close friend were associated with lower dropout rates, as well as higher ability levels.

High mobility has also been found to be a predictor of dropping out. In one study, students who were "nonmovers" had a graduation rate of 95 percent, and students who moved once had a 68 percent graduation rate. Students who moved twice had a rate of 56 percent and students who moved three times had a graduation rate of only 30 percent (Bracey, 1989).
Even inter-school transfer (changing schools within the same district) significantly increased the propensity to drop out (Hammons and Olson, 1988). Their study followed a one grade-level cohort group (n=615) for five years. Thirteen percent of the sample progressed through school with no transfers. Of the 532 remaining students, each student had experienced at least one inter-school transfer.

Hammons and Olson's (1988) obtained the same results in their study of inter-school transfers as Bracey (1989) did in his study of students who transferred out of the school district. They found that students who remained in their local school had a 95 percent graduation rate, whereas the movers with one transfer had a graduation rate of 68 percent. Students who had experienced two inter-school transfers had a 56 percent graduation rate and students with three transfers obtained only a 30 percent graduation rate. Hammons and Olson (1988) concluded that, "stability seems a very important factor in educational success, even more important than reading or math achievement test scores" (p. 137).

School Related Factors

While many studies primarily focus on the personal characteristics of dropouts, or social and family background factors that influence students to leave school, Wehlage et al. (1989) maintain that little regard is given to policies and practices within schools that contribute to high drop out rates. Such a focus ignores possible conflict between the potential dropout and the institution (Wehlage and Rutter, 1986). They suggest that students do not drop out of school
based solely on personal characteristics, but as a result of the interactions between the student and the school.

Policies and practices involving attendance, such as retention in grade (Holmes and Matthews, 1984; Smith and Shepard, 1987); detention and suspension (Hahn, 1987); the inflexible structure of the school (Cuban, 1989); and even inappropriate expectations (Good, 1981) have negatively affected the holding power of the school. Some entrenched practices, although proven to be ineffective and may over time ensure failure, continue to exist.

In a study to determine the effect of grade-level retention on elementary and/or junior high school students, Holmes and Matthews (1984) used meta-analysis to analyze data from 44 retention studies. On the average, the retained group consistently scored lower than the promoted group on academic achievement scores, personal adjustment and self-concept scores, and "attitude toward school." The researchers concluded that, "Those who continue to retain pupils at grade level do so despite cumulative research evidence showing that the potential for negative effects consistently outweighs positive outcomes," (Holmes and Matthews, 1984, p. 232). Walz (1989) added, "The child who has been held back one grade level is 60 times more likely to become a dropout than a student who was not, and the child who has been held back two grade levels is 250 times more likely to become a dropout" (p. 9).

Wehlage (1983) suggested that some students are at-risk not because of lack of intelligence or social class, but because of the estrangement and alienation they experience within schools. This group of students, which he refers to as "marginal students," experience little success in school and feel alienated from many of their peers and teachers. Jones (1977) defines alienation as "a feeling of
not belonging, estrangement, hopelessness," and suggests that, "it is often associated with those who feel and perceive they have suffered great inequities and injustices" (p. 414).

Walz (1989) stated, "Many students, particularly male students, report that they found little in school to their liking, that they were essentially uncared for, and that they seldom experienced anything other than blame, disapproval, and negative comments" (p. 11). Clearly, this lack of personal connection within schools contributes to the alienation of students. Raebeck and Beegle (1988) also stated, "... it is now possible for many students to spend four years without developing a single close relationship with an adult" (p. 23).

Without some degree of success and engagement, these students fail to develop a social bond with their school and perhaps later with conventional society. Instead they develop negative, and even anti-school attitudes. Because they see themselves as social misfits, they attempt to develop a subculture that establishes its own definition of the norm.

These behaviors are usually in direct conflict with accepted behavior patterns. As a result, students are very unlikely to complete courses needed for graduation because of negative behaviors such as truancy, conduct problems and failure to complete assignments.

The effects of school characteristics on the probability of dropping out and absenteeism were investigated by Bryk and Thum (1989). Using a sub-sample for the High School and Beyond data base to make public-private sector comparisons, they found that absenteeism was lower and students were more likely to be successful in schools where teachers and administrators were interested and engaged with students. Absenteeism was lower in schools with an
orderly environment and less internal differentiation (i.e., academic track, general track or vocational track). Parnell's (1985) analysis of the "High School and Beyond" data revealed that the majority of the students that dropped out of school were in the general education track. He writes, "Too many young people are receiving an unfocused general education which relates to nothing, leads to nothing, and prepares for nothing" (p. 37).

Barrington and Hendricks (1989) also identified absenteeism as a predictive characteristic of dropping out. In this longitudinal study they found that the number of absences for dropouts was higher than that for graduates for all years, beginning in first grade. They also found that by ninth grade the typical dropout has a definite profile of absences, failing grades and a low overall GPA.

A recent Iowa study revealed institutional causes that influence students' decisions to drop out of school. Teacher behaviors such as "teacher lectured most of the time," "I needed more individualized help to learn," and "teacher did not care about me," were listed among the top ten reasons for leaving school for former Iowa high school dropouts who had re-entered one of Iowa's alternative high schools or programs (Cosner, 1990).

The organizational structure of traditional schools also presents a challenge for potential dropouts, as well as many other students. Sizer (1983) maintained that, "the organizing framework of the traditional high school dates from the late 19th century," and continues to exist with "remarkable consistency across all regions of the country and across public and private sectors" (p. 680). Through his long-term research of American high schools, Sizer has developed the following commentary:

The goals for high schools are numerous and seem to continue multiplying, with little regard for the severe limits imposed by a lack of
school staff, equipment, and time. The daily activities, academic and otherwise, in which a typical high school student engages are numerous: five or six classes on widely differing topics taken in a random sequence are mixed with some nonacademic activity and lots of usually frenetic socializing.

More is better, or so it seems. A premium is put on coverage at the expense of thoroughness. The torrent of facts poured over students is overwhelming, and the only way teachers can keep up the flow is to lecture—to feed students knowledge rather than expect them to forage on their own.

The academic reward system revolves around time, with quicker being better. 'Ahead of grade level' is absolutely preferred to solid, ultimate mastery.

In spite of strenuous efforts on many sides to eliminate it, segregation of the schools by social class is profound and no less visible at the school level today than it was more than 50 years ago. The poor are tracked to be poor, the rich to be rich, and related racial and ethnic stereotyping is pervasive. (p. 680)

Likewise, Glasser (1990) expressed concern for the present structure of schools as well as how they are managed. He argued that, “Education is defined in terms of how many fragments of information these students can retain long enough to be measured on standardized achievement test,” p. 430. He suggested that secondary schools would greatly increase their effectiveness with students if there were a focus on the quality of information being taught, instead of quantity. To this end, Glasser strongly recommended that schools should be transformed into what he referred to as, “quality schools” (p. 428). These “quality schools” are schools where students are asked to do “quality” work. Students understand the value of this work and they are also involved in evaluating their work.

Glasser's recommendation would certainly seem to address the issue that Cosner's 1990 study raised concerning practices that influenced students to prematurely leave school. When students were asked to rank policies and practices that contributed to their decisions to leave school, the majority of these
students reported, "I could never see the connection between what was being taught in class and what I wanted to do later in life." This statement was the highest ranked policy/practice that influenced their decision to drop out of school (Cosner, 1990, p. 52).

Productivity

This section of the literature review addresses those critical components that constitute productivity in this study. Since a thorough search of the literature did not reveal any holistic models of human productivity, productivity in this study was characterized by active participation in the following areas: employment (including homemaking), volunteer work and political involvement. To provide a balanced portrait, counterproductive components were also addressed which included public assistance and incarceration.

Employment Productivity

"The number of young people will decline both relatively and absolutely. The population between age 20 and 29, for example, is projected to shrink from 41 million in 1980 to 34 million in 2000, and their share of the total population will drop from 18 to 13 percent" (Johnson and Packer, 1987, p. 80). Within this shrinking pool of potential workers, prospective employers will need individuals who are highly skilled as well as educated. However dropouts are rarely skilled and obviously not well educated. Instead of being actively pursued by
prospective employees, dropouts experience high levels of underemployment or unemployment.

Higher unemployment rates were observed among dropouts than for graduates of high school (West, 1991). Kinisawa (1988) also observed in a study of nongraduates that 52% of dropouts were unemployed or received welfare. In 1991, the unemployment rate for individuals without a high school diploma was 14.8%, compared to a 7% unemployment rate for high school graduates (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). The William T. Grant Foundation (1988a) stated, "Young workers age 20-24 suffer extraordinarily high unemployment rates: 6.8 percent for whites, 11 percent for Hispanics, and 20.3 percent for African-Americans in 1988" (p. 2). They also observed that although 82.4% of all 20-24 year olds were in the workforce, these youth spent much of the time underemployed in part-time jobs that pay low wages. Moreover, according to Hodgkinson (1991) in 1989 four million workers were employed full-time in minimum wage jobs and still qualified for welfare benefits.

By 1995, sixty-one percent of the 1993-1994 dropouts were in the labor force (Department of Education, 1995). Unfortunately, this means that since 1991 unemployment for dropouts had risen 15.2%. Compared to the college graduate, the dropout is five times as likely to be unemployed (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988a).

Indeed, the wages for individuals who receive a high school diploma far exceeds the earnings that are within the grasp of a dropout. Rumberger, 1987 reported the life-time earnings of American males, aged 18 to 64 with a high school diploma, were $250,000 greater than the earnings of the high school dropout. By 1991, this figure had increased by $10,000 for the high school
Although income for females rose at a faster pace than that of males during the ten-year period between 1980 and 1990, salaries for women remained nearly 30% below the income of males for all educational levels (Department of Education, 1992).

While younger families in general have experienced reduced earnings, families headed by females experienced the greatest risk of poverty (Johnson, Sum, and Weill, 1988). Hodgkinson (1991) referred to this phenomenon at the feminization of poverty. The following statistics were offered by Reed and Sautter, 1990:

1) More than 16% of the young people between the ages of 12 and 17 lived below the poverty line.

2) Almost 50% of all U.S. children living in a family headed by a person 25 years of age or younger were poor.

3) One-third of all children living in a family headed by a person 30 years of age or younger were poor.

4) From 1967 to 1987, the poverty rate for children in a family headed by a person 30 years of age or younger drastically increased from 19% to 35.6%.

5) Half of the nation's poor children lived with both parents.

6) The majority of the nation's poor resided in rural areas, and two-thirds of America's poor were white, p. K4.

Moreover, West, 1991 wrote, "Half of all families headed by a female dropout live in poverty" (p. 20).

In 1976, Amundsen found that at equal educational levels women earned wages that were fourteen percent less per year than their male counterparts. According to the William T. Grant Foundation (1988c), females have continued
to fare less well over time. The Commission reported that women with the same educational levels of males received earnings which were 40% lower.

Participation in the Political Process

Elections are at the core of the American political system. They are the way we choose government leaders, a source of the government's legitimacy, and a means by which citizens try to influence public policy. And for most Americans, voting is the only form of political participation. (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980, p. 1)

Since the early 1960s voter participation has continued to decline (Conway, 1991; Kleppner, 1982; Putnam, 1995). From 1960 to 1976 voter participation declined from 62.8% to 54.4%, respectively (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). This trend continued with only a slight rebound in 1984 when 59.9 percent of the electorate voted (Conway, 1991). By 1990, voter participation had dropped by nearly a quarter (Putnam, 1995).

Voter turnout is also affected by the type of election. Conway (1991) maintains that turnout for primary elections is always lower than general elections. Flannigan and Zingale (1975) reported a 10 to 20 percent decline at the polls for off-year elections. They asserted that presidential elections drew the highest turnout, off-year congressional elections a distant second, and primaries and local elections third. Lea (1982) wrote, "...nonvoters have outnumbered the winning total in every presidential election. And in off-year elections the turnout plummets to about one-third of the electorate" (p. 162).

Kleppner (1982) suggested that one of the legal changes that directly contributed to the decline in voter turnout was the eighteen-year old vote.
He stated, "By enfranchising the 18 - 20 year old group, the Twenty-sixth Amendment (1971) added approximately 25 million potential voters at the youngest end of the age scale. About one-quarter of the nations' 1968-72 decline in reported turnout can be attributed to this expansion of the electorate" (p. 123).

Low turnout among the general voting population has also been attributed to a number of social characteristics. Socioeconomic status, as well as age, gender and marital status have consistently been found to influence the number of people who went to the polls.

Turnout is generally higher among people with higher levels of education and increases with income and higher job status (Kleepner, 1982). From their analysis of a national sample, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980), found that thirty-eight percent of the respondents with $\leq$ 5 years of school voted, high school dropouts had a 55% voting rate, and high school graduates had a 69% voting rate. With additional educational attainment these rates climbed even higher. College graduates had a 86% voting rate and participants in the study with at least a year of graduate school had a 91% voting rate.

