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**ABSTRACT**

This report of the number and percentage of senior high school students who left school before graduating found that: (1) 7% of the fall 1981 high school enrollment left before the end of the 1981-1982 school year; (2) leavers accounted for 6% from regular high schools enrollment, 51% from continuation high schools, and 7% from other high schools; (3) over 60% of early leavers left during the second semester; (4) there were 14% more male early leavers than females; (5) there were more tenth grade early leavers than eleventh or twelfth graders; (6) the average age of early leavers was 17.7 years; (7) Hispanics comprised 43% of early leavers, Whites 26%, Blacks 26%, Asians 4%, and American Indian/Alaskan Native 0.1%; (8) "overage" was the reason most commonly noted for eleventh and twelfth grade leavers and "whereabouts unknown" for tenth graders. Other reasons included: full-time employment, institutionalization, nonattendance or excessive absence. The report recommends the establishment within high schools of programs that seek to identify potential leavers, and provide counseling or guidance to help them remain in school. (PS)

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**EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS:  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO LEFT  
SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATING,  
1981 - 82**

**PUBLICATION NO. 428**

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**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION BRANCH**

**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO LEFT  
SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATING,  
1981-82**

**Publication No. 428**

**Research and Evaluation Branch  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
September 1983**

**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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**Early School Leavers:  
High School Students Who Left School  
Before Graduating, 1981-82**

**Executive Summary**

This study reports the number and percentage of senior high school students who left school before graduating. There were 132 schools with grades 10-12 providing data for this report.

The senior high schools used Form 34-H-136, "Record of Transfer," to report students who left school before graduating. The forms provided the following student information: sex, date of birth, grade, and reason for leaving. In addition, administrative area and type of school were indicated.

**Major Findings**

- The 9,433 students who left high school before graduating comprised 7% of the fall 1981 high school enrollment.
- By type of school, leavers accounted for 6% from regular high schools enrollment, 51% from continuation high schools, and 7% from other high schools (e.g., special education and opportunity).
- Over 60% of 1981-82 early school leavers left during the 2nd semester; the 9th and 10th months recorded the most departures.
- There were 14% more male early leavers than females.
- There were more 10th grade early leavers than 11th or 12th graders.
- The average age of 1981-82 early leavers was 17.7 years.
- Hispanic students comprised 43% of early leavers, with 26% White, 26% Black, 4% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native.
- Overage was the reason most commonly noted for 11th and 12th grade leavers; and whereabouts unknown for 10th graders.

## PREFACE

All senior high schools in the district contributed data to this annual report. Appreciation is extended to principals and staff for their help.

The findings in this report should be helpful to administrators, counselors, teachers and parents who plan programs and provide services that encourage potential school leavers to remain in school.

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**EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS:  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO LEFT SCHOOL  
BEFORE GRADUATING, 1981-82**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) offers a variety of instructional programs for high school students. The intent is to meet students' educational needs and reduce the number of early school leavers. In spite of this, a significant number of high school students continue to leave school before graduating.

This publication reports the number and percentage of early school leavers during the 1981-82 school term. Findings are grouped by type of school, age, sex, grade level, ethnicity, and reason for leaving school. Also, the tables show summaries of 1980-81 findings. This feature provides the reader an opportunity to compare the findings of 1981-82 and 1980-81 school terms.

**II. DESCRIPTION**

**A. Purpose**

This study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What was the incidence of students' leaving school?
2. What were the differences in the number, percentage, or rate of students leaving school with respect to type of school, sex, grade, ethnicity, time of year, age, and administrative area of attendance?
3. What were the reasons for students' leaving school?
4. What differences were there in reasons for leaving school with respect to type of school, sex, grade level, age, time of year, and administrative area of attendance?

With these questions answered, administrators, counselors, teachers, and parents should be able to improve programs and services that encourage potential early school leavers to remain in school.

**B. Procedures**

Schools in the Study. There were 132 schools with grades 10-12 providing student data for this report. These schools were grouped into regular senior high (49), continuation (43) and "other" (40). "Other" schools were: 25 magnet, 8 opportunity, and 7 special education schools. The results are reported by these grouping and by the 10 administrative areas.

Data Gathering Instrument. Senior high schools used Form 34-H-136, "Record of Transfer," to report students who left school before graduating. The schools completed the forms and sent them to the district's Research and Evaluation Branch office each month. The Record of Transfer form provides the following student information: sex, date of birth, grade, and reason for leaving. Also, school month, administrative area, and type of school are indicated (See appendix).

