DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 273 737 UD 025 136

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TITLE Newark's Dropouts: Who Are They?
INSTITUTION Newark Board of Education, N.J.
PUB DATE Apr 85
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Statistical Data (110)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Dropout Characteristics; Dropout Prevention; *Dropout Rate; *Dropouts; Educational Environment; High Schools; Potential Dropouts; *School Holding Power; Urban Education
IDENTIFIERS *Newark School System NJ; New Jersey (Newark)

ABSTRACT

This paper provides information about Newark (New Jersey) high school students who have officially dropped out of school. The report is divided into four sections. The first section is an overview of the dropout rate of two cohorts of students: freshmen in 1979-80, and freshmen in 1980-81. The second section includes 1984-85 data, based on monthly reports submitted by high school guidance departments, on dropouts' age, sex, ethnicity, reason for leaving school, and current status. The third section analyzes patterns and reasons for dropping out in a small sample of 1984-85 dropouts. It draws on findings from an in-depth study of the dropouts' cumulative records and focuses on achievement, absenteeism, retention, and teachers' comments. Finally, the fourth section presents 1984 comprehensive tests of basic skills (CTBS) scores of those students scoring in the bottom quartile, the population considered most likely to drop out. In summary, it is said that dropouts usually show problems at a relatively early age. Thus, intervention efforts--such as remedial assistance--should be offered early, before students find it too difficult to catch up. An appendix describes four model dropout intervention programs. (KH)

Newark's Dropouts: Who Are They?

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April, 1985

Introduction

This paper contains information about Newark high school students who have officially dropped out of school. There are four sections to the report: the first is an overview of the dropout rate of two cohorts of students, those who were freshmen in 1979-1980 and those who were freshmen in 1980-1981.

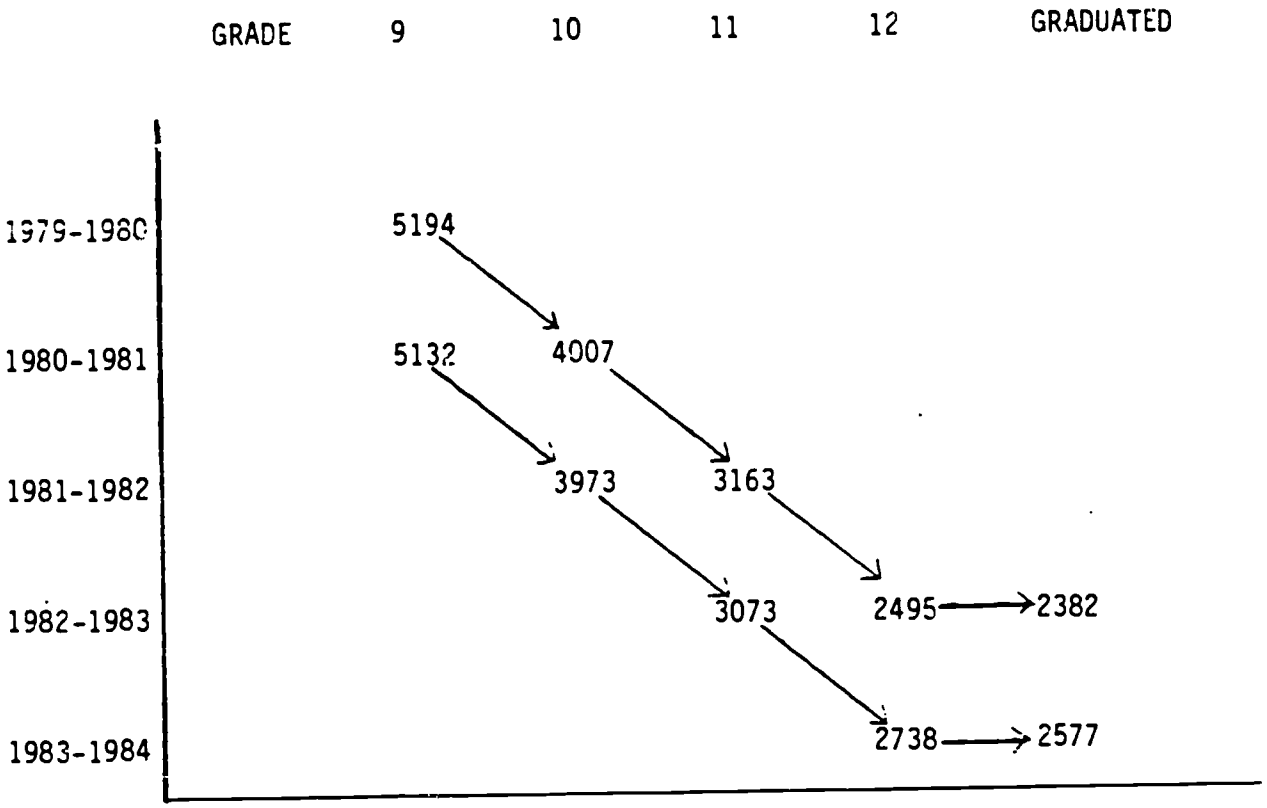
The second section includes data from this school year. High school guidance departments submit monthly reports on drop-outs to the Central Office, Department of Guidance. These reports contain information regarding the dropout student's age, sex, ethnicity, reason for leaving, and current status. We obtained the reports submitted from September 1984 through March 1985 and have a total number of 639 students. (Not all high schools were diligent in submitting their reports, so this number is not the total to date.)