Conflicting evidence has emerged concerning the relationship between these socioeconomic variables and voter turnout. Avey (1989) argued that if educational levels, income and occupation were strong predictors of voter turnout rates, then results for these groups would be consistent. However, many exceptions do apply. He pointed out that the youth cohort was the highest educated category, yet their participation at the polls was very low. Also, farmers have very low incomes, yet they voted at very high rates.

Avey strongly suggested that it was not socioeconomic variables or apathy that caused depressed turnout rates, but a consistent failure of the major political
parties to identify with the needs of the poor and working class. He maintains that voter turnout would reach 80% if the concerns of these neglected groups were addressed.

Gender differences have also been found among the electorate. Voting rates for males were higher than voting rates for females; and people who were married had higher voting rates than people who were single, divorced or separated (Conway, 1991; Wolfinger and Rosenshine, 1980). The age of the voter seems to have a normal curve effect in that initially few youth participate, then voting increases and levels off, and finally declines (Flanigan and Zingale, 1975).

Parnell (1985) observed a twenty percent decline in the number of young people eighteen to twenty-four that voted between 1975 and 1985. It has been suggested that, "Citizens who feel competent to act politically and who are interested in politics usually vote at higher rates than those who do not (Kleppner, 1982, p. 125). However, Flanigan and Zingale (1979) attributed low levels of voter participation among youth to unsettled circumstances (e.g., military duty or mobility), rather than a general disinterest in politics.

Sigel and Hoskin (1981) stressed the relevance of personality traits such as low self-esteem and external locus of control, and their role in impeding political activity. They hold that, "In a democracy, the concept of locus of control becomes particularly relevant since a democracy rests at least partially on the idea that the individual can and should control those who govern" (p. 181). They also maintain that these personality traits are of particular importance when examining the political involvement of adolescents, because these youth are at such a critical stage in their development of self, and their perceived capacity to influence outcomes.
Another explanation for low turnout among youth is marital status. Married people generally have higher voting rates, however, young people under the age of twenty-five are delaying marriage longer (Conway, 1991). From 1974 to 1986 the number of males between the ages of 20-24 who were married and living in the same household with their spouses fell from 39.1% to 21.3% (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988).

Despite Avey's (1989) argument to the contrary, apathy and distrust have also lead to eventual withdrawal from the political process. One study designed to identify politically disillusioned and alienated people found that the apathetic American was usually in the lowest income category (Gilmour and Lamb, 1975). And, although the 18 - 25 year old voting population was found least likely to be alienated, they claimed, "Of those found in the lowest two income categories and who dropped out before completing high school, 40 percent expressed apathy toward American politics. They pointed out that this group was least likely to vote or participate in political activities.

Volunteer Service

In 1988 one in four teens said they participated in some type of volunteer activity. Young women (30%) and older teens (26%) were more likely to volunteer, and youth that reported regular church attendance were twice as likely to be involved in volunteer work (Bezilla, 1988). In a two-year study of 16-24 year olds, The William T. Grant Foundation (1988b) reported that young people contributed a minimum of 250 million hours of volunteer work to their communities each year. By 1992 nearly 2 million sixteen to nineteen year olds
reported volunteering in schools and other organizations (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1992).

Church-related groups have been the most common type of organizations joined by Americans, although participation in religious services and church related groups had fallen by nearly a sixth (Putnam, 1991). He also reported that church-related groups were especially popular with women. Although, The William T. Grant Foundation (1988b) maintained that women are volunteering less because more women are now in the workforce.

The 1992 statistics from the Department of Education indicated that church groups (32%) have been replaced by sports groups (36%) as the most common organizations. Social or hobby clubs comprised the third largest organization that young adults participate in as volunteers.

While some individuals are active as volunteers, many are not and this group is continuing to grow. Putnam (1995) reported that compared with 1970 data, volunteers for civic organizations such as the Boy Scouts and the Red Cross were off by 26% and 61%, respectively. He suggested that perhaps the decline in overall participation in contemporary, traditional organizations in the U.S. was due to the growth of new organizations (e.g., feminist groups, support groups and non-profit organizations). The old organizations have simply been replaced by new ones, and participants become active in new roles rather than as volunteers. Therefore, agencies that relied on volunteers were forced to find creative ways to continue to supply this social capital. The Commission has found that organizations and agencies are now using professionals, older youths, young adults without children and seniors to fill positions (William T. Grant, 1988b).
Job Training and Partnership Act

The Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982 is a federal employment training initiative. It was primarily created to provide training and employment to disadvantaged youth in areas plagued with high dropout and unemployment rates (West, 1991). Haasl (1989) found that most programs have several elements in common. They were “career exploration and establishment of career goals; development of employability skills and attitudes; emphasis on academic skill development and remediation; supervised work experiences; academic credit for participation; and the establishment of school, business, and community member advisory committees to assist with program design and implementation” (pg. 58).

The William T. Grant Foundation (1988b) added that in order to produce effective results these programs must be, “comprehensive and of long duration” (p. 60). This commission suggested that it is only through long-range, broad-based intervention that the multitude of problems and needs of these youth can be addressed.

Like most governmental agencies, JTPA does not exist without its weaknesses. Over the years the agency has come under severe criticism because of its inability to adequately serve more of its targeted clients (largely due to its limited funding) and its short-term programming (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988b). This commission reported that, “Currently, less than five percent of eligible youth are served under JTPA’s provisions,” and that, “the average length of JTPA training is only 14 weeks” (p. 63). JTPA has also been heavily criticized for its engagement in a practice referred to as “creaming,” (Anderson,
Burkhauser and Raymond, 1993). Creaming is defined by Anderson, Burkhauser and Raymond (1993), as the practice of “serving individuals who are most employable at the expense of those in most need” (p. 613). They attribute its practice to two flaws in the system: first, the conflicting language of the bill, and secondly, the reward system that JTPA is required to operate within.

Their investigation of the degree to which JTPA agencies used creaming revealed that although it does exist, it is not as commonplace as most critics might suspect. They also concluded that creaming only accounted for about 9% of the placement rate for the agencies included in the study.

Public Assistance Involvement

Economic stability seems beyond the reach of students who leave school early. It is widely accepted that as the educational level of an individual increases, his/her chances of living in poverty is reduced. When an individual foregoes the opportunity for educational attainment, which increases employability, and translates into increased earnings (Rumberger, 1987), he/she is likely to be unemployed or underemployed and live in poverty.

The William T. Grant Foundation (1988b) warned that young families were in great distress. The Commission reported the following findings of America’s youth:

1) The percentage of 20-24 year old males able to support a family of three above the poverty level dropped by nearly a quarter, from 58.3 percent in 1973 to 43.8 percent in 1986. The rate of decline among blacks in that same group was more than twice as great—a full 55 percent.
2) Only 6.3 percent of all single-parent families were able to afford payments on their own home in 1987, down more than one-half from 13.7 percent in 1973.

3) In 1986, 32.6 of every 100 families headed by a person under age 25 was poor, triple the rate for all American families in 1986, and more than double that of 1967. (p. 2)

Hodgkinson (1991) maintained that, "The 'Norman Rockwell' family—a working father, a housewife mother, and two children of school age—constitutes only 6% of U.S. households today" (p. 10). Reed and Sautter, 1990 wrote, "Nearly 40 million people of all ages live in families with income levels below the official poverty line of $7,704 for a family of two, $9,435 for a family of three, and $12,092 for a family of four. They offer low minimum wages as one explanation for the downward trend associated with the working class poor. They pointed out that, "...full-time work at the minimum wage by the head of a family of three leaves that family $2,500 below the poverty level.

Because of these factors, young families are likely to require public assistance to survive at or below the poverty line. Public assistance involves a wide range of services which assist economically disadvantaged families in raising their standard of living. Seventy-five federally funded programs offer assistance in numerous ways. Direct financial aid is provided through programs such as "Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)" or "Supplemental Security Income (SSI)." Assistance for medical care, food and housing are provided through "Medicaid," food stamps, "Women, Infants and Children (WIC)," and Section 8 housing certificates. Programs are also available to stimulate employment among these families. The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) provide education, training
and employment services for these families (Jennings and Zank, 1990). While assistance expenditures are estimated to exceed $200 billion for these services, Kunisawa (1988) reported cost for financial assistance and services at $75 billion for dropouts exclusively.

Level of Incarceration

Research also indicates that potential dropouts are more likely to be involved in delinquent or juvenile crime activities than graduates (Bachman, Green and Wirtanen, 1971). According to this study, delinquent behavior was found to be a powerful predictor of dropping out. However, no evidence was found that these behaviors increased after leaving school.

Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack and Rock (1987) also found that delinquency precluded dropping out. They reported, “Students who cut classes, had disciplinary problems, had been suspended, and/or had trouble with the police were much more likely to drop out” (p. 63).

Battle (1988) found that school dropouts possessed more intense symptoms of anxiety, more difficulties with legal authorities, which often result in periods of incarceration, and more frequent incidences of legal and illegal substance abuse. Whether delinquency occurs before or after leaving school, dropouts are involved in the penal system in overwhelming numbers. Kunisawa (1988) estimated that, “Sixty percent of prison inmates are high school dropouts” (p. 61). Hodgkinson (1991) reported a much higher rate of involvement in the penal system for dropouts. He asserts that 80% of the one million prisoners in America are dropouts.
Alternative Schools

Several definitions exist for alternative schools. One formal definition was provided by McNabb and Kaufmann, 1994; and Raywid, 1994 which defined alternative schools as an independent or shared facility that offers a nontraditional, full-service school program characterized by its small scale, community atmosphere and pronounced departure from traditional programs, school organization and environment. Although formal definitions provide some standardization from which to construct a study, simplicity offers a much clearer understanding of the concept.

Perhaps by defining what an alternative school is not will provide more clarity. The reference is not to sectarian schools, military academics, prep schools or the segregationist academies so prevalent in the South. Instead alternative schools involved in this study are better defined by Duke's (1978) definition. He writes that an alternative school is simply, "a school accessible by choice, not assignment" (p. 4).

This section looks at the history of alternative schools as well as the organization and characteristics of contemporary alternative schools.

Historical Perspective of Alternative Schools

Alternative schools offer the potential, or actual, dropout one last opportunity to continue or resume their education. West (1991) suggested that, "Alternative schools are usually a district's last effort at resolving the problems of at-risk students" (p. 187). Because these schools are usually designed for a specific population (e.g., dropouts, teenage parents, students with a
vocational/career orientation, etc.) they can more effectively provide the needed services of these targeted youth (Young, 1990).

Alternative education is not a new concept. As early as the colonial period educational options and choices existed in America. Public and private schools and home instruction gave the colonists some alternatives for educating their youth. However, more alternatives existed for individuals who were more able to pay for them.

While private schools were dominant during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by the nineteenth century the common elementary school had far exceeded private and home instruction as the option of choice. The widespread popularity of the common school was due largely to its most famous advocate, Horace Mann, who believed that the common school was in his view..."the greatest discovery ever made by man" (Mann, 1876, p. 9).

In the late nineteenth century the progressive education movement, or the educational theory of progressivism, was introduced into public education. By the early twentieth century this movement began to flourish. John Dewey, along with other progressive reformers, shared the belief that all learning should center on the child's interests and needs (Ornstein and Levine, 1984). By integrating real-life experiences into the traditional curriculum, progressive educators attempted to expand choice within the context of education.

At the elementary level, students worked in small groups at learning centers and activities were designed to incorporate more community-based learning. High school students could exercise choice through various electives and extracurricular activities, as well as participate in clubs and interscholastic athletics. Moreover, more vocational options such as home economics,
agriculture, trade, and industrial education became available for secondary students through funding provided by federal legislation.

By the 1950s the child-centered educational movement gave way to national interest. With the Soviets successfully launching the first satellite into space, America quickly focused its attention on education and its role in the country's national defense. In an effort to recapture its competitive edge in the world, education in public schools began to reflect subject matter (math, science and foreign languages) that was beneficial in providing for the nation's security interest. The federal government responded to this increased pressure for excellence from public schools by passing the National Defense Education Act (1958) which provided funds for materials and instruction in these core areas.

Contemporary Alternative Schools

Public education came under serious attack from growing discontent from its constituents during the 1960s. Schools were blamed by many for virtually all of society's problems. Broudy (1972) wrote,

By the mid-sixties the unresponsiveness of the schools was said to be toward the children of the city ghetto, then toward all poor children, and finally toward all children and youth. By the end of the sixties, the schools were alleged to be unresponsive to all social evils—poverty, racism, the war in Vietnam, and the pollution of the environment. (p. 54)

While reformers worked for change within schools, radicals wanted to abandon existing schools altogether. Independent free schools were the choice of these revolutionaries, where teachers were guides who assisted students through their
self-selected learning experiences. Reformers embraced much the same philosophy, but chose to exercise it "within" public education.