Subjects. The subjects were 9,433 senior high school students identified as L8's on Record of Transfer forms. The L8 code refers to students who are dropped from school rolls for specific reasons (including medical exclusion) and will not be receiving instructions. For the remainder of this report, the L8 leavers will be referred to as early school leavers.

Data Processing. Data reported on Form 34-H-136 were inspected for completeness and accuracy, e.g., for agreement of "L" codes with reasons for leaving. The most frequent errors were incorrect birthdates, wrong codes, and missing codes. All errors were corrected.

The corrected data were keypunched directly from Form 34-H-136. The computerized Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data and produce information reported in tables 1-12.

### **III. RESULTS**

#### **A. Incidence of L8 School Leavers**

During the 1981-82 school term, 9,433 senior high school students left school before graduating. Compared to 1980-81, the early school leavers represent a decrease of 433 students. The 9,433 early school leavers are reported by type of school and school month (Tables 1 and 2. All tables are in Appendix A).

Enrollment, 1st School Month. In 1981-82, LAUSD senior high early school leavers equaled 7% of 1st school month enrollment compared to 8% in 1980-81. The early school leavers in regular senior high schools were 6% of the first school month enrollment in those schools; the same was true in 1980-81. In continuation and "other" high schools, early leavers accounted for 51% and 7%, respectively, of the first month school enrollments (Table 1).

School Months. About 4% of the early school leavers left during the 1st school month, and increased to 14% in the 9th and 10th months. Further, over 60% of the 1981-82 early school leavers left during the second semester; the same was true for 1980-81 (Table 2).

## **B. Characteristics of L8 School Leavers**

The number and percentage of 1981-82 early school leavers are reported by sex, grade, average age, and ethnicity (Tables 3-7).

Sex. In 1981-82, males comprised 55% of the early leavers; a slight decrease from 1980-81. Approximately 41% of the early leavers were females; the same was reported for 1980-81 (Table 3).

Grade. In 1981-82, 39% of LAUSD early school leavers were 10th graders, 32% were 11th graders, and 26% were 12th graders. The 26% figure for 12th graders is 13 percentage points less than in 1980-81.

In continuation high schools, more 11th graders left school than 10th or 12th graders (Table 4).

Average Age. The average age of early school leavers was 17.7 years. However, in continuation high schools, early leavers were slightly older (17.9) than those from regular or "other" schools. The average age from "other" schools (17.7 years) represents a 6-month increase over the year before (17.1 years).

Male early school leavers were slightly older than female (17.7, 17.5 years). (Table 5).

Ethnicity. The ethnicity of 1981-82 early school leavers is reported by type of school and by administrative area (Tables 6 and 7). Hispanic students comprised 43% of all early leavers, with 26% White, 26% Black, 4% Asian, and 1% American Indian/Alaskan Natives (Table 6). The percentages of Hispanic and Black early leavers were higher than their percentages of October 1981 enrollment (Table 8).

Administrative Areas 5, 6, and 8 averaged more than 1,000 early leavers each. Of the 10 administrative areas, Area 5 reported the largest number of early leavers (1,744) and Area 10 reported the smallest (572).

Hispanic students were the predominant leavers in 6 areas (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8). There were more White early leavers in Areas 8, 9, and 10 and more Black in Areas 3 and 4 (Table 7).

The percentage distribution by racial/ethnic identity of senior high school enrollment in each administrative area is presented in Table 8.

## **C. Reasons for Leaving**

Form 34-H-136, Record of Transfer, contains 19 coded reasons why students leave school. As in 1980-81, 7 of the 19 were identified with 1981-82 early leavers and reported as L8 leavers. Early school leavers identified with the 7 coded reasons are grouped and reported by sex, grade, and average age (Table 9, 10, 11). If none of the 19 coded

reasons applied, recorders used code 20 (other) supplemented with written statements (Table 12).

Reason by Sex. As in 1980-81, approximately three-fourths of early leavers were "over legal age" (40%), or discontinued because their "whereabouts were unknown" (37%). Males accounted for 61% of the overage leavers and females 36%, while for "whereabouts were unknown", 52% were males and 47% females.

Full time employment and being "institutionalized" accounted for 9% of early school leavers; and 3% left school either because of "medical reasons," enlisting in the military, or getting married. Another 10% left for "other" reasons.