In the third section is an in-depth analysis of a small sample of this year's dropouts. We visited East Side and West Side High schools and looked at the histories of the dropouts as gleaned from their cum cards and other information in their student files. Presumably, dropouts are students who had trouble in school. We wanted to know wher the trouble began and what its nature was.

Finally, we present 1984 CTBS test score information regarding those students scoring in the bottom quartile. That population is the most likely to produce dropouts. As will be seen, Newark has a large number of students whose test performance is poor.

I. Dropout Rates of Two Cohorts

Two classes of students were traced through their high school years - the class of '83, who entered school in the fall of 1979, and the class of '84 who entered school in the fall of 1980. Figure 1 shows the September 30th enrollment for each of those classes as they progressed from their freshmen to



1979-1980 - 1982-1983 = 45.9 percent graduated
54.1 percent did not graduate

1980-1981 - 1983-1984 = 50.5 percent graduated
49.5 percent did not graduate

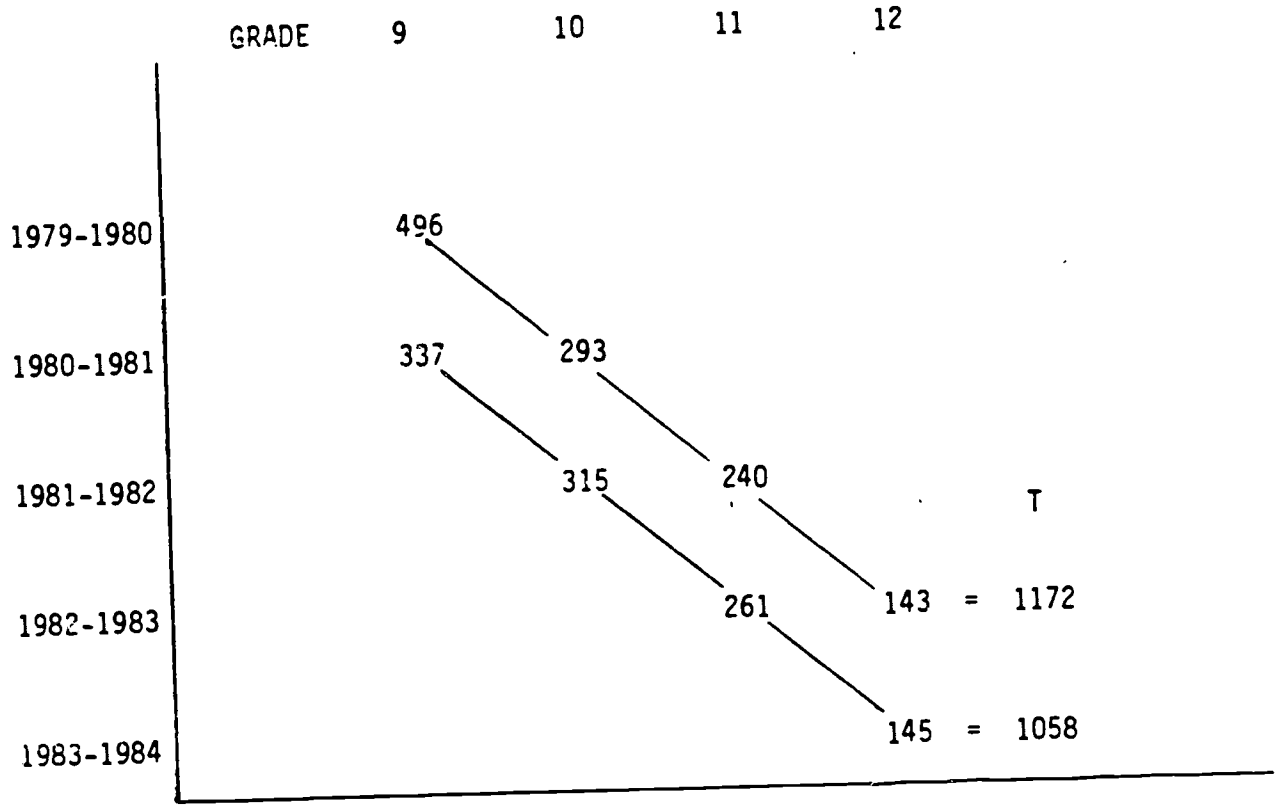
FIGURE 1 - TWO COHORTS: SEPTEMBER 30TH ENROLLMENTS