The reformers' new approach to public education was open education. In these reformed schools learning experiences would also be more child-centered and based primarily on the interest and learning style of the individual student.

In secondary schools students were taught using an individual, competency-based program of study through interdisciplinary topics. Credits were used instead of grades in many of these schools, and students were invited to participate in school governance.

Alternative schools have been found to offer a more effective means of delivering educational services to students. Although the research base on the effectiveness of alternative schools is not large, some insight are being provided and some similar characteristics are beginning to emerge. These schools have been found to possess the following characteristics: 1) small-scale— allowing for greater program flexibility and individualization (Raywid, 1983; Wehlage, 1983; Young, 1990), 2) "flatter" organizational structures— more decision-making power at the school site and less control from the central bureaucracy, 3) shared leadership— a professional culture among teachers and administrators that permits more empowerment; and provides parents and students with an opportunity to exercise their voice in school governance (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Outson and Smith, 1979), 4) program autonomy— reflects the uniqueness of the students' interests as well as the local community (Raywid, 1983; Wehlage, 1983; Young, 1990), 5) collegiality— creative environment where teamwork and joint
decision-making are utilized (Doyle, 1985), 6) community atmosphere — providing a supportive, accepting atmosphere where students feel they belong (Gregory and Smith, 1987; Wehlage, et. al., 1989), and extended roles for teachers— teachers act as counselors, attendance officers, mentors, as well as instructional staff (Foley, 1984; Raywid, 1983).

In summary the alternative school movement attempted to offer the public not only a choice, but one that had not previously existed. Fueled by growing dissatisfaction with, and distrust for traditional education, supporters of the alternative movement sought new ways to transform schools into settings where students, parents and school personnel could become empowered. Many individuals felt vulnerable and victimized by institutions that were too large, too bureaucratic, too impersonal and failed to acknowledge local and individuals needs. Only through a total transformation of schools would these social institutions begin to address these empowerment issues. By increasing participation in decision-making, expanding educational goals and reducing bureaucracy; these schools were able to create organizational settings that were sensitive and responsive to the needs of all its members.

The forecast for alternative schools is that they will continue to thrive because of their attention to educational diversity among students (Raywid, 1983). In a national study of alternative schools Raywid found several features that contribute to their overall effectiveness. While smallness, autonomy and extended roles of teachers continued to be standard elements, other features such as high staff morale, positive student/teacher interactions and reduced cost were also seen as contributing factors to the overall success of alternative schools.
Her study of more than 1,200 alternative programs revealed that 62% of these schools operated at or below the cost of other programs. Finally, Raywid believed that one of the most crucial elements of alternative schools was that it provided a choice for students and their families.

Locus of Control

This study explores locus of control because of its potential impact on the student's decision to leave school. While students with an internal locus of control believe they have the ability to accomplish their goals; students who have an external locus of control believe that they cannot succeed in their efforts. Students with an internal locus of control believe they are in control and therefore attribute success to personal factors. Students with an external locus of control believe they are controlled by environmental causes.

Attribution theorists, de Charms (1968) and Weiner (1972, 1977) made clear distinctions between internal and external locus of control. deCharms (1968) suggested that under certain circumstances one may feel somewhat like a "Pawn" in his or her environment, and at other times, like an "Origin."

He wrote,

An Origin has a strong feeling of personal causation, a feeling that the locus of causation of effects in his environment lies within himself....A pawn has a feeling that causal forces beyond his control, or personal forces residing in others, or in the physical environment, determine behavior. This constitutes a strong feeling of powerlessness or ineffectiveness. (p. 274)
Weiner (1972, 1977) further developed these dimensions (internal and external) of locus of control to include four attributions: ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. He theorized that individuals attribute their success or failure to either internal or external causes. This perception of causality also affects future behaviors.

A number of studies have found a negative relationship between external locus of control and dropping out. In a longitudinal study of young men, Bachman, Green and Wirtanen (1971) found that external locus of control is correlated with dropping out of school. Using twelve items from Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Scale, 2,000 males were surveyed at the beginning of their tenth-grade year and later as they either dropped out, stopped after graduation or pursued post-secondary levels. They found that students who scored highest in the internal direction had a dropout rate of 12 percent, while students who scored in the external direction had drop out rates that were twice as high as the internal driven students.

Edstrom, Goertz, Pollack and Rock (1987) used locus of control as an attitude variable in their longitudinal study of high school sophomores over a two-year period. Using path analysis to analyze the data, they found a negative relationship between an externalized locus of control and dropping out. This relationship was especially strong for African-Americans and Hispanics.

Frey and Carlock (1984) related locus of control to personal responsibility. They maintained, "When people consider themselves as responsible for their selfhood, they realize that it is their behavior which influences what happens to them. They are not at the mercy of others, nor can they hold others responsible for their fate" (p. 53).
More recently, locus of control (referred to as choice or self-determination) was included in Schutz's (1994) human element model as a component of control. He stated,

I am fully self-determining when I choose my whole life—my behavior, my thoughts, my feelings, my illnesses, my body, and my reactions. I am not self-determining when I act as if my life were decided by external forces—luck, coincidence, fate, synchronicity, the economy, the environment, society, my parents, heredity, my childhood, the law, predestination, my boss, the organization. (p. 41)

A number of studies have found a relationship between locus of control and self-esteem (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld and York, 1966). Bachman, Green and Wirtanen (1971) estimated that one-fourth of the participants in their study that received low scores on a measure of self-esteem dropped out of school; whereas only an eighth of the students who obtained high self-esteem scores left school.
CHAPTER III.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the method employed to investigate the productivity of those students who leave alternative schools without a high school diploma. This research was undertaken to answer the following questions:

1) Is the employment rate of students who drop out of alternative schools among small, medium and large communities independent of gender?

2) Is the employment rate for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of Job Training Partnership Act work experience?

3) Is level of political involvement for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of gender?

4) Is level of involvement in volunteer work for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of gender?

5) Is level of involvement in the public assistance system for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of gender?
6) Is level of incarceration in the penal system for students who drop out of alternative schools independent of gender?

7) Are productivity levels of graduates and nongraduates of alternative schools independent of educational attainment in the areas of: post-secondary education, volunteer activity, participation in the political process, homemaking and child rearing, talents and skills not used in job, public assistance involvement and penal system involvement?

Attention was also be given to the locus of control of these students. Although no formal hypothesis was provided, an exploratory analysis of the frequency data was used to provide summary data.

Subjects

The participants in this study were 100 white high school dropouts currently residing in various locations throughout the state of Iowa. All students were dropouts from alternative schools. A stratified sample was selected from a sampling frame of 1023 students. Students were grouped according to the the size of the municipality in which they resided. From this grouping three categories were established, Group A - small (range: 646-7878), Group B - medium (range: 7911-24,488) and Group C - large (> 24,488).

Using a table of random numbers 100 students were selected. Thirty-three members were selected for Group A and Group B, and thirty-four members were selected for Group C.
Demographic data were collected in the following categories: gender, age, marital status, number of children and number of years in attendance at the alternative school. This information is presented in Table 1 below.

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<th>Table 1. Student demographics.</th>
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</table>

Instrumentation

During a recent Iowa study, 206 students were surveyed to assess the costs of dropping out of school along with the productivity benefits of returning and completing a high school education in an alternative school setting. These returning dropouts were selected from twenty alternative schools during the 1987-1989 school years. Systematic random sampling was used to select the graduates. Students were surveyed by telephone using the "Graduate Interview Form", an instrument developed by a diverse community of educators, businessmen and government leaders during a state conference on productivity (Veale, 1991). According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), "Content validity is determined systematically by content experts, who define in precise terms the domain of specific content that the test is assumed to represent, and then determine how well that content universe is sampled by the test items" (250).
In this study the “Graduate Interview Form” was used with minor adjustments. First, congruent with the general purpose of the study, the title of the survey was changed to the “Student Interview Form” (Appendix A) to reflect the status of the population of interest. Items in the original survey were also altered to accommodate this group. For example, wording such as, “What other work have you been doing since you graduated,” was changed to, “What other work have you been doing since you left school?”

Three additions to the questionnaire were made. First, in an effort to discover who played a significant role in the student’s life while attending the alternative school, question 12 was added. Secondly, Question 13 was added to determine whether students had an internal locus of control or an external locus of control. Finally, the questionnaire ended with a question in which each interviewer was asked to evaluate whether the respondent was either “cooperative” or “uncooperative.” This question was used to help determine whether the assumption of honesty was an accurate one.

One item requesting the permission of the interviewee to contact his/her employer was eliminated. Also, the “Questionnaire for Employers,” found in the 1991 study was not used since no comparison was attempted between the responses collected from the students and their employers.

Thus, using this modified version of the 1991 “Graduate Interview Form,” dropouts from forty-four Iowa Alternative schools were invited to participate in this study. There are presently forty-five Alternative schools in the state of Iowa. However, one alternative school, which only recently opened its doors, did not qualify as a candidate for this study, since its starting date was fall 1995. Figure 1 shows the location of alternative schools throughout Iowa.
The interview form (Appendix A) is a seven page, multiple choice survey which assesses productivity by examining the following areas:

- income generated by employment
- post-secondary education
- volunteer activity
- participation in the political process
- homemaking and child rearing
- talents and skills not used in present job
- public assistance involvement
- penal system involvement

Survey research was used in this study because it allows data to be collected from a cross section of the population in a standardized form which can easily be analyzed statistically. These findings can then be used to make inferences about the population from which the sample was drawn.

Figure 1. Geographic location of alternative schools.
Procedure

Prior to pursuing this research, permission was obtained from the Iowa State University Human Subjects Review Committee, and the project was approved. The committee concluded that the rights and welfare of the human subjects were adequately protected; that risks were outweighed by the potential benefits and expected value of the knowledge sought; that confidentiality of data was assured; and that consent was obtained by appropriate measures (Appendix E).

Alternative schools in Iowa were identified through the Iowa State Department of Education. All students who left these institutions between August, 1991 - July, 1994 without a diploma were included in the population. In order to identify students germane to the study, alternative schools were contacted during the fall semester of 1995.

Students were identified by the alternative school that they last attended. These lists of students contained the following information: student name, date of birth, social security number, the most current address available and, whether, to the knowledge of the school, the student was or had been incarcerated.

During the third week of August, 1995, forty-four alternative schools in Iowa were contacted regarding the study. Each school received a cover letter, several student data forms and a return envelope. Schools were invited to participate in the study by returning the requested information.

Approximately one month following the first mailing, schools that had not responded were contacted by telephone. At this point only one-fourth of the schools had returned completed information regarding their students or had
indicated that their school did not wish to participate. Following the telephone contact with each school, ten additional schools returned a list of students, and one school responded by not electing to participate.

Finally, a second mailing was generated through the use of a facsimile machine. Twenty-two schools were faxed a second letter encouraging their participation in the study, along with the cover letter and student data form from the original mailing. Table 2 shows the response rate of each area.

Using 1994 census information, towns were classified into three equal groups based on population size which ranged from small: 646 to 7,878; medium: 7,911 to 24,488 and large: >24,488. Using a computer generated table of random numbers, a stratified random sample of 100 students was then selected from this list of students with 33 members in group A (small), 33 members in group B (medium), and 34 members in group C (large). All students in the sample were contacted by telephone during the 1995 fall semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Town</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(7) 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(10) 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(7) 47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Telephone interviews were conducted by the researcher of this study and other graduate students trained to use the survey. Generally, students were asked to respond by determining whether a given statement was an accurate description of his or her situation. However, some open-ended questions were also included in the survey. Completing the interview took between ten and twenty minutes. Responses were recorded directly on the interview form.

The surveys assessed the eight areas of productivity which included employment, volunteer work, political involvement, post-secondary education, homemaking/child rearing, talents and skills not used on the job and counter-productive involvement areas such as public assistance and/or penal system involvement. Locus of control, as well as background information such as marital status, age, gender, number of children were also assessed. Each survey was individually examined and the responses were tallied by hand.

Training Session

On September 3, 1995, nine volunteers met for a three-hour training session. Three additional volunteers received individualized training at later dates. All volunteers were female, African or African-American and graduate students at Iowa State University. Following a brief introduction, which included a review of the general purpose of the study and the procedures to be used, students received individual training packets.

Each volunteer was given a folder that contained ten copies of the questionnaire, an information update sheet and a call back sheet.
The information sheet contained several clarifying statements for various areas of emphasis; the procedure for contacting former students by telephone; and a short, but sincere note of appreciation for their assistance with the project. Everyone was encouraged to protect the confidentiality of the materials.