As in 1980-81, males left school for "employment" reason more often than females (62%, 37%). Also, males were institutionalized more often than females (80%, 20%) and "enlisted in the military" in a ratio of 6 to 1 (86%, 14%). Females, however, left school more often than males for marriage (90%, 6%) (Table 9).

Reason by Grade. About 39% of the district's 1981-82 early school leavers were 10th graders, 32% were 11th graders, and 26% were 12th graders. More 12th graders (43%) than 10th or 11th graders were over legal age and dropped.

Again, as in 1980-81, substantially more 10th graders (58%) than 11th (28%) or 12th graders (21%) were dropped from school rolls because their "whereabouts were unknown." Tenth graders (59%) were institutionalized more often than 11th (30%) or 12th graders (9%). Eleventh graders (43%) enlisted in the military more often than 10th (24%) or 12th graders (30%).

Of the 98 early leavers who married, 47% were 10th graders, 30% were 11th graders, and 21% were 12th graders. Early school leavers who left for "full time employment" were about equally represented in all three grades (Table 10).

Reasons by Average Age. As in 1980-81, the youngest early school leavers were institutionalized. Differences between this year and last are fractional (Table 11).

"Other" Reasons. The 981 early school leavers who were indicated as "Other" (Code 20) are rank ordered in Table 12. As in 1980-81, the most frequent "other" reason given was "nonattendance/excessive absence" (37%). Another 35% were in the in custody of parents at home. Additional reasons ("Other") were deceased (4%), expelled (2%), child care (14%), and miscellaneous (8%) (Table 12).

## **IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Findings**

1. The 9,433 students who left high school before graduating comprised 7% of the fall 1981 high school enrollment.
2. By type of school, leavers accounted for 6% from regular high schools enrollment, 51% from continuation high schools, and 7% from other high schools.
3. Over 60% of 1981-82 early leavers left during the 2nd semester. The 9th and 10th months recorded the most departures.
4. There were 14% more male early leavers than females.
5. There were more 10th grade early leavers than 11th or 12th graders.
6. The average age of 1981-82 early leavers was 17.7 years.
7. Hispanic students comprised 43% of early leavers, with 26% White, 26% Black, 4% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native.
8. "Overage" was the reason most commonly noted for 11th and 12th grade leavers; and "whereabouts unknown" for 10th graders.

### **B. Recommendations**

The following are recommended:

1. Revise the reporting instrument to include information needed for this report, but presently available only by inferring or by calling each school. Further, the wording in some column headings on the form needs to be clarified.
2. Investigate alternative data reporting schedules, such as bi-annual.
3. Establish programs within high schools that seek to identify potential leavers, and provide counseling or guidance to help them remain in school.

**APPENDIX A**

**Table 1**  
**Senior High School Early Leavers and October Enrollment,**  
**by Type of School, 1980-81 and 1981-82**

<u>Type of Senior High</u>	<u>Number</u>		<u>Enrollment</u>		<u>L8 School Leavers</u>			
	<u>1980-1981</u>	<u>1981-1982</u>	<u>Oct. 1980<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>Oct. 1981<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>1980 - 1981</u>		<u>1981 - 1982</u>	
					<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Enrollment</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Enrollment</u>
Regular	49	49	123,185	120,522	7,045	6%	7,165	6%
Continuation	42	43	3,420	3,414	2,293	67	1,756	51
Other	23	40	3,316	7,592	528	16	512	7
<b>Total</b>	114	132	129,921	131,528	9,866	8	9,433	7

<sup>a</sup>Enrollment data based on Racial and Ethnic Survey--Fall 1980, Research and Evaluation Publication No. 390.

<sup>b</sup>Enrollment data from Racial and Ethnic Survey--Fall 1981, Research and Evaluation Publication No. 405.