senior year of school, and ultimately to graduation. Almost 46 percent of the class of '83 graduated, and 50.5 percent of the class of '84 graduated, if we calculate the percentage by dividing the number of graduates by the number of freshmen enrollees. Figure 2 presents the number of dropouts in each of the classes as they progressed through school. In the class of '83 there were a total of 1172 dropouts or 22.6 percent of the total freshmen enrollees, and in the class of '84 there were 1058 dropouts or 20.6 percent of the freshmen enrollees.

Obviously, there are a large number of students not accounted for by these figures. In the class of '83 31.6 percent of the nongraduates are not accounted for, and in the class of '84 29.2 percent are not accounted for. What happened to these students? At this point we can only speculate. Record keeping seems to be problematic, so the figures may or may not be accurate. There is a large variation by school in the annual dropout reports. Of the comprehensive high schools, Malcolm X Shabazz has a relatively low rate (4.6 percent in 1984, as compared to 9.1 percent in West Side, 9.4 percent in Weequahic, 13.2 percent in Central, 12.4 percent in Barringer, 7.8 percent in East Side, and 5.1 percent in Vailsburg).

Some students probably did not graduate with their class because they were retained somewhere during their high school years. Retention figures are not centrally located. An estimate of 9th grade retention from one of the comprehensive high schools was 25 percent. No doubt some of those retainees drop out, but some may eventually graduate.

Some students may just "fall through the cracks." They stop coming to school, but they never get officially dropped. Some may have transferred out of the system. All of these "guesses" cannot be known until we are able to



1979-1980 cohort 1172/5194 = 22.6 percent dropout

1980-1981 cohort 1058/5132 = 20.6 percent dropout

Note: 5194-2382 = 2812; 2812 - 1172 = 1640 = 31.6 percent of nongraduates not accounted for

5132 - 2577 = 2555; 2555 - 1059 = 1497 = 29.2 percent of nongraduates not accounted for

FIGURE 2 - TWO COHORTS: NUMBER OF DROPOUTS

have adequate enough records to follow a particular cohort through its high school career.