In order to standardize the performance of the interviewers, volunteers were grouped in pairs to participate in a role play activity. After a thorough examination of the questionnaire, each person was given the opportunity to act as the interviewer, and later as the interviewee. By role-playing, students were able to familiarize themselves with the survey as well as pinpoint areas that needed further clarification. This portion of the training session also allowed each individual to refine his/her skills, adopt a technique for establishing rapport and set a pace that would allow the interview to be completed within the projected time frame (20 minutes).

Definition of Variables

Presented in this section is a discussion of the variables examined in the study.

Dependent Variables

Employment rate—Six employment options were used to assign students to groups: "full-time employment," "part-time employment," "self-employed," "military duty," "homemaker," and "unemployed." The employment rate was computed as a proportional figure, and as a percent. For example, if the sample
size was 100 and 64 members were employed, the proportion that was employed was 64/100 or .64. Thus, the employment rate was reported as 64%.

Political involvement—Political involvement was operationalized as the "act of voting." Students were asked to respond to the following question: "Did you vote in the last election?" This question referred to local, state and national elections.

Volunteer involvement—Only participation in structured organizations or service activities without compensation were considered "volunteer involvement." For example, donating one's time at a community shelter or the Salvation Army, or assisting at church or school functions would qualify as legitimate volunteer activities, whereas helping family or friends would not.

Public assistance involvement—This variable referred to any student receiving funds or services from the federal, state or local government to support themselves. This may include, but was not limited to the following: Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps, public housing, county relief, Social Security Insurance (SSI), free/reduced lunch, Title 19, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), General Assistance Stipend, etc.

Level of incarceration—Those students who, at the time of the interview, were serving mandatory jail or prison sentences, as well as students in juvenile detention centers, were considered incarcerated for the purpose of this study.
Because these students were not available for the telephone interviews, parents provided cursory information such as age, marital status, years at the alternative school, etc.)

Locus of control—refers to the belief or perception that outcomes (positive or negative) were the result of either one’s own actions (effort and ability) or external forces (luck, fate, or influential factors outside of the individual’s control). Although locus of control was presented in this study as an unhypothesized variable, its significance lies in serving as a personal characteristic indicator of dropouts; and further contributed to the description of dropouts.

Independent Variables

Gender—This term referred to the sex of the student, either female or male.

Size of community—Students were grouped according to the population of the community in which they resided. These communities were categorized as small (range: 646-7,878), medium (range: 7,911-24,488) and large (range: >24,488).

Job training—Job training or work experience in this study was limited to participation in Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs offered by the student’s former home school. It is believed that students who participate in
JTPA training yield such benefits as increased effectiveness on the job, higher employment rates, and longevity.

Hypotheses

Seven null hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1.
Employment rate for students who drop out of alternative schools among small, medium and large communities is independent of gender.

Hypothesis 2.
Employment rate for students who drop out of alternative schools is independent of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) work experience.

Hypothesis 3.
Level of political involvement for students who drop out of alternative schools is independent of gender.

Hypothesis 4.
Level of involvement in volunteer work for students who drop out of alternative schools is independent of gender.

Hypothesis 5.
Level of involvement in the public assistance system for students who drop out of alternative schools is independent of gender.

Hypothesis 6.
Level of incarceration in the penal system for students who drop out of alternative schools is independent of gender.
Hypothesis 7.

Productivity levels of graduates and nongraduates of alternative schools are independent of educational attainment in the areas of:

- post-secondary education
- volunteer activity
- participation in the political process
- homemaking/child rearing
- talents and skills not used in job
- public assistance involvement
- penal system involvement.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the "Student Interview Form," and the "Student Data Form" were used to develop profile reports of students who left alternative schools during the 1991-1992, 1992-1993, and 1993-1994 school years. All survey data were collected through telephone interviews.

Descriptive data will be presented using summary statistics. Because much of the research data was in the form of categories and dichotomies on variables such as gender, dropout rates, etc., chi-square tests will be utilized. A chi-square test is a non-parametric statistical test used most often when the frequency data are discrete, and cases are placed in categories (Borg and Gall, 1989). By comparing observed distributions with the expected distributions, this
test indicates whether membership in one category is related to membership in another (Fitz-Gibbon and Morris, 1978). The formula for this test is:

\[ X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \]

Where:
- \( X^2 \) = chi-square
- \( \sum \) = sum of
- \( O \) = observed frequency
- \( E \) = expected frequency

The level of significance was established at .05. Tests yielding a probability of < .05 resulted in rejection of the null hypothesis. As in the case of small samples (n= 100 being a relatively small sample) \( X^2 \) analyses may yield cells with fewer than five expected frequencies (Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs, 1988). In instances where expected frequencies were less than 5, these cells were combined, provided that combining the cells would not result in distorting the data.

Statistical treatment of the data was completed using the statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) and the Iowa State mainframe, Wylbur; and Statview.

Delimitations of the Study

Because the study spanned a three-year period, students may have taken residency outside of their community and perhaps even outside the state. Therefore, the sample was limited to individuals who could be located through
their local schools. The sample was also affected by the data collecting method used in this study. Collecting survey information by telephone limited the sample to individuals who were accessible by telephone and to students whose telephone was currently in use.

Furthermore, while some schools may show little or no interest by failing to respond within the requested time frame, or by choosing not to participate in the study, other schools who take a high or even moderate interest in the study may respond quite favorably. Thus, the study was further restricted to those cooperating schools.

Finally, the study was restricted to consenting subjects (students). Each student had to consent to the interview before the survey was administered. Potential interviewees were given the option to participate or to decline immediately following the initial greeting and an explanation of the general purpose of the study.
CHAPTER IV.
RESULTS

Introduction

This study's major focus was to examine productivity of students who dropped out of alternative schools. Alternative schools refer to public schools, accessible by choice, which offer a nontraditional approach to education for dropouts or potential dropouts from traditional secondary schools. Productivity was assessed in the areas of employment, political and volunteer involvement. Level of involvement in the public assistance system and penal system were also examined as counter-productive activities. Locus of control was also a variable under investigation in this study.

During the fall of 1995 forty-four alternative schools across Iowa were invited to participate in this study by providing information concerning their dropouts for the 1991-1992, 1992-1993 and 1993-1994 academic school years. Twenty-four out of 44 alternative schools responded.

From this list of students, a stratified random sample of 100 dropouts was selected to represent small, medium and large communities. Data were collected through the use of a revised edition of the Veale (1991) "Graduate Interview form" and a student data form (see Appendix A and C). After revisions, the "Graduate Interview form" became the "Student Interview form." All students were interviewed by telephone.
CHAPTER IV presents the findings and statistical analyses of this study. Six hypotheses were tested using data collected from one hundred students who left alternative schools before graduation during the period between August, 1991 and July, 1994. To avoid negative connotations in this study, these individuals were referred to as "students," or "nongraduates," rather than dropouts.

A second sample of 206 high school graduates who completed their education at alternative schools throughout Iowa during the period from 1987 through 1989 formed the comparison group for the seventh hypothesis. Following the descriptive analysis of the 1996 sample, each productivity component was listed with a descriptive summary. The descriptive summary included the hypothesis for each productivity component, the results of its statistical test, and a detailed explanation of the findings. Graphical representation and tables summarizing the data are presented where appropriate.

Descriptive Analysis

The sample consisted of one hundred former students of alternative schools. Sixty percent of the sample were male (n=60) and 40% were female (n=40). All participants reported their ethnicity as white and their age from 17 to 23.

The majority of the participants reported their marital status as single (82%). Three percent were married and 7% had a live-in companion. These eight students were incarcerated at the time of the study. Student demographics were presented in Table 1 (see p. 45).
Employment

Of the one hundred participants, 25% reported that they were currently employed full-time, while 30% were employed part-time. Homemakers were 9% of the sample and only one person (1%) was attending college. Twenty-seven percent reported being unemployed, and 8% of the participants were incarcerated.

Slightly more than fifty percent (53%) of the respondents reported previous work experience which included either full-time (24%) or part-time employment (29%). None of the fifty-three participants reported any previous volunteer work.

Figure 2 illustrates the employment categories of the participants. Participants who were employed worked mostly in food services (30.4%). The next largest group worked in building trades (16.1%) followed by health services (10.7%) and other (10.7%). The “other” category consisted of occupations such as farming, playing in a band, etc. However, in figure 2 all groups with three or less members were placed in the “other” category, and included: clerical (5.4%), cosmetology (1.8%), manufacturing (1.8), mechanical (3.6%) and transportation (5.4%). Maintenance (7.1%) and sales (7.1%) formed the fourth largest categories.

Wages for this group ranged from minimum wage to over $20.00 per hour. About three-fourths (76.3%) earned wages between $5.00 and $10.00 per hour. Eighteen percent (18.2%) reported wages between minimum wage ($4.25 per hour) and $5.00 per hour. Only 3.6% reported hourly wages of $4.25. None of the participants reported being salaried employees.
Null Hypothesis 1:

Employment rates for students who dropped out of alternative schools among small, medium and large communities was independent of gender.

This hypothesis was tested using a chi-square test. Using size of community as a constant, three tests were conducted to compare the employment rates of males and females. All three tests failed to find differences between employment rates of males and females in either small, medium or large communities (see Tables 3, 4, and 5 below). The results were confounded by small sample size, as well as expected cells of less than five across all three
Table 3. Present job by gender in small communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job status</th>
<th>females</th>
<th>males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>full-time</td>
<td>O=2.0</td>
<td>O=7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=4.4</td>
<td>E=4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time</td>
<td>O=7.0</td>
<td>O=2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=4.4</td>
<td>E=4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>O=7.0</td>
<td>O=8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=7.3</td>
<td>E=7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 5.5970 \quad p = .06090$

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies

Table 4. Present job by gender in medium communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job status</th>
<th>females</th>
<th>males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>O=5.0</td>
<td>O=7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=3.3</td>
<td>E=8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>O=2.0</td>
<td>O=12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=3.8</td>
<td>E=10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>O=2.0</td>
<td>O=5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=1.9</td>
<td>E=5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 2.4499 \quad p = .2937$

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies
Table 5. Present job by gender in large communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job status</th>
<th>females</th>
<th>males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>O=4.0</td>
<td>O=10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=6.2</td>
<td>E=7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>O=4.0</td>
<td>O=3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=3.1</td>
<td>E=3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>O=7.0</td>
<td>O=6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=5.7</td>
<td>E=7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 2.3531 \quad p = .3083 \]

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies

analyses, and therefore, cannot be interpreted as reliable. These results suggest that for each community the employment trend was virtually the same. Across all communities males were more likely than females to be employed full-time.

In small communities (see Figure 3) males were more likely to be employed full-time than females, while females outnumbered males more than three to one in part-time employment. Both males and females were evenly distributed in the "unemployed" category.

Students who resided in communities with populations from 7,911 - 24,488 formed the "medium" category. Males in this category were 29% of the group reporting full-time employment, while females were 55% of this same group. Males and females differed slightly from students in small communities
on part-time employment and in the "unemployed" category.

In small communities, males and females were equally represented in the "unemployed" category. In the "part-time" category females were 77% of the group and males were 22%. Females in small communities had an employment rate of 56%. The employment rate for males was 53%.

In medium communities, males were 55% of the "unemployed" category and 86% of the "part-time" category, while females comprised 28% and 14%, respectively (see Figure 4). Females in medium communities had an employment rate of 78%. The employment rate for males of medium communities was 79%.

Overall, the highest employment rate (78%) was found in medium communities and the highest unemployment rate (45%) was found in small communities. As shown in Figure 5, large communities had an employment
Figure 4. Present job by gender in medium communities.

Figure 5. Present job by gender in large communities.
rate of 62% and an unemployment rate of 38%. The employment patterns were very similar to those in small communities. Males and females were distributed evenly in both the "part-time" and "unemployed" category. Full-time employment for males was 53% and 27% for females.

Job Training Partnership Act Work Experience

Slightly less than half of the sample reported involvement in the Job Training Partnership Act Work Experience (JTPA) program. Of the students responding to the question on Job Training Partnership Act Work Experience involvement (n=92), 47.8% indicated that they had participated in the JTPA program at their school and 52.2% were nonparticipants. When asked, "Do you feel that the JTPA program was (or will be) helpful to you in preparing you for employment?" The majority of the participants found the experience worthwhile. Thirty-three or 75% of the JTPA participants responded that they found this experience to be helpful. Less than fifteen percent (14.3%) of the participants felt the experience was not helpful or was not sure.

Null Hypothesis 2: Employment rates for students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of Job Training Partnership Act work experience.

To test this hypothesis, a chi-square test was used to compare the employment rates of the JTPA participants and the nonparticipants to determine whether the employment status of the individual was related to participating in
this program. Table 6 presents a summary of the findings. No significant
difference at the .05 level was found. Therefore, null hypothesis two could not
be rejected. Whether the student was a participant in the JTPA program was not
related to the employment status of the student.