**Table 2**  
**Number of Senior High Early School Leavers, by**  
**School Month and Type of School, 1981-82**

<b>School Month</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Continuation</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>%</b>
1	252	74	37	363	4%
2	467	113	60	640	7
3	621	159	50	830	9
4	403	95	26	524	6
5	969	249	59	1,277	13
6	845	213	46	1,104	12
7	939	167	49	1,155	12
8	656	174	49	879	9
9	1,113	176	63	1,352	14
10	900	335	73	1,309	14
<b>Total 1981-82</b>	7,165	1,756	512	9,433	100
<b>Total 1980-81</b>	7,045	2,293	528	9,866	



**Table 3**  
**Sex and Grade of Senior High School Early Leavers, 1981-82**

Grade	No. Male	No. Female	Not Reported
10	2,002	1,610	37
11	1,767	1,219	67
12	1,399	1,056	38
<b>Total 1981-82</b>	5,168 (55%)	3,885 (41%)	142 (1%) 238 (3%) <sup>a</sup>
<b>Total 1980-81</b>	5,574 (57%)	4,061 (41%)	231 (2%)

<sup>a</sup>Schools failed to report the sex of 142 early school leavers. There were 238 L8 school leavers for whom grade was not reported.

**Table 4**  
**Number of Senior High School Early Leavers, by Grade and Type of School, 1981-82 and 1980-81**

Type of School	Grade			Not Reported	Total	
	10	11	12		No.	%
Regular	2,994	2,291	1,835	45	7,165	76%
Continuation	434	609	538	175	1,756	19
Other	221	153	120	18	512	5
<b>Total 1981-82</b>	3,649 (39%)	3,053 (32%)	2,493 (26%)	238 (3%)	9,433	100
<b>Total 1980-81</b>	2,691 (27%)	3,053 (32%)	3,891 (39%)	150 (2%)	9,866	

**Table 5**  
**Average Age of Senior High School Early Leavers,**  
**by Type of School and Sex, 1981-82**  
**and 1980-81**

Category	Average Age (Yrs.) <sup>a</sup>		L8 Leavers with Date of Birth		
	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	Reported	Not Reported	Total
<b>Type of School</b>					
Regular	17.6	17.5	7,105	60	7,165
Continuation	17.8	17.9	1,745	11	1,756
Other	17.1	17.7	510	2	512
<b>Total</b>	17.6	17.7	9,360	73	9,433
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	17.7	17.7	5,293		5,293
Female	17.5	17.5	3,998		3,998
Not Reported	18.5	18.4		142	142
<b>Total</b>	17.6	17.9	9,291	142	9,433

<sup>a</sup>The youngest early school leavers (17.5) were from regular high schools while the oldest (17.9) were from continuation schools.

Table 6

Number of Senior High School Early Leavers, by Racial/Ethnic Identification and Type of School, 1981-82 and 1980-81

Type of School	Racial/Ethnic Identification				
	Am. Ind./ Alask. Natv.	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Black, Not Hisp.	Hispanic	White, Not Hisp.
Regular	7	395	1,790	3,353	1,620
Continuation	6	24	462	539	725
Other	1	3	220	188	100
<b>Total 1981-82</b>	14 (0.1%)	422 (4%)	2,472 (26%)	4,080 (43%)	2,445 (26%)
<b>Total 1980-81</b>	31 (0.3%)	369 (4%)	2,723 (28%)	3,798 (38%)	2,945 (30%)

Table 7

Number of Senior High School Early Leavers, by Racial/Ethnic Identification and Administrative Area, 1981-82 and 1980-81

Admin- istra- tive Area	Racial/Ethnic Identification					Total LB School Leavers			
	Am. Ind./ Alas. Natv.	Asian Pac. Is.	Black, Not Hisp.	Hispanic	White, Not Hisp.	1980-81		1981-82	
						No.	%	No.	%
1	1	69	165	263	262	974	10%	760	8%
2	1	2	341	464	95	1,044	11	903	10
3	0	1	809	146	42	1,123	11	998	11
4	3	18	265	148	180	609	6	614	6
5	0	123	579	768	274	1,217	12	1,744	18
6	7	31	67	1,030	115	1,386	14	1,250	13
7	0	94	15	384	180	743	8	673	7
8	0	53	121	605	404	1,071	11	1,183	13
9	1	20	88	170	457	955	10	736	8
10	1	11	22	102	436	744	8	572	6
<b>Total</b>						9,866	100%	9,433	100%

Table 8

Percentage Distribution of October Enrollment in Senior High Schools,  
by Racial/Ethnic Identification and Administrative Area, 1981-82