II. Dropouts 1984-1985 - Age, Grade Level, and Current Status

The schools which submitted monthly reports and from which the following information came were: Arts, Barringer, Broadway Jr., East Side, Vailsburg, Weequahic, and West Side. Table 1 shows that most students dropout at the 9th grade level, and within that group the largest percentage are 16 years old. Interestingly enough, over 20 percent are younger than 15. Similarly, in 10th grade the largest percentage of students who drop out are 16 years old. The "normal" age for a ninth grader is 14, and for a 10th grader 15. Thus, these dropout students are older, meaning that they probably have been retained somewhere along the way. They are also probably not doing well in school and are simply waiting for their 16th birthday so that they can legitimately leave.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Dropouts by Age and Grade Level, 1984-1985

	Total N	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
Grade								
9	249 100%	11 4.4%	41 16.5%	87 34.9%	73 29.3%	28 11.2%	8 3.6%	1
10	191 100%	1 .5%	9 4.7%	76 39.8%	66 34.6%	30 15.7%	9 4.7%	0
11	122 100%	0 0	1 .8%	29 23.8%	54 44.3%	29 23.8%	6 4.9%	3 2.5%
12	77 100%	0 0	0 0	1 1.3%	38 49.4%	29 37.7%	8 10.4%	1 1.3%
T	639	12	51	193	231	116	31	5

Where the data were available, we collected information regarding the current status of the dropouts. Table 2 presents the data as it was given on the high school reports. The largest percentage of the dropouts are remaining at home (41.5 percent) according to this source. Fourteen percent indicated they were already working or intended to work; 11.6 percent were planning to get a GED; and 11.6 percent other forms of training. The whereabouts of 20 percent were unknown. In this sample, then, the overwhelming majority are not leaving high school for other kinds of job or educational training.

The monthly reports also contained information regarding the reasons for leaving school. "Dislike of school experience" or "lack of interest" were given as the reasons in almost all cases, except for some of those for whom some other form of training was indicated. Whether this is, in fact, true or merely that which is being recorded is not known.

III. Sixty Dropouts: Historical Factors

Sixty students (thirty from East Side High and thirty from West Side High) who had been reported as dropouts by their schools were selected for further study. We examined cumulative records with respect to four factors which might shed light on typical patterns or reasons for dropping out: achievement (teacher-assigned grades and test scores), absenteeism, retention, and teachers' comments about students. The first three factors were studied by grade level for all 60 students combined; the fourth factor was studied qualitatively by category. Effort was made to explore students' history going back through the fourth grade (6 or more years); it should be noted that school records are far from complete, with much information missing from students' folders; hence, total numbers usually do not add up to 60.

Table 3 shows a breakdown of the sample by school and last grade entered. Most students dropped out of grades 9 and 10. One possible reason has been discussed above: many students may have been retained earlier and have now

Table 2

Current Status of Dropouts by Grade Level, 1984-1985*

	Home	Employment	GED	Other Training	Other	Unknown
Grade						
9 (N=67)	41	10	0	9 4 Job Corps 2 Adult Learning Cntr 1 YCS 1 Essex Fields 1 Job Training	1	6
10 (N=74)	28	13	8	9 3 Job Corps 1 New Hope Skills Center 1 Tech School 1 Wilfred Academy 1 Lincoln Tech Inst 1 Adult Learning Cntr 1 ECY	3	13
11 (N=50)	13	7	7	4 2 Essex Fields 2 Job Corps	0	19
12 (N=55)	20	5	13	6 2 Bus School 1 Tech School 1 Jersey Tech 1 ECY 1 Armed Svcs	0	11
T=246	102	35	28	28	4	49
100%	41.5%	14.2%	11.6%	11.6%	1.6%	20%

*Note. Schools here include East Side, West Side, Broadway Jr., Vailsburg and Barringer High.

reached the age of 16. Students in grade 12 who dropped out may have done so because they found themselves unable to complete the requirements for graduation, because they had not reached the age of 16 until then, or because they became overage.

Table 3

Breakdown of Sample by School and Grade

Grade	East Side	West Side	Total
9	8	15	23
10	8	9	17
11	5	2	7
12	9	4	13
Total	30	30	60

Table 4 presents teacher-assigned grades in reading; Table 5 presents these in math. In both disciplines, most students received many Cs, Ds, and Fs throughout elementary and high school. Grades tend to be somewhat more variable in math than in reading, with a few As, but many more Ds and Fs. Failure in both subjects is particularly high in the ninth grade, and common in the years immediately preceding departure from school. Thus, many students have a history of poor achievement all through school, as far back as the early elementary grades.