Table 6. JTPA experience by employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JTPA</th>
<th>full-time</th>
<th>part-time</th>
<th>unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>O=15.0</td>
<td>O=14.0</td>
<td>O=13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=13.2</td>
<td>E=15.2</td>
<td>E=13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participants</td>
<td>O=11.0</td>
<td>O=16.0</td>
<td>O=14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=12.8</td>
<td>E=14.8</td>
<td>E=13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 0.773 \quad p = 0.679 \]

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies

Although the results indicate that there was no statistically significant
difference between the employment rate of JTPA participants and
nonparticipants, it is important to note that neither group has completed their
high school education. Perhaps, this deficiency has more than a marginal effect
on the students ability to find employment.

Political Participation

**Null Hypothesis 3**: Level of political involvement for students who drop out of
alternative schools was independent of gender.
Chi-square analysis for political involvement was not used because there was a 100% non-participation rate for both males and females. A low participation rate was somewhat anticipated for this group, because overall voter turnout is low for the nation (Conway, 1991; Kleppner, 1982). However, a 0% participation rate was an unexpected outcome.

Fifteen individuals were deleted from the analysis because they had not reached the legal voting age. Given that nearly 42% of the sample had either not reached the legal voting age or had only recently become eighteen, it is likely that this group will begin to exercise their right to vote in the near future. Therefore, Table 7 was added to represent the "potential for involvement." Of the students responding to the question, "Do you plan to vote in any elections this year?" males clearly were more likely to vote in up-coming elections than females.

As shown in Table 7 the chi-square statistic was found to be significant. Therefore, a statistically significant difference was found between males and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>female</th>
<th>male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>O=15.0</td>
<td>O=32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=20.8</td>
<td>E=26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>O=24.0</td>
<td>O=17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=18.2</td>
<td>E=22.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 6.288 \]
\[ p = 0.0121 \]

O=observed frequencies
E=expected frequencies
females on their potential to vote. This finding suggests that voting was related to gender. Also, when the results are combined for potential voters nearly fifty percent have indicated that they will vote in the future.

Volunteer Work

Null Hypothesis 4: Level of involvement in volunteer work for students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of gender.

Only a fraction (10.9%) of the students reported any involvement in volunteer activities (see Table 8). These activities were limited to participation

Table 8. Volunteer work by gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>female</th>
<th>male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>O=2.0</td>
<td>O=8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=4.2</td>
<td>E=5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>O=37.0</td>
<td>O=45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=34.8</td>
<td>E=47.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 2.3033$ $p=.1290$

$O =$ observed frequencies
$E =$ expected frequencies

in church-related activities (4.3%) and the Salvation Army (3.3%). Also, three students indicated involvement with Habitat for Humanities which was grouped in the “other” category. Of the twenty-five percent that expressed an interest in becoming involved in volunteer activities, most students indicated
that they preferred activities that centered around children and that were located within their communities. Other areas of interest were church activities and programs that involved assisting the homeless or the elderly.

Although the analysis of data did not yield significant results, summary data indicated that more than three-fourths (80%) of the students that were involved in volunteer activities were male.

Public Assistance

**Null Hypothesis 5:** Involvement in the public assistance system for students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of gender.

Only 14.2% of the students who responded reported receiving some form of public assistance; all were female. Table 9 reports the results of the statistical analysis for public assistance involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>females</th>
<th>males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no assistance</td>
<td>O=26</td>
<td>O=53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=33.5</td>
<td>E=45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assistance</td>
<td>O=13</td>
<td>O=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=5.5</td>
<td>E=7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 20.573$  $p = .00001$

*O = observed frequencies
*E = expected frequencies*
Students were given eleven options to choose from when identifying the type of public assistance they were presently receiving (Appendix A, question 9). For purposes of analysis, these eleven options were collapsed into two categories— "no assistance" and "assistance."

While the level of involvement between males and females in the public assistance system was statistically significant, this test should not be interpreted as a reliable one, because one observed cell had a value of zero. However, when the data are combined these students show only a marginal involvement with the public assistance system. Participants are 14% of the sample, while nonparticipants comprise nearly 80%.

Penal System Involvement

Eight or 8% of the one hundred students in the sample were incarcerated in state institutions. They were all male and located throughout all communities. Thirty-five percent of the students, who were incarcerated at the time of the study were from small communities, and large communities. Twenty-five percent were from medium sized communities.

Null Hypothesis 6: Level of incarceration in the penal system for students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of gender.

Again, while the chi-square statistic was found to be statistically significant, the results are somewhat questionable since one observed cell was equal zero. Table 10 reports the results of this analysis.
Table 10. Penal system involvement for males and females nongraduates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>females</th>
<th>males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>O=0.0</td>
<td>O=8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=3.2</td>
<td>E=4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>O=40.0</td>
<td>O=52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=36.8</td>
<td>E=55.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 5.797 \quad p = 0.0161 \]

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies

However, the summary data indicated that proportionately (13%) of the males were involved in the penal system, since 8 out of 60 of the males were incarcerated. The data suggest that being incarcerated was related to gender.

Locus of Control

Students were asked to select the statement that best described their philosophy of life. Sixty-four percent of the sample responding to question 13 (see p. 107) chose the first statement which indicated an external locus of control. Thirty-five percent selected the second statement which indicated an internal locus of control.
The frequency pattern in Figure 6 indicated that dropouts were twice as likely to experience an externalized locus of control. Because locus of control was not a hypothesized variable in this study, only summary data was reported.

![Bar chart showing locus of control of 1996 nongraduates.]

**Figure 6.** Locus of control of 1996 nongraduates.

**1991 and 1996 Comparisons**

Hypothesis 7 was formulated to examine differences between alternative school graduates and nongraduates on seven productivity components. Data used in testing this hypothesis were collected during two time periods. Two hundred and six respondents who graduated from alternative schools from 1987 through 1989 comprised the comparison group for the nongraduates who left alternative schools between 1991 and 1994. Graduates were surveyed in 1989 and the nongraduates were surveyed six years later (1995). General information about the characteristics of the graduate sample are provided in Chapter 1 (p. 5).
Seven Chi-square tests were conducted. The results of the analysis are presented after each of the subhypotheses. Tables 11 through 17 display the chi-square tables for six of the seven productivity components.

**Null Hypothesis 7**: Productivity levels of graduates and nongraduates of alternative schools were independent of educational attainment in the areas of:

- post-secondary education
- volunteer activity
- participation in the political process
- homemaking and child rearing
- talents and skills not used in job
- public assistance involvement
- penal system involvement

**Post-secondary education**

Nearly half (45%) of the graduates had completed some part of a post-secondary education. Of those responding (n=91), fifty percent had completed some college credit and almost twenty percent (17.8%) had received training from the military. Graduates also exceeded nongraduates in future plans for education, when asked, "Do you plan to take some courses—either in college or through training programs—in the foreseeable future?" an overwhelming 78.5% responded "yes."

Of the nongraduates responding, 62.9% had received no additional training since leaving the alternative school. Only 12.3% had taken any college
credits. Of the remaining 37%, 24.7% had participated in an adult education program.

**Subhypothesis 7a:** Level of post-secondary education for students who graduated from alternative schools and those who did not was independent of educational attainment.

As shown in Table 11, no significant difference was found among the two groups. However, the data indicated that graduates outnumbered nongraduates in their participation in post-secondary education by 8%. Also, as mentioned earlier, 78.5% of the reporting graduates replied, “yes” concerning future plans, while 55.2% of the nongraduates reported post-secondary education as a future goal.

Table 11. 1991 vs 1996 Post-secondary Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>1991 Graduates</th>
<th>1996 Nongraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no Post-Sec education</td>
<td>O=111.0</td>
<td>O=56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=54.95</td>
<td>E=62.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Sec education</td>
<td>O=91.0</td>
<td>O=33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=45.05</td>
<td>E=37.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 1.605 \quad p = .2052$

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies
A review of the data on living arrangements and the amount of time spent in the alternative education setting (see Table 1) may provide some explanation for the reluctance of the nongraduates to pursue educational goals. Eighty-two percent of the nongraduates reported a year or less in the alternative school before dropping out, and 71.8% reported that their present living status was with a parent or parents. These results may indicate that these students have not yet adopted adult roles. Perhaps they are not yet required to accept the responsibility that comes with independent living (i.e., rent, utilities, food), therefore, they are not motivated to make long-range plans to upgrade skills for higher wages. Again, without having the advantage of a high school diploma, these students may consider greater challenges beyond their potential.

**Volunteer activity**

About one-fourth (23.4%) of the graduates reported involvement in volunteer activities (see Table 12). The top three categories were the “other” category (63.0%) which consisted of activities such as Red Cross, Big Brother/Sister, etc., church related activities (21.7%) and school-related activities (8.7%). Participation for females (28.1%) outnumbered males (16.9%).

More than three-fourths (89.0%) of the students who dropped out of alternative schools had no involvement in volunteer activities. Moreover, nearly this same proportion (74%) expressed no desire to participate given the opportunity. However, ten percent reported involvement with church related activities, the Salvation Army or various “other” activities.
Subhypothesis 7b: Level of involvement in volunteer work for students who graduated from alternative schools and those who did not was independent of educational attainment.

The 1991 graduates that were actively involved in volunteer activities comprised 23% of those responding to this question. Nongraduates had an involvement rate of only 10%. As shown in Table 12 the chi-square statistic was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The level of involvement in volunteer work was related to educational level of the student.

Table 12. 1991 vs 1996 Volunteer participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>1991 Graduates</th>
<th>1996 Nongraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>O=46</td>
<td>O=10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=23.35</td>
<td>E=10.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>O=151</td>
<td>O=82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=89.13</td>
<td>E=76.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 6.253$  $p=.0124$

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies

Participation in the political process

As reported earlier in the study, thirty-two percent of the voting age graduates voted in the 1988 election. On the other hand, none of the voting age
nongraduates exercised their right to vote. Twenty-five of the nongraduates were not included in the chi-square analysis because fifteen of the students were not of voting age (17 years old) and eight nongraduates were incarcerated. Of the nonvoting graduates (68%), "not registered" was the most frequent reason for their lack of involvement. The nongraduates reported "not old enough" (64.8%) as their number one reason for not voting, followed by "not interested" as the second most stated reason for their lack of political participation (19%).

**Subhypothesis 7c:** Level of political participation for students who graduated from alternative schools and those who did not was independent of educational attainment.

Since a significant $X^2$ value was found, the analysis indicated that there were significant differences between the political participation of the 1990 graduates and the 1996 nongraduates. Table 13 shows these results. However,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>1991 Graduates</th>
<th>1996 Nongraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>voted</td>
<td>O=58.0</td>
<td>O=0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=43.20</td>
<td>14.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>did not vote</td>
<td>O=123.0</td>
<td>O=62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=137.79</td>
<td>E=47.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 26.09$, $p = .0001$

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies
the nongraduates reported that none of the individuals in this group voted, therefore one cell had a zero value. Based on this datum, the results can not be considered reliable for this analysis and no conclusions can be made. However, by observing the information in Table 13, the graduates' thirty-two percent voting rate clearly demonstrates that they were more involved in voting than the nongraduates.

**Homemaking and childrearing**

Less than twenty percent (17.1%) of the graduates classified themselves as "homemakers," and only 9.0% of the 1996 sample indicated that they were in this category. Students in this category were considered to be employed full-time. Table 14 presents the results of the analysis of the 1991 graduate homemakers and 1996 nongraduate homemakers.

**Subhypothesis 7d**: There is no difference in the level of involvement in homemaking and child rearing of students who graduated from alternative schools and those who did not.

As noted in Table 14, a significant chi-square value was obtained, thus the null hypothesis was rejected. However, these results should be interpreted with caution. Although a greater proportion of the graduates identified themselves as homemakers in the 1990 sample, no assessment was made to determine whether this status was by necessity or by choice, therefore the 1991 graduate homemakers and 1996 nongraduate homemakers may not form equivalent groups.
Talents and skills not used in job

When asked whether they had some talents or skills that were not being used in their present jobs, 83.3% of the graduates that responded said “yes.” Thirty-one or 35% of the nongraduates reported having additional skills not required on their jobs.

Nearly three-fourths (74.8%) of the graduates were continuing to develop these skills, while twenty-one or 72.4% of the nongraduates said they were actively refining these potentially marketable skills. Nongraduates reported three categories of talents and skills that were not utilized on their present job. They were art, mechanics and athletics. The majority of the responses reported by graduates were categorized as marketable skills such as auto mechanics, musical talent, or computer skills.
Subhypothesis 7e: There is no difference in the talents and skills not used in the present job of students who graduated from alternative schools and those who did not.

The results of the chi-square analysis of graduates and nongraduates revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the talents and skills levels of the two groups. Table 15 shows the results of this analysis.