Admin- istra- tive Area	Percentage of Enrollment					October 1981 Enrollment
	Amer. Ind./ Alask. Natv.	Asian/ Pac. Is.	Black, Not Hispanic	Hispanic	White, Not Hispanic	
1	1%	16%	28%	29%	27%	14,808
2	0.4	1	18	70	10	14,001
3	0	1	78	12	9	11,423
4	0.3	7	43	14	36	12,578
5	0.3	16	29	40	15	16,085
6	0.3	7	2	90	1	12,111
7	0.4	21	2	44	33	9,145
8	0.4	7	12	38	42	13,203
9	0.3	5	16	18	61	14,888
10	0.3	5	16	8	70	13,286
<b>Total 1981-82</b>	0.4%	9%	24%	36%	30%	131,528
<b>Total 1980-81</b>	1%	8%	25%	33%	34%	129,921

**Table 9**  
**Reasons for Leaving Senior High School Early,**  
**by Sex, 1981-82**

Reason for Leaving	L8 School Leavers							
	Males		Female		Not Reported		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Overage	2,295	61%	1,372	36%	104	3%	3,771	40%
Whereabouts Unknown	1,801	52	1,653	47	31	1	3,485	37
Full Time Employment	304	62	184	37	4	1	492	5
Institutionalized	331	80	84	20	0	0	415	4
Medical Exclusion	22	26	64	74	0	0	86	1
Enlisted Military	90	86	15	14	0	0	105	1
Marriage	6	6	90	92	2	2	98	1
Others <sup>a</sup>	423	43	501	51	57	6	981	10
<b>Total 1981-82</b>	<b>5,272</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>3,963</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9,433</b>	
<b>Total 1980-81</b>	<b>5,774</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>4,061</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9,866</b>	

<sup>a</sup>See Table 12 for distribution of "other" reasons.

**Table 10**  
**Reasons for Leaving Senior High School Early,**  
**by Grade, 1981-82**

Reason For Leaving	Grade of L8 School Leavers									
	10		11		12		Not Reported		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Overage	696	19%	1,388	37%	1,635	43%	52	1%	3,771	40%
Whereabouts Unknown	2,017	58	991	28	407	12	70	2	3,485	37
Full Time Employment	153	31	135	27	157	32	47	10	492	5
Institutionalized	245	59	125	30	37	9	8	2	415	4
Medical Exclusion	34	40	36	41	16	19	0	0	86	1
Enlisted Military	25	24	45	43	32	30	3	3	105	1
Marriage	46	47	29	30	21	21	2	2	98	1
Others	407	41	290	30	178	18	106	11	981	10
<b>Total 1981-82</b>	<b>3,623</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3,039</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2,483</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9,433</b>	
<b>Total 1980-81</b>	<b>2,691</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3,134</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3,891</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9,866</b>	

**Table 11**  
**Average Age of Senior High School Early Leavers,**  
**by Reason for Leaving, 1980-81 and 1981-82**

Reason for Leaving	Average Age (yrs.)		Number of L8 School Leavers,	
	1980-81	1981-82 <sup>b</sup>	1980-81	1981-82
Overage	18.5	18.4	4,322	3,764
Whereabouts Unknown	16.9	16.9	2,913	3,425
Full Time Employment	17.3	18.2	626	490
Institutionalized	16.7	16.7	561	412
Medical Exclusion	16.9	17.0	142	85
Military	17.4	17.6	136	105
Marriage	17.1	17.3	117	98
Others <sup>a</sup>	17.0	17.3	983	9801
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>9,800</b>	<b>9,359<sup>b</sup></b>

<sup>a</sup>See Table 12 for distribution of "other" Reasons.

<sup>b</sup>There were 74 L8 school leavers with missing birthdates; and were not included in computing average ages.



Table 12

Written Statements Accompanying Coded Reason 20 (Other)  
for 981 Senior High Early School Leavers, 1981-82  
and 1980-81

Statements (in Rank Order)	Occurrence, 1980-81		Occurrence, 1981-82 <sup>b</sup>	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Nonattendance or excessive absence	486	49%	372	37%
2. In custody of parent at home, or "dropped" to parent	408	41	341	35
3. Deceased	62	6	38	4
4. Expelled	17	2	15	2
5. Child care	9	1	134	14
6. Miscellaneous <sup>a</sup>	3	0.3	81	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>985</b>		<b>981</b>	

<sup>a</sup>Miscellaneous in 1981-82 includes undercover agents, no statement, emancipated minor, and run-away.

<sup>b</sup>In order to compare 1980-81 findings to 1981-82, items 3, 4, 5, and 6 are not presented in ranked order.