Table 4

Teacher-assigned Grades in Reading for Sample

Grade	A	B	C	D	F	Total
4	0	5	18	3	0	26
5	1	5	16	9	0	31
6	0	5	24	6	1	36
7	0	8	19	8	4	39
8	0	7	19	15	2	43
9	1	3	8	11	27	50
10	0	1	2	9	9	21
11	0	0	1	1	4	6
12	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	2	41	107	62	50	

Table 5

Teacher-assigned Grades in Math for Sample

Grade	A	B	C	D	F	Total
4	2	2	10	9	3	26
5	2	7	12	8	2	31
6	0	6	17	10	3	36
7	1	6	14	12	6	39
8	4	5	10	15	9	43
9	1	7	4	10	28	50
10	0	3	1	10	7	21
11	0	0	2	1	4	7
12	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	10	36	70	75	64	

Achievement on standardized tests (the MAT or CTBS) is presented in Table 6. Mean NCE scores, their corresponding national percentiles, and score ranges are computed for each grade level. For these students as a group, average achievement at all grade levels has been low - both in an absolute sense and relative to the district averages. Interestingly, the score ranges show that at all grade levels, a few students scored highly in reading and math. This upper range is abruptly cut off at grade 11. Therefore, most students have a history of below average achievement, but a small number were good students in elementary school and may not have shown overt problems until the high school years. For these students, other special problems may be present; some possibilities are suggested below.

Table 7 shows the number of days absent by grade level. At every grade level studied, absenteeism was high, averaging between 20 and 50 days per school year. The ranges show that absenteeism, like achievement, may vary widely for individual students. Highest rates occurred in high school, with some students in 9th grade absent most of the school year and no students in grades 10 and 11 absent less than 16 days. Thus, poor attendance may go hand in hand with poor achievement; in high schools, this was often the reason given for failing grades on report cards.

As noted previously, retention was found to be a common historical factor for many dropouts; Table 8 illustrates just how common this factor was for the sample. A total of 40 students out of 60 studied had 1 or more retentions noted in their records; of these, 17 had been retained in 2 different grades, for a total of 57 actual incidents of retention. Eight of the 40 students had also repeated the same grade more than once. Overwhelmingly, most incidents of retention occurred in grade 9, and all multiple repetitions occurred in grades 9 and 10. Apparently these students had reached high school, many already

Table 6

Standardized Test Scores in Reading and Math for Sample

Grade and Test	N	Mean NCE (NP)	Range NCE (NP)
G4 Reading	21	34 (23)	7-80 (2-92)
G4 Math	21	32 (19)	1-64 (1-74)
G5 Reading	27	28 (15)	1-54 (1-57)
G5 Math	28	30 (17)	1-65 (1-76)
G6 Reading	28	28 (15)	1-60 (1-68)
G6 Math	26	40 (31)	7-75 (2-88)
G7 Reading	37	31 (18)	1-59 (1-66)
G7 Math	36	35 (24)	1-76 (1-89)
G8 Reading	41	29 (16)	1-71 (1-84)
G8 Math	41	34 (22)	4-58 (2-64)
G9 Reading	39	24 (11)	1-77 (1-90)
G9 Math	34	28 (15)	1-51 (1-51)
G10 Reading	20	31 (18)	2-66 (1-77)
G10 Math	16	37 (27)	15-66 (5-77)
G11 Reading	7	33 (21)	19-41 (7-33)
G11 Math	5	36 (25)	24-28 (11-15)
G12 Reading	1	45 (41)	-
G12 Math	1	16 (5)	-

Table 7

Number of Days Absent per Grade for Sample

Grade	N	Mean	Range
4	29	21.5	2 - 63
5	36	20.5	1 - 90
6	37	21.0	2 - 87
7	38	19.8	2 - 62
8	46	24.5	1 - 69
9	40	45.3	0 - 146
10	15	50.0	19 - 90
11	6	45.5	16 - 72
12	1	24.0	----

Table 8

Incidence of Retention by Grade

Grade Repeated	No. of Retentions per Grade	Multiple Repetitions
1	1	--
2	1	--
3	2	--
4	3	--
5	2	--
6	3	--
7	2	--
8	1	--
9	27	6
10	11	2
11	1	--
12	3	--
Total	57	8

having records of low achievement and high absenteeism, and found themselves, through poor attendance or academic failure, unable to accumulate enough credits to move on to the next grade. The inability to successfully complete school grades when normally required seems to be a consistent pattern in the history of most students who drop out of school.