Based on these results, the talents and skills of an individual were related to the educational attainment level of that individual. Moreover, graduates were found to have talents and skills that were potentially more marketable than the talents and skills reported by the nongraduates. With the additional educational training of this group, it would seem likely that their talents and skills would be more developed. Perhaps continuing through high school and receiving a diploma afforded the graduates opportunities to develop their

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>1991 Graduates</th>
<th>1996 Nongraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>O=156.0</td>
<td>O=31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=83.87</td>
<td>E=35.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>O=30.0</td>
<td>O=57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=16.13</td>
<td>E=64.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 65.229 \quad p = 0.001 \]

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies
skills and talents, where as the nongraduates may have been denied these same advantages.

**Public assistance involvement**

Only 22.8% of the 197 graduates responding to the question on public assistance involvement indicated that they were receiving some form of public aid. Table 16 shows that the nongraduates had a much lower rate of involvement, only 14%. However, nearly half (42.4%) of the nongraduates also reported that they lived with their parents. This living arrangement may have had some influence on the public assistance involvement for these students, thus explaining the 8.8 percentage point difference between graduates and nongraduates.

One disturbing pattern that was present in the 1991 sample and repeated in the 1996 sample (see Table 9) was that of the overrepresentation of females in the public assistance system.

**Subhypothesis 7f**: Level of public assistance involvement for students who graduated from alternative schools and those who did not was independent of educational attainment.

No statistically significant differences were found between the involvement of graduates and nongraduates in the public assistance system. Thus, the null was rejected. The statistical analysis on the level of public assistance involvement is reported in Table 16. Therefore, educational
attainment was not found to be related to the level of involvement in public assistance programs among these two groups.

However, these results may be influenced by several variables. For instance, the economy might have had a moderate effect on the membership of each group, as well as one group having only a high school diploma and the other occupying a lesser status.

Table 16. 1991 vs 1996 Public Assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>1991 Graduates</th>
<th>1996 Nongraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>O=45.0</td>
<td>O=13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=22.84</td>
<td>E=14.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>O=152.0</td>
<td>O=79.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=77.16</td>
<td>E=85.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2=2.967 \quad p=.085$

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies

Penal system involvement

As mentioned earlier individuals who were incarcerated at the time of the study were not contacted by telephone. Information concerning both the graduates and nongraduates was obtained from parents or school officials. Data were limited for these individuals to such information such as age, gender, marital status, and perhaps years of attendance at the alternative school.
These graduates represented 1.4% of the 1990 sample, while 8.0% of the nongraduates were incarcerated (see Table 17). If these figures are representative of the general population, then students who drop out of school are more than twice as likely to become members of the penal system.

**Subhypothesis 7g:** Level of incarceration in the penal system for students who graduated from alternative schools and those who did not was independent of educational attainment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>1991 Graduates</th>
<th>1996 Nongraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>O=3.0</td>
<td>O=8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=1.44</td>
<td>E=8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>O=206.0</td>
<td>O=92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E=98.56</td>
<td>E=92.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[X^2 = 8.49\quad p=.0036\]

O = observed frequencies
E = expected frequencies

The chi-square for data on involvement in the penal system for graduates and nongraduates, was statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The analysis revealed that dropouts were clearly more represented in the penal system. This is an expected outcome, because students frequently drop
out—or they are pulled out—of school because of their involvement with the legal system.

Summary

This study examined the productive behaviors of one hundred Iowa students who each left their perspective alternative high school prior to graduating. Congruent with the purpose of this study, fourteen hypotheses were formulated. Seven of these hypotheses explored productivity within the group of nongraduates. The analysis of these hypotheses indicated that employment for male and female nongraduates was not related to the size of the community in which they resided. Overall, this group was not active in the political process and showed only minimal involvement in volunteer work. Only the female nongraduates participated in public assistance programs and only male nongraduates were involved in the penal system. Also, an external locus of control was reported for the majority of this group.

Seven additional analyses were conducted with a group of graduates of alternative schools. Within these analyses the distribution of graduates was compared to the distribution of nongraduates on seven productive behaviors. These results showed higher levels of productivity within the group of graduates on volunteering, voting, talents and skills not used on the job and penal system involvement. No statistical differences between distributions of graduates and nongraduates was found on the post-secondary education, involvement in public assistance program and homemaking/childrearing variables.
CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

It is estimated that each year nearly one million students leave school without a high school diploma. Davis and McCaul (1990) assert that, "A student drops out of school every 16 seconds of every school day in the United States" (p. 22). These students have experienced high rates of unemployment and often become a burden on the tax system through welfare and social programs. If the economic welfare of the nation is dependent upon high productivity from all its citizenry, then one must ask, "Are dropouts productive in society?"

It was the purpose of this study to examine the productive behaviors of students who left alternative schools before graduation. Productivity for these students was assessed in the areas of employment, political participation, volunteer participation; and counter-productive activities which included public assistance involvement and incarceration. In addition to the productivity components under study, the locus of control of these students was also assessed.

Twenty-four Iowa alternative schools participated in this study by completing a “Student Data Form” for students who left their schools during the period between fall, 1991 - fall, 1994. One hundred former students of alternative schools throughout Iowa were randomly selected to participate in the study.
The "Student Interview Form," an eight-page questionnaire, was used to assess the productivity components, as well as locus of control among this sample. These students were interviewed by telephone during the fall of 1995.

Major Hypotheses and Findings

**Null Hypothesis 1**: Employment rate of students who dropped out of alternative schools in small, medium and large communities was independent of gender.

**Null Hypothesis 2**: Employment rate for students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of Job Training Partnership Act work experience.

**Null Hypothesis 3**: Level of political involvement for students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of gender.

Employment

Hypothesis one was tested using a chi-square test. However, since the sample had to be subdivided into "stratified" groups, the resulting expected cell counts were less than five in four of six cells in the analysis of small communities. Also, the analysis of medium and large communities yield expected cell counts that were less than five in three of six cells. Therefore, the chi-square results for all tests were interpreted as unreliable.

Several trends were evident by observing employment patterns among these groups. Although males were the majority in the full-time category for all communities, females were only slightly underrepresented in full-time work in medium communities. There were much larger discrepancies between males and females in full-time employment in small and large communities.
Unemployment rates were more evenly distributed between females and males in small and large communities, whereas in medium communities, males experienced an unemployment rate that was 50% higher than females.

Overall, this sample had an employment rate of 65%, therefore the unemployment rate was 35%. The unemployment rate for 1993-1994 dropouts was reported to be 39% by the Department of Education (1995). The high unemployment rate among this sample is fairly consistent with the national unemployment rate reported for dropouts.

Job Training Partnership Act Work Experience

Analysis of the data revealed no significant difference between the employment rates of former JTPA participants and nonparticipants. The null was not rejected, since the distribution of frequencies were evenly distributed across "full-time," "part-time," and "unemployed" categories. However, this finding suggests a number of possibilities.

Because subjects in this study left school prior to graduation, their involvement in this program may have only been tentative. Slightly more than fifty percent (52%) of the sample reported that they were enrolled at the alternative school for one year or less (see Table 1). Also, without the benefit of a high school diploma, their employability may have been greatly jeopardized.

Anderson, Burkhauser and Raymond (1993) pointed out two flaws in the system concerning JTPA. One of which was the reward system in which this program must operate within. Their study found that agencies are encouraged to keep expenditures low, while maintaining high placement levels. Since
dropouts often need extensive training to improve their skill levels, it is more costly to serve this population. Along with the additional cost, dropouts often need more time in training to acquire marketable skills, which also increases the cost. If the participants in this study were involved in programs that neglected those with the greatest need (i.e. dropouts), in order to maintain high levels of placement and cost effectiveness; then this practice would explain the ineffectiveness of this program among this group.

Political Participation

No analysis of data was provided for Hypothesis three, since the sample reported no political activity. It would be difficult to attribute this phenomena to findings in the literature on voter turnout concerning mobility or military as Flanagan and Zingale (1979) suggest, or even apathy and distrust (Gilmour and Lamb, 1975) because the data here are limited to two very specific behaviors—whether the individual actually voted and/or the intent to vote in future elections. No information concerning other variables such as mobility, political interest, apathy or even sense of citizen duty were included as part of the study.

However, socioeconomic variables such as education, income and occupation have been found to influence political involvement (Conway, 1991; Kleppner, 1982; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). As high school dropouts, the participants in this study had not yet obtained the minimum level of education. Regarding dropouts, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) found that the voting rate among this population was 55%; and that there was a positive correlation between educational attainment and voter turnout.
The income level of this sample ranged from minimum wage ($4.25) to $20 per hour. With slightly more than half of the sample reporting wages between minimum wage and $10 per hour, and only 25% reporting full-time employment, the annual income for this group could be estimated as: $20,800 (net income: $10 x 40 hrs. x 52 weeks) at the highest end of the scale to $8,840 (net income: $4.25 x 40 x 52 weeks) at the lowest end. For the 30% of the sample that reported part-time employment (20 hours a week or less) at $4.25 to $10 per hour, their range is estimated as $10,400 maximum and $4,420 minimum. Since low income has consistently been found to negatively affect political participation, it provides another likely explanation of the lack of participation of this group.

Age (Parnell, 1985) and marital status (Conway, 1991) have also influenced voting patterns. The sample under study consisted largely of students who were 16-18 years of age (42%). Complicated by proportions that were either too young to vote or had only recently acquired this privilege, this sample's suitability for determining political involvement is somewhat questionable. However, the remaining fifty-eight percent also reported no activity in the voting process. With these students Parnell's 1985 finding of low voter participation among voting aged youth could be a likely explanation.

The number of students who reported their marital status to be "married" was extremely low among this sample (see Table 1). Conway (1991) listed marital status as one of the social characteristics that influenced voting. Individuals who are single, divorced, or separated are less likely to vote than those who are married.

Avey (1989) strongly believed that the poor and working class had become disenfranchised from the political process. He felt that since their needs have
consistently been ignored by both major parties, these groups have willingly elected to be politically inactive.

The lack of voting may have been due to the time of the survey, because students in the 1995 sample were surveyed more than a year before a presidential election. During the period between 1992 and 1996 it was assumed that a number of state and local elections were held. By not specifying a particular year, students were given the opportunity to be represented as voters regardless whether the election was a local, state or national one.

It is promising that nearly half of these students showed a desire to become politically involved. Further study would be needed to determine whether these students became active participants in the political process.

Null Hypothesis 4: Level of involvement in volunteer work for students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of gender.

Null Hypothesis 5: Involvement in the public assistance system of students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of gender.

Null Hypothesis 6: Level of involvement in the penal system for students who dropped out of alternative schools was independent of gender.

Volunteer Work

Only a tenth of the sample reported involvement in volunteer activities. This finding was consistent with numerous research on volunteerism. The Department of Education (1992); Putnam (1995); and the William T. Grant
Foundation (1988b) reported a drop in national figures among all age categories for volunteer work.

However, one inconsistency was found among this sample. Bezilla (1988) reported that a higher number of females were active in volunteer work. Among the nongraduates the majority of volunteers were male. Although not a statistically significant finding, males outnumbered females 4:1 in volunteer work.

The lack of volunteer participation may also reflect the economic status of this population. The William T. Grant Foundation (1988b) concluded that, "Low income can deter even the most concerned adult from volunteering" (p. 69). With more than a quarter of the sample reporting no employment and thirty percent reporting only part-time employment, these individuals may well represent that portion of the electorate which are least likely to vote because of their economic status. Volunteering requires one's time and money, which for the most part are luxuries this group cannot afford to part with.

Public Assistance

Hypothesis five was rejected since statistically significant differences were found between females and males on public assistance involvement. Females who reported receiving public assistance were 14.2% of the sample. Males reported no involvement with public assistance.

Reed and Sutter (1990) noted that the poverty rate for families headed by a single female was 50%. Participants reported two types of public assistance involvement: WIC and AFDC. These data indicate that these females have one
or more children, also since strict eligibility requirements must be met in order to receive these benefits; they would qualify on the basis of meeting these eligibility requirements such as income. Therefore, it may be inferred that the income levels of these females were either below or at poverty level.

The overall low involvement in public assistance programs of this sample was however, inconsistent with Kunisawa's (1988) prediction that 52% of dropouts participate in welfare programs. This sample fared far better than Kunisawa's prediction in that only a fraction of the sample reported involvement with public assistance. Twenty-four females reported having one or more children and only slightly more than half (14.2%) reported receiving public assistance. No males in the sample reported receiving public assistance. However, the overall living arrangement of this sample as a whole must again be considered. The majority of these students reported that they were still residing with their parents.

Penal System Involvement

The degree of involvement with the penal system was statistically significant between males and females. Therefore, the null was rejected on this variable.

Eight percent of the males in the sample were currently incarcerated at the time of the study. This finding was consistent with Battle's (1988) conclusion that school dropouts were likely to participate in delinquent acts that may lead to involvement in the penal system.
Locus of Control

The majority of the nongraduates had an external locus of control. Externals outnumbered internals nearly 2 to 1.

