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ABSTRACT

The 1982-83 school year was the second year of the New York City (New York) Public Schools Promotional Gates Program. Under this program students in grades four and seven who failed to attain their promotional criteria (in both reading and mathematics) were retained for a year of intensive remedial instruction. This report is the result of a longitudinal study of these "Gates" students. Findings are presented in the following areas: (1) student achievement; (2) attainment of the seventh-grade criterion (for the fourth grade students); (3) progress towards high school graduation (for the seventh-grade students); and (4) participation in the Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program (AIDP) and the Dropout Prevention Program (D.P.P.). The majority of the Gates students made significant gains during the Gates year, particularly in reading achievement. Unfortunately, after the Gates year, students received few, if any educational or social services to assist them in building on these gains, and they failed to continue to make adequate progress. Recommendations for improving the Promotional Gate Program are offered. Data are presented on 24 tables and figures. (BJV)

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE 1982-83 PROMOTIONAL GATES STUDENTS

O.E.A. Evaluation Section Report

Prudence Opperman, Senior Manager

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE 1982-83 PROMOTIONAL GATES STUDENTS

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SUMMARY OF THE
FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE
1982-83 PROMOTIONAL GATES STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The 1982-83 school year was the second year of the Promotional Policy. Under that policy students in grades four and seven who failed to attain their promotional criteria were retained for a year of intensive remedial instruction. (In 1982-83 the promotional criteria included both reading and mathematics.)

The Office of Educational Assessment (O.E.A.) followed the subsequent progress of the "Gates" students from the 1982-83 school year through the 1986-87 school year. Using centrally-maintained data files, O.E.A. examined student achievement, promotion, attainment of the seventh-grade criterion (for the fourth-grade students) and, for the seventh-grade students, progress towards high school graduation and participation in A.I./D.P. and D.P.P.

For each grade, the reading-retained and mathematics-retained cohorts were recreated from the original data files. In addition, for each cohort a grade-comparison group was created. These grade-comparison groups contained students in the fourth (or seventh) grade for the first time who scored within one standard error of measurement above the criterion. In addition, age-comparison groups were created consisting of students scoring within one standard error of measurement above and below the criterion. Students below the criterion became Gates students and were retained, while those above the criterion "just" missed becoming Gates and were promoted.

FINDINGS

Student Achievement

The fourth-grade reading-retained Gates students showed substantial gains in reading achievement during the Gates year (1982-83). After that year, the Gates students maintained their standing relative to the grade-comparison group through 1986-87. Reading achievement of the mathematics-retained Gates students showed a similar pattern, but at a consistently lower level of achievement. For both groups mathematics achievement showed consistent gains, with the mathematics-retained students, again, performing at levels lower than the reading-retained students. Extension-eligible students (those students failing to attain their grade criterion by April, 1983) in both groups showed, at best, minimal gains in both reading and mathematics.

In both the reading and mathematics age-comparison groups, reading achievement remained at a constant level in terms of N.C.E. scores although the reading-retained students performed at a higher level than the mathematics-retained group. In mathematics achievement, a similar pattern was observed with the mathematics-retained students scoring at a lower level than the reading-retained students.

Attainment of the Seventh-Grade Criterion

Almost 45 percent of the reading-retained Gates students later scored below the seventh-grade reading criterion compared to less than 25 percent of the reading grade-comparison group. Among the mathematics-retained Gates students, 55 percent were below the seventh-grade reading criterion compared to 46 percent of the mathematics grade-comparison group. Similar findings were obtained for the age-comparison groups.

Continued Progress in School

By the 1986-87 school year, approximately 50 percent of the fourth-grade reading-retained Gates students were still "on-grade." Among the Extension-eligible students in this group, less than 25 percent were still on grade although large numbers had been placed in special education classes. In the mathematics-retained group, only about 40 percent of the students were still on-grade and less than 10 percent of the Extension-eligible students were on-grade in 1986-87. A similar pattern of results was observed in the age-comparison groups.

Progress of the Seventh-Grade Students

Less than 5 percent of the seventh-grade Gates students, in either the reading- or mathematics-retained groups participated in either A.I./D.P. or D.P.P. in 1984-85 or 1985-86.

The large majority of seventh-grade Gates students, in either group, had no record of ever having taken either the Regents' Competency Test in mathematics or reading.