Finally, Table 9 lists categories of teachers' comments about students' difficulties. These suggests several possible reasons for students' failure to remain in school. By far the most frequent subject of teachers' comments was students' poor attendance and achievement. Teachers wrote many comments in students' records indicating that the students were often absent or late (too often to perform well), did not work up to potential, did not have good work habits, or needed individual attention in order to make progress. Sometimes they indicated that the student had tried harder and had shown some improvement, but this did not last, as students were just too far behind to really catch up. Once again, poor attendance and achievement seem clearly the most frequent precursors of failure to remain in school, and may often be observed early in the child's history.

Less universal but also frequently observed were comments about students' behavior problems. Teachers described students as immature and in need of discipline. In high school, students were sometimes suspended (ironically, many for poor achievement and truancy). Again, behavior problems indicating an inability to adjust to the learning environment may be warning signals of the potential for dropping out.

A third category of comments, less frequent but potentially serious, described problems stemming from the home environment, particularly when only one parent was present and the student received little supervision or help with schoolwork. Sometimes parents would be called (curiously, this was noted only

Table 9

Categories of Teachers' Comments About
Students' Difficulties

I. Problems with Attendance and Schoolwork

1. Poor attendance
2. Tardiness
3. Truancy
4. Has not worked up to grade level; can work harder; not applying self
5. Slow
6. Does not pay attention; daydreams
7. Poor work habits
8. Needs individual attention
9. Easily distracted
10. Tries hard; tried harder this year

II. Behavior Problems

1. Immature
2. Needs strict supervision
3. Talkative
4. Disruptive; fights with other students; discipline problems
5. Suspended

III. Problems at Home

1. Parents divorced
2. Home problems
3. Lack of help from home
4. Parent not helpful when called (lax or uncooperative)
5. Death of parent

IV. Special Problems

1. ESL; problems with English language
2. Tested for LD
3. Health problems
4. Evaluated by psychologist
5. Pregnancy/child care

in high school records) and the parent would either show helplessness or, in a few cases, refusal to cooperate.

Finally, some students were described as having special learning problems. The most common of these was difficulty with the English language. (We may speculate that this was involved for many foreign-born students for whom it was not noted, as well.) A few had health problems which interfered with attendance. A couple had been tested for learning disability or psychological problems, though no information about the nature of the problem or follow-up was provided.

IV. Test Score Information

It is clear that most dropouts in our sample have a history of poor academic performance. In this last section we present an overview of the district in terms of the test score performance of those students in the bottom quartile. The CTBS test is nationally normed, that is, each of the tests at each grade level is scored according to national norms. Any particular child or any particular grade or any particular district will receive a score according to those norms. If a particular district's scores are <u>like</u> the national scores, then 25 percent of its students will be in each of four quartiles. If more than 25 percent of its students are in the bottom quartile, then it is performing <u>below</u> national norms. Table 10 shows the percentage of Newark students who are in the bottom quartile of the national distribution in reading at each grade level. As can be seen, except for first grade, Newark has a larger percentage of its students in this group than does the nationwide sample. The dramatic numbers, however, appear in high school, starting with the ninth grade. Sixty-two percent of Newark's ninth graders are in the bottom quartile in reading, indicative of a huge problem at that level. Over 2000 students are far below national norms.