Since locus of control is associated with dropping out (Bachman, Green and Wirtanen, 1971) perhaps the high incidence of externals among this group provides some insight into the personality characteristics of the dropout. Walz (1989) suggested that dropouts fail to understand the connection between schooling and their future.

1991 and 1996 Comparisons

Null Hypothesis 7: Productivity levels of graduates and nongraduates from alternative schools were independent of educational attainment in the areas of:

- post-secondary education
- volunteer activity
- participation in the political process
- homemaking and child rearing
- talents and skills not used in job
- public assistance involvement
- penal system involvement

Hypothesis 7 examined differences between 1991 alternative school graduates and 1996 nongraduates on several productivity components. No differences between groups were found for post-secondary education and for public assistance involvement. However, the responses of the two groups were significantly different in volunteer participation, political participation, homemaking, talents and skills, and penal system involvement.
On post-secondary education, graduates outnumbered nongraduates by eight percent. And graduates were 25% more likely to pursue educational plans as a future goal.

Public assistance involvement did not vary among graduates and nongraduates. Nongraduates had participation rates that were slightly lower than graduates in their involvement with the public assistance system, however this variation was interpreted as a special circumstance inherent within the group. Seventy-one percent of the nongraduates reported their living arrangement as "living with a parent or parents."

Graduates had volunteer rates that were twice that of nongraduates. And their involvement in voting was substantial (32%) compared to the nongraduates who reported no participation in the political process.

Among graduates, students who identified themselves as "homemakers" were slightly greater than nongraduates in this same category. However, these results could be interpreted more as a matter of choice, rather than that of economics. An individual who makes a conscious choice to forego employment opportunities for the sake of the family is in a much different situation than an individual who maintains the status of a homemaker because he/she does not possess the skills needed to find gainful employment.

Talent and skill levels between the two groups were statistically significant. Eighty-three percent of the graduates who responded reported having talents and skills that were used in their present jobs. In addition, high levels of these graduates (74.8%) were continuing to develop these skills.
Only 33.7% of the nongraduates reported having talents and/or skills not being used on the job. However, a majority of the nongraduates reported that they were also continuing to develop these additional skills.

Whether all categories transfer into gainful employment for these individuals is highly questionable. Graduates, on the other hand seemed to provide more realistic responses to this question.

Finally, involvement in the penal system between the graduates and nongraduates was statistically significant. Nongraduates were more than twice as likely to participate in the penal system. This finding was consistent with the literature, since dropouts have been generally over represented in the penal system (Battle, 1988; Kunisawa, 1988).

Conclusions

This study provides a portrait of the productive and counter-productive behaviors of student who left alternative schools before graduation. With roughly twenty-five percent of America’s youth continuing to leave school without a diploma, we can assume that these youth are not being adequately developed.

Findings from this study indicate that being an alternative school graduate was related to the individual’s involvement in productive behaviors such as volunteer work, voting and homemaking, and talents and skills which were not being used in his/her present job. Graduates also had minimal involvement in the penal system. Dropouts on the other hand were not voting, had minimal
involvement in volunteer work, and had an unemployment rate of thirty-five percent. There was also an overrepresentation of dropouts in the penal system. These results support the argument that as educational attainment increases so does the individual's involvement in productive behaviors such as employment, voting, etc.

Therefore, educators should work aggressively to increase the holding power of the school as well as reclaim the student who has dropped out of school. Strategic planning is needed to address reforming school to work programs, so that students better understand the connection between school and the workplace. Curriculum planning which addresses civic responsibility and community service projects should be offered to help students develop a heightened sense of self-efficacy. Schools should also collaborate more closely with other service providers to formulate viable solutions for the unique problems of these students. Seeing the school as a system of support changes the perspective of the student significantly.

The data also suggest that female dropouts are more represented in public assistance programs. In order to more fully address the needs of this subgroup, schools need to offer effective programming such as sex education classes, and parenting and child care courses. This group may also need on-site child care facilities which provide a safe and convenient environment for children as well as allow the student to continue her education. This is not only necessary in order to nurture the development of the child, providing these support services may be instrumental in breaking the cycle of poverty among this group.

Finally, as the nation moves toward its goal of a 90% graduation rate, alternative schools offer the dropout or the potential dropout another
educational option. Alternative schools by design are more responsive to the needs of its clientele. Here students are more likely to get a tailor-made education and because these schools are smaller they are able to more effectively respond to the learning needs of these students. Results from the study show that the majority of the nongraduates had an external locus of control. This finding suggest that this group may need a very supportive atmosphere in order to reach their educational goals. It is very likely that without the alternative school as a school of choice perhaps the 1991 graduates would not have succeeded in completing high school.

Recommendations

This study examined levels of productivity among dropouts from alternative schools. Whether students who leave school early have an internal or external locus of control was also addressed. In addition, the findings of this investigation provided comparison data for an earlier study comprised of graduates of alternative schools (Veale, 1991).

Based on the findings of this investigation, the following recommendations for further research were made:

A similar study should be conducted using a larger sample, perhaps even a national audience. "Documenting the magnitude of a problem helps in assembling resources for amelioration," says Mann, (1987). Studies such as these would provide baseline information concerning the productive behaviors of this population. Data tell schools, the business sector and government officials where the weaknesses lie, and what measures should be taken to correct them.
It is also the opinion of the researcher that the reliability and validity of the findings of this study could be increased by using an instrument that more effectively assesses productivity. In the "Student Interview Form," employment, volunteer work, political participation and whether an individual was not involved in the public assistance or penal system were used as indicators of productivity. To assess the degree to which these factors adequately measured productivity a reliability coefficient (alpha) was computed. The computed reliability coefficient was -.0717. This result means that using these factors as components of productivity was not an effective way to defining productivity. This suggests that future research designs should include a model that accurately assesses productivity. The questionnaire only assessed the present or absence of certain behaviors, but did not contribute to a definition of productivity. This finding also suggest that without an instrument which accurately assesses productivity perhaps another research method should be employed.

Dropping out of school and how an individual functions thereafter may be more appropriately investigated using a qualitative approach such as focus groups. Qualitative studies would provide far more depth into the experiences of these students by examining the intricate details of day to day activities as well as allowing the individual an opportunity to express in greater detail their personal views. Individual self-evaluations of their level of productiveness in society might also contribute worthwhile information to such a study. Without the restrictions inherent in a quantitative study (ie., content of questionnaire), perhaps more areas of productivity might emerge that were not addresses by the current study. These new themes may further help to extend or complete the definition of productivity. The information from a qualitative study of this type
could be extremely valuable in developing comprehensive programs to address the needs of these students.

Continued research is also needed in the area of human productivity. Since the literature did not reveal the existence of a holistic model of human productivity, this area provides fertile ground for further research to answer the question: "By what yardstick do we measure human productivity?"
APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM
STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM

Employment, Productivity, and Feelings about Alternative School

Introduction:

Hello, __________________________, I am __________________________ at _____________________________. I am helping in a study which is being done by a graduate student at Iowa State University. We are surveying students in the state of Iowa who left alternative schools before graduation over the past three years—their employment and other productive activities. Since you formerly went to __________________________ School, perhaps you have been contacted by someone from __________________________ in this regard. Would you like to talk to us about __________________________ School. The information which you can provide us is very important to the research being done. Your responses will be kept private and your name will never be used. Only statistical information will be used in this study, with no reference to you personally. I would greatly appreciate your taking about 20 minutes to answer a few questions about your work since you left school and your feelings about the alternative school. Is this a convenient time for you now? [If respondent answers “Yes”, proceed with the interview; otherwise, ask “What would work out better for you?” and write down day and time to call back on call sheet and conclude call.]

1. Are you working right now? What is your PRESENT job?
   (You may choose as many as may be appropriate.
   For example, the respondent may have two jobs or may be employed while attending college or a training program.)
   _____ full-time employed
   _____ part-time employed (# hours per week on average = _________)
   _____ self-employed
   _____ military duty
   _____ attending college or university
   _____ homemaker (if homemaker only, go to item 8)
   _____ not employed
2. What other work have you been doing since you left school, not what you are doing right now. (Include volunteer activities. See question #10 for examples of these. The following abbreviations should be used: F=full-time, P=part-time, and V=volunteer work.)

a. Are you paid by the hour? (May check more than one if working more than one job.)

Yes. Is it (including tips)...
- below minimum wage (less than $4.25/hr)
- minimum wage ($4.25/hr) between $4.25 and $5.00/hr
- between $5.00 and $10.00/hr
- between $10.00 and $15.00/hr
- between $15.00 and $20.00/hr
- over $20.00/hr

No.

b. Are you paid a salary?

Yes. Is it...
- less than $10,000
- between $10,000 and $15,000
- between $15,000 and $20,000
- between $20,000 and $30,000
- over $30,000

No.

3. What kind of work is it?

Check appropriate category of employment (do not ask):

- building trades
- business
- clerical
- cosmetology
- food services
- health
- maintenance
- manufacturing
- mechanical
- sales
- technical
- transportation
- other

[In case interviewee has more than one job, put a “1” in space corresponding to primary job category, “2” in space corresponding to second job, etc.]

4. How long have you been employed in your present main job?

- less than one month
- 1-6 months
- 7-12 months
- between one and two years
- more than two years
5. Regarding your present MAIN job...
   a. Are you satisfied with your pay?
      yes
      somewhat
      no
   b. Are you satisfied with your working conditions? (e.g., air quality, safety, breaks for lunch and coffee)
      yes
      somewhat
      no
   c. Are you satisfied with the time of day (or night) you work?
      yes
      somewhat
      no
   d. Are you satisfied with the number of hours you are getting in your job?
      yes
      somewhat
      no
      would like more hours
      would like fewer
   e. Do you get along with your co-workers?
      yes
      somewhat
      no
   f. Do you get along with your boss?
      yes
      somewhat
      no
6. Is there opportunity for advancement or "moving up" in terms of pay or position in your present MAIN job?
   a. Considerable opportunity
   b. Some opportunity
   c. What type of opportunity for advancement exists in this job?
      higher pay
      higher level position
      (more challenging work, greater responsibility)
      educational opportunities
      (training programs, etc.)
      other
      no opportunity
   b. Are you rated on how well you do your job?
      yes
      do you receive feedback on what you are doing right and what you are doing wrong from this evaluation?
      yes
      no
      do you feel that the performance evaluation is fair?
      yes
      no
      what is unfair about it?
   c. I would like you to rate yourself on the following qualities as they relate to your performance in your present MAIN job:
   a. Punctuality
      often late for work
      occasionally late for work
      never late for work
   b. Work attendance
      occasionally miss work
      never miss work (except for illness or injury)
      often miss work
   c. Responsibility
      abide by rules; always do my job
      often break company rules
      can be depended upon for high quality work—with or without supervision
   d. Quantity or amount of work
      above average for work unit
      well above average for work unit
      below average for work unit
      average for work unit
   e. Quality of work
      some defects or errors in my work
      few defects or errors in my work
      very few defects or errors in my work
      many defects or errors in my work
   f. Customer needs (explain concept of "customer": person who will use what you produce or buy what you are selling)
      do not know who my customers are
      little or no concern for customer needs
      have some concern for needs of customer; friendly
      have considerable concern for needs of customer; relate personally to customer
g. INITIATIVE
—— work fairly hard; follow the lead of others in work unit
—— do as little as possible to get by
—— will "go the extra mile" to get job done right
—— work hard; look for more work to do upon completing a task (don't stand around)

h. FLEXIBILITY
—— can do many types of jobs at work; adapt well to change
—— can do only one type of job at work
—— some ability to do more than one type of job at work

[Note: Advise interviewee to answer subitem "h" in terms of his/her potential, whether or not they are given the opportunity to perform more than one type of job.]

i. ABILITY TO LEARN
—— have considerable skills and ability; take advantage of training or educational opportunities on job
—— have basic skills for learning on job
—— lack basic skills needed for learning on job

j. COMMUNICATION
verbal communication
—— good
—— poor
written communication
—— good
—— poor
nonverbal communication
—— good
—— poor

[Note: Interviewer may have to explain what "nonverbal" communication is. This would include, for example, the manual demonstration of a work procedure, the use of sign language (with a deaf worker), gestures, eye contact, good touch (hug or pat on back), sense of rhythm or low, a smile, and positive "vibes".]

k. COOPERATION
—— cooperate with other workers when asked
—— cooperate with other workers even when not asked
—— like to work by myself
—— help to build cooperation with fellow workers

l. POTENTIAL FOR ADVANCEMENT
—— feel that I have excellent potential for advancement in the organization, e.g., from staff to management level
—— feel that I have some potential to advance on pay scale
—— feel that I have potential to advance in work unit, both in terms of pay and job responsibility
—— feel that I will likely stay at the same level of pay and job responsibility

8. Are you married (or living with someone)?
—— Yes [answer (a) and (b)]
—— No [answer (b)]
a. Is your spouse (or living partner) working?
—— Yes
—— No
b. Do you have any children living with you?
—— Yes ( # of children= _____ )
—— No
c. Have you been looking for work, but been unable to find it (other than homemaker)?
—— Yes [go to Item 9]
—— No [answer (d)]
d. What are the reasons you have not found employment (other than homemaker)?
1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
9. a. Have you taken any classes or any training since leaving School?
   _____ Yes
   _____ completed part of a training program (e.g., technical, mechanical, or beauty school)
   _____ completed a training program in military (standard training program)
   _____ special training in military (e.g., radar, computer technology, electronics, pilot, etc.)
   _____ some college or university course-work (less than a full year of credit)
   _____ completed one year of college or university credit
   _____ completed two years of college or university credit
   _____ completed more than two years of college or university credit
   _____ G E D
   _____ Adult Education Program

(bname of institution attended)

   _____ No

b. Do you plan to take some courses—either in college or through training programs—in the foreseeable future?
   _____ Yes
   _____ What courses or type of program?