Table 10

Number and Percentage of Newark Students in Bottom Quartile of National Percentile Distributions at Each Grade Level: 1984 CTBS Reading Total

Grade	Total N	No. in Bottom Quartile	Percent in Bottom Quartile
K	3302	928	28.1
1	3705	887	23.9
2	3508	1144	32.6
3	3383	958	28.3
4	3445	1247	36.2
5	3580	1355	37.8
6	3714	1535	41.3
7	3840	1293	33.7
8	3822	1303	34.1
9	3465	2151	62.1
10	2596	1394	53.7
11	2345	1211	51.6
12	2241	1244	55.5

If we divide Newark's own students into quartiles, and look at the scores of those students, another part of the picture emerges. Table 11 shows the cutoff national percentile and grade equivalent reading scores at the bottom quarter and halfway marks in Newark. Again, focussing on the ninth grade, we see that 25 percent of Newark's 9th grade students score at or below an 8.5 national percentile level or a 5.6 grade equivalent level. Half of Newark's 9th graders score at or below a 19.5 national percentile level or a 7.2 grade equivalent.

Clearly, there is a problem which is magnified at the ninth grade level. Why? One answer may be that few eighth graders are retained. In a Chapter I pretest analysis, it was found that in a sample of five schools, there was not a single eighth grade retainee. (See a report titled Chapter I Pretest Analysis, 1984-85, by J. Azumi.) Poor students are promoted to ninth grade. The combination of their own academic weaknesses plus the increasing demands of a high school curriculum result in failures of great magnitude. As we have seen, many ninth graders repeat the ninth grade, but this does not seem to alleviate the problem. Rather it seems to be yet another year of failure. True, there is also a lot of absenteeism, and absenteeism and poor academic performance go together. But, what is cause and what is effect is not so clear. Both are probably symptomatic of larger problems having to do with the lack of basic skill development at an earlier age.

If we look at the grade level progression, we can see that Newark students fall further behind as they move through the school system. At the third grade level, the median grade equivalent is 3.2 or one-half year behind the national norm (3.8). By the fifth grade Newark's median is one full year behind the national median. By the ninth grade it is 2½ years behind. For those students in the bottom quarter the gaps are even wider. By the ninth grade they are

Table 11

National Percentile and Grade Equivalent Scores of Newark's Median and Bottom Quarter Cutoff Points at Each Grade Level: 1984 CTBS Reading Total

Grade	Newark's Median Cutoff Scores		Newark's Bottom Quarter Cutoff Scores	
	NP	GE	NP	GE
1	49.6	1.8	27.0	1.5
2	39.6	2.5	19.4	2.0
3	35.6	3.2	23.9	2.7
4	30.8	3.9	21.1	3.2
5	32.3	4.8	19.1	3.9
6	29.8	5.2	18.4	4.4
7	35.1	6.1	21.0	5.0
8	34.0	7.3	21.1	5.8
9	19.2	7.2	8.5	5.6
10	22.9	8.7	10.7	6.8
11	24.7	9.2	12.3	7.6
12	21.2	9.5	8.9	8.1

over four years behind. It's not too difficult to see where potential dropouts are coming from.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is clear that dropouts for the most part show problems at a relatively early age. These take the form of achievement and attendance problems in the majority of cases. Other factors such as discipline and behavior problems, or language problems for non-native English speakers, may also be involved. The failure which manifests itself so dramatically at the ninth grade level represents an accumulation of problems rather than a sudden change. It is vital that schools begin to address these problems early, before the accumulated deficit is great.

Within the school system a limited number of options are available at present; perhaps these can be expanded. Students scoring below a certain test-score cutoff are able to receive remedial assistance in the form of Chapter I or SCE services. However, this may not be enough help for some students. Others having difficulty may be classified as special education students. This, too, has drawbacks because it may unfairly label students without necessarily helping them get what they need educationally. Other forms of intervention are obviously needed for those students experiencing difficulty at an early age.

It is our belief that early intervention would better serve students than intervention at a stage where it is difficult or impossible to catch up. No student should ever fall more than two years behind grade level. Alternative schools or classes, small classes at the K, 1, and 2 grade levels, greater sharing of ideas and materials among teachers, voluntary tutorial services, and expanded guidance services, possibly including efforts toward parental involvement at an early stage, are some suggested directions to pursue.

An attendance incentive program, particularly addressed to those students chronically absent, is also needed. Programs like PRIMERA, the Title VII funded project for bilingual students which includes dropout-prevention activities, are helpful for non-native English speakers; perhaps they could generate recommendations for practices to be used with native English speakers as well. (The State Commissioner's Immersion Project bears watching also.)

Admittedly, schools must recognize that they cannot solve all problems of children's lives. Death, divorce, ill health, transience, abuse, poverty are all problems which some children must deal with and which are beyond the scope of the school. However, this is not to say that teachers and principals should be insensitive to those aspects of children's lives. It is to say that such issues should not be used as excuses as to why children can't or won't learn. Nor should they be allowed to blind schools to the things they <u>can</u> do to help.

Appendix: Model Dropout Intervention Programs

On Tuesday evening, April 30, 1985, WNEW-TV broadcast a program describing the extend of the dropout problem nation-wide and four model programs for dealing with the problem. These are summarized below.

I. Extent of the Problem

Many students drop out because they do not see the connectedness between themselves, their goals, their place in the world, and school. Common precipitating factors are school failure (to drop out is less humiliating), pregnancy (which occurs among one quarter of all female high school students), family problems such as divorce and lack of supervision, and alcohol and drug abuse. Without help, teachers are too overloaded with pupils and responsibilities to deal with these problems. Yet an effective dropout program may save much cost to society in terms of welfare and support of criminals in prisons (where many who cannot find jobs may end up).

II. Four Model Programs

1. New York City: Youth Outreach

In New York City, it is estimated that 45% of high school students drop out. Police and schools have pooled resources to conduct a city-wide three-day workshop program for high school sophomores. The workshop is conducted at the high schools in small groups and led by one policeman and one teacher or principal, who are known by their first names. Students participate in exercises to encourage trust, communication, understanding of their own and others' motives, and releasing of defenses. These include introducing oneself to the group, writing (anonymous) statements about their identity and feelings which are shared with the group, and role-playing of teacher-student interaction. Students with serious problems may be

referred to a psychologist, social worker, or minister. At Columbus High School, many students came to feel that they could come to adults for help with problems, and the dropout rate fell from 22% to 13%.

2. Knoxville, Tennessee

A special program is run by guidance counsellors to target pregnancy and drug abuse, funded by grants. Counsellors try to teach students to be mature about drug and alcohol use - to understand what they are doing, why, and when use turns into abuse. Day care is provided, as are classes in parenting for both boys and girls which include warnings about the dangers of early parenting.

3. Southern California: Rancho Del Mar

Rancho Del Mar is an alternative school for students who have been unable to cope with the traditional school system or have become "turned off." Teachers relate to students with respect but have standards for responsible behavior.

4. National Program: Cities and Schools

Cities and Schools is a nation-wide program which began in Atlanta in the early 1970s and was expanded by the Justice Department in 1977 with the help of matching grants provided by private companies. It now serves 17 cities, including West Palm Beach, Washington, D.C., and Bethlehem, Pa.

The program coordinates various city government services to answer the needs of inner-city high school students. For example, the Department of Labor provides vocational counseling; health-care workers provide medical advice to pregnant teenagers; and social workers address special problems. Home visits are included to establish a dialogue with parents and children. The program targets 14-to 16-year-olds, who need much guidance and are at the most vulnerable age for school-related problems. Standards are set for students' behavior, but there is also an emphasis on listening to

students' concerns.

In Atlanta, an alternative school operates in Rich's Department Store called Rich's Academy. It is designed for former dropouts and staffed by volunteers from local companies who share their knowledge and expertise. Businesses see this as in their own interest as well as the students' - they can prepare young people to be more productive employees.

It is estimated that 65% of the former dropouts in Cities and Schools programs receive a high school diploma. Not only do they finish school, but they learn a valuable lesson in not being discouraged by past failure or prevented from trying again.

In summary, several elements are important to a successful dropout intervention program. Adults must care and provide personal attention; students are expected to be responsible, as adults are responsible to them; and there is community support, both public and private. Businesses can provide grants, work sites, and volunteers. The task is great, and success is more likely if schools do not have to do it alone.