   ____________________________

   _____ No

10. Are you involved in any volunteer organizations or any voluntary service activities? (These are activities in which you have freely chosen to participate and for which you are not paid.)
   _____ Yes (What kind?)
   _____ Community shelters
   _____ Crisis line
   _____ Community services
   _____ Salvation Army
   _____ United Way
   _____ Church-related activities
   _____ School-related activities (e.g., tutoring)
   _____ Political activities (either with a political party or centered around some issue such as the environment)
   _____ other(s)

   _____ No
   _____ Would you like to get involved in such activities if you had more time or had someone to help you get involved?
   _____ Yes
   _____ What type of activities?

   ____________________________

   _____ No

11. a. Did you vote in the last election?
   _____ Yes
   _____ Why did you choose not to vote?
   _____ Not old enough
   _____ Not registered
   _____ Didn't feel that my vote would make a difference either way
   _____ Didn't like any of the candidates
   _____ Not interested in the campaigns
   _____ Other

   _____ No

b. Do you plan to vote in any of the elections this year?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No
The following questions concern your experiences at the alternative school you attended.

12. a. How long did you attend School?
   — less than one semester
   — one semester
   — one year
   — 1 1/2 years (semesters)
   — two years or more

   b. Do you feel that School has made a positive difference in your life?
   — Yes
   — No
   — Not sure

13. How did School help you in your present work?

14. What could School have done better to prepare students for a job after graduation?

[Note: Interviewer may need to use "probes" to elicit responses from graduates to questions #13 and #14. Be careful not to lead the respondent.]

Background information:

1. Age

2. Marital status:
   — single
   — married
   — living with someone (significant other*)
   — divorced
   — separated
   — widowed
   — refused to answer
7. Were either of your parents or your guardian employed while you were going to school?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No
   What were their occupations?

8. How much education do your parents (or guardian) have?
   _____ neither are high school graduates
   _____ one is a high school graduate
   _____ both are high school graduates
   _____ some college or university work for one or both
   _____ one has (four year) college or university degree
   _____ both have (four year) college or university degrees

9. Are YOU presently receiving any type of public assistance?
   _____ Yes
       WIC (Women, Infants, and Children; food assistance)
       AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)
       food stamps
       county relief (rent or heat)
       public housing (low rent; Section 8; lease housing)
       SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
       free/reduced cost for lunch or breakfast
       Title 19 (health care; medicaid; medical card)
       JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act)
       GA (General Assistance Stipend)
       other
   _____ No
   Do you need information on how to get such assistance, should you need it?
   _____ Yes (Suggest "First Call for Help": 244-8646)
   _____ No

10. Have you participated in any work experience or training programs sponsored by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No
    Do you feel that the JTPA program was (or will be) helpful to you in preparing you for employment?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No
    in what way?

11. Are YOU presently receiving any type of public assistance?
    _____ Yes
        WIC (Women, Infants, and Children; food assistance)
        AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)
        food stamps
        county relief (rent or heat)
        public housing (low rent; Section 8; lease housing)
        SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
        free/reduced cost for lunch or breakfast
        Title 19 (health care; medicaid; medical card)
        JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act)
        GA (General Assistance Stipend)
        other
    _____ No
    No sure

12. What additional talents or creative abilities do you have which are not being utilized in your present work activity?
   a. Are you continuing to develop these talents or abilities?
      _____ Yes
      _____ No
   b. Do you feel that you may eventually be able to find a market for these talents or abilities?
      _____ Yes
      _____ No

13. Who do you feel was most helpful at your school.
    _____ Principal
    _____ Counselor
    _____ Classmates
    _____ Teacher
    _____ Which teacher

14. Please tell me which statement best describes your philosophy of life:
    Choose one:
    No matter how hard I try there will always be something that keeps me from getting where I really want to go in life.
    If I give it my best there isn't anything I can not do.
14. Do you have anything else you would like to say—either about the alternative school, your present work, or your future plans?


To the interviewer: Please rate the interview.

_____ I felt the student was very cooperative.

_____ I felt the student was very uncooperative.
APPENDIX B

LETTER TO ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS
Dear Educator:

Your assistance is needed as a part of an important study. We are conducting a study to assess productive behaviors of students who drop out of alternative schools and do not return and graduate. As an alternative school in Iowa that has been in operation at least two years prior to 1994, your school’s participation is requested. This study is being conducted with the permission of Iowa State University and Iowa Department of Education.

Your help will determine our study’s success. If your school has not been in operation during the entire period from August, 1991 to July, 1994, please indicate this information below:


☐ 2. Alternative School opened ____________________________
   (date)

If your school does meet #2 above (whether all three years or only one year), please complete the enclosed data form with the appropriate information. This sheet may be duplicated as many times as needed. The student’s telephone number is critical since all additional information will be obtained by telephone. Also, Schools that have maintained a list of its dropouts for each school year may send the list instead of the data sheets, however, please include all the information requested on the data sheets. It would be helpful if your school completed at least five names for each school year (1991-1992, 1992-1993 and 1993-1994).

Please be assured that all information will be completely confidential. Neither your name, the school’s name, nor the student’s name will ever be placed on the questionnaire or in the final report. The data will be used only for research. Also, your participation is strictly voluntary, but we sincerely hope you will choose to participate. Please return the completed data sheets for your school by Friday, August 25, 1995. A self-addressed return envelope is provided for your convenience in returning the data sheets.

If you have no dropouts to report, I would like to hear from you also. Please report by writing No Dropouts across the front of this letter and returning it.

Please accept our sincere thanks for your help with this important study. During the 1995-1996 school year I will forward the results of this study to your school. Meanwhile, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have concerning this research. Please call me at (515) 294-2917.

Thank you for your assistance.

Patty Black, Graduate Student
Educational Administration
Iowa State University

Dr. Bill Poston, Professor
Educational Administration
Iowa State University

Dr. Ray Morley, Consultant
Iowa State Department of Education
APPENDIX C

STUDENT DATA FORM
Iowa State University  
Alternative Schools Study Project  
Former Student Data Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Birthday</th>
<th>Telephone number</th>
<th>Social Security number</th>
<th>Calendar year student dropped out</th>
<th>Grade level at time student left school (and did not return)</th>
<th>Please mark whether student is or has been incarcerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Birthday</td>
<td>Telephone number</td>
<td>Social Security number</td>
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<td>Please mark whether student is or has been incarcerated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Male</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Birthday</td>
<td>Telephone number</td>
<td>Social Security number</td>
<td>Calendar year student dropped out</td>
<td>Grade level at time student left school (and did not return)</td>
<td>Please mark whether student is or has been incarcerated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return to: Patty Black  
Educational Administration  
N225 Lagomarcino  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011
APPENDIX D

FAX TO ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS
Dear <<Name>>:

As an alternative school in Iowa your participation is greatly needed. In August you were sent a packet concerning research on dropouts who leave alternative schools and never return and graduate. We feel that this is a worthwhile project and would greatly appreciate your participation.

I have included for your convenience another copy of the cover letter and the student data form that was a part of the original mailing. Please take a few minutes to complete and return this information. Duplicate the student data form as many times as needed and note that we are requesting at least five names for each school year. Please fax this information to: Patty Black, fax#: 515-294-4942.

Thank you for your assistance.

Dr. Bill Poston, Professor
Educational Administration
Iowa State University

Patty Black
Graduate Student
Educational Administration
Iowa State University
APPENDIX E

PERMISSION FOR USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects
Iowa State University

(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project: "A Longitudinal Assessment of the Employment Productivity of Former Alternative School Students in Iowa"

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

   Patricia A. Black  
   Typed Name of Principal Investigator  
   Educational Administration  
   Department  
   N225 Lacomarino, ISU  
   Campus Address  
   294-2917  
   Campus Telephone

3. Signatures of other investigators  
   Dr. William Poston  
   Date  
   Relationship to Principal Investigator

4. Principal Investigator(s) (check all that apply)  
   □ Faculty  □ Staff  □ Graduate Student  □ Undergraduate Student

5. Project (check all that apply)  
   □ Research  □ Thesis or dissertation  □ Class project  □ Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)*  
   □ # Adults: non-students  □ # ISU student  □ # minors under 14  □ other (explain)  
   □ # minors 14 - 17

   * Students in this study may be from 14 to 24 years in age, however it would be difficult to project a specific number for each category.

7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects (see instructions, item 7. Use an additional page if needed.)
   This study will investigate productivity levels of students who leave alternative schools in Iowa and do not return and graduate. Forty-four alternative schools will be asked to participate in the study by reporting the names of students who dropped out of school during the period between 8/91 and 7/94. From this list a stratified random sample will be selected in order to achieve a more accurate representation of students from urban, suburban and rural settings. These students will be surveyed by telephone. The survey includes questions concerning employment, post-secondary education, volunteer activity, participation in the political process, public assistance involvement and homemaking/child rearing. Students are also asked to respond to questions about their feelings concerning the alternative school that they attended. Once students have been contacted, only one additional "call back" will be made to students who were unavailable on the first contact.

   (Please do not send research, thesis, or dissertation proposals.)

8. Informed Consent:  
   □ Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)  
   □ Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 8.)  
   □ Not applicable to this project.
9. Confidentiality of Data: Describe below the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

Student information from participating schools will be transferred directly from the Student Data sheets manually by the principal investigator of the study. All surveys will be coded, and completed surveys will be tallied by hand by the principal investigator. Only the major professor, the statistician and the principal investigator will have access to completed surveys and student information. The names of the students will be removed from the surveys immediately following the telephone contact. All documentation will be stored in a locked file cabinet. Also, information concerning the coding of documents will be stored in a separate file.

10. What risks or discomfort will be part of the study? Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 10.)

No foreseeable risks.

11. CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:

☐ A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
☐ B. Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
☐ C. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
☐ D. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
☐ E. Deception of subjects
☐ F. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or

Subjects 14 - 17 years of age
☐ G. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, prisons, etc.)
☐ H. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (Attach letters of approval)

If you checked any of the items in 11, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

Items A - D Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions being taken.

Item E Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

Item F For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects will be obtained.

Items G & H Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research, and the letter of approval should be filed.
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. ☑ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #’s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. ☐ Consent form (if applicable)

14. ☑ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. ☑ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

   First Contact     Last Contact
   9/5/95            9/14/95
   Month / Day / Year Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

   9/15/95
   Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer Date Department or Administrative Unit

   Daniel P. Rabin     8/8/95   DEO

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

   ☑ Project Approved     ☐ Project Not Approved     ☐ No Action Required

   Patricia M. Keith 8/14/95
   Name of Committee Chairperson Date Signature of Committee Chairperson

GC: 1/90
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bell, T. (April, 1993). Reflections One Decade After “A Nation at Risk.” *Phi Delta Kappan, 74*(8), 592-597.


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cordina Barber was a never ending source of encouragement throughout this experience. She never let me forget that I had love and support from a distance; and that friends are always there when you need them.

My sister, Faye Black-Sanders was also a pillar of strength and support. She never allowed me to forget that my family was always with me.

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Teresa Lynn Holmes, whose fortitude in her own life helped to strengthen and motivate me. She was always there as a kind and gentle cheerleader.

A special thank you to my committee members: Dr. Bill Poston, Dr. Russell Mullen, Dr. Charlie Railshack, Dr. Harold McNabb, Dr. George Jackson and Dr. Connie Hargrave, who generously offered their expertise and thoughtful advice to further enrich this research.

And to Dr. Abel Mugenda, who gave so generously of his time to assist with statistical procedures and the interpretation of data.

Finally, a special acknowledgement to Bill Parker, who entered my life quite unexpectedly during the final stages of my academic career at Iowa State. His support and encouragement were esstential to the completion of this goal.