Status of Seventh-Grade Gates Students by 1986-87. By the end of the 1986-87 school year, approximately 40 percent of reading-retained and mathematics-retained students had dropped out of school, 18 percent had graduated, and less than 30 percent were still enrolled in school. Only 25 percent of the grade comparison students had dropped out of school by June, 1987 and over 55 percent were still enrolled in school.

In the seventh grade reading age-comparison group, 32 percent of the reading promoted students had graduated by June, 1987, compared to 24 percent of the reading retained students. Dropout rates for both groups were slightly more than 35 percent, and approximately one-fourth of each group was still enrolled in school. Similar results were obtained for the mathematics age-comparison group.

CONCLUSIONS

The initial gains in reading achievement were substantial; following the Gates year, however, students returned to a lower level of achievement and made only minimal gains thereafter. Extension-eligibles continued to perform at a level far below that of the students who attained the reading achievement criterion during the Gates year. Mathematics-retained students evidenced minimal gains in either reading or mathematics achievement over the succeeding years.

When the fourth-graders reached the seventh-grade Gate, approximately half of them failed to attain the reading criterion. A larger percentage of the mathematics-retained students, compared to the reading-retained students, failed to attain the seventh-grade reading criterion.

Among the students most at-risk for failing to complete high school are the Gates students. The seventh-grade Gates students, identified in 1982-83 as the lowest achieving students in their grade, were not found in subsequent years to be participating in the A.I./D.P. program in any significant numbers. Further, large percentages of students had never taken the mathematics or reading R.C.T., indicating a lack of progress toward completing high school. By the 1986-87 school year, approximately 40 percent of the seventh-grade Gates population had dropped out of school compared to 25 percent of the grade-comparison students.

These results indicate that the majority of the Gates students made significant gains during the Gates year, particularly in reading achievement. The Promotional Policy, therefore, did produce initial increases in student achievement. Unfortunately, after the Gates year, students received few, if any, educational or social services to assist them in building on those gains and they failed to continue to make adequate progress. These findings indicate that the school system has not provided the educational and social services necessary to ensure that the Gates students complete their education on a timely basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these conclusions, O.E.A. makes the following recommendations:

- The Gates program should be continued with the Promotional Gate being retained at the end of grades four and seven.

- Following the Gates year, the progress of former Gates students should be continuously monitored so that further educational gains can be built on those made previously.

- For Gates students found to be having educational or social problems, appropriate services, including but not limited to A.I./D.P. and D.P.P., should be made readily available.

- When former Gates students reach high school every effort must be made to ensure that these students receive the skills necessary to pass the R.C.T. and graduate. For example, remedial reading classes could be combined with content area classes (e.g., social studies, science, mathematics, etc.) providing students with both reading skills and course credit that can be applied towards graduation.

- For students who are overage for grade, which would include the large majority of Gates students, ungraded classes should be created to allow these students to proceed towards high school graduation at their own pace.

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

On June 30, 1980, the Chancellor's Regulation A-501 established citywide "required performance standards" and established promotional "Gates" at grades four and seven. Promotion from these grades was based on appropriate grade-level performance on the citywide reading achievement test (the California Achievement Test). Grade-level performance was defined as a score on the citywide reading test of not more than one year below grade level in the fourth grade (i.e., a grade-equivalent score of 3.7 or higher) and not more than one and a half years below grade level in the seventh grade (i.e., a grade-equivalent score of 6.2 or higher).

Grades four and seven were selected as the promotional Gates based on a review of relevant educational literature. Grade four was viewed as a point at which the transition from reading readiness to reading comprehension is completed. Grade seven was selected to serve as a check point prior to entry into higher grades and high school.

The promotional criteria were first applied to fourth and seventh graders during the 1980-81 school year. Students in those grades failing to meet their promotional criteria were retained and became eligible for placement in promotional Gates classes. The Gates classes provided intensive instruction to the students, particularly in the areas of reading and mathematics.

BACKGROUND OF THE 1982-83 COHORT

In 1982-83, the promotional criteria were applied to the second cohort of students. In that year, however, fourth- and seventh-grade students were subject to promotional criteria based on their achievement on both the reading and mathematics tests administered in April, 1982. The promotional criteria for reading remained the same as in the previous year. The promotional criterion for mathematics was set at two years below grade level (i.e., a grade-equivalent score of 2.7 for fourth-graders and a grade-equivalent score of 5.7 for seventh-graders). Students failing to attain their grade criterion on either reading or mathematics or both were eligible for placement in Gates classes during the 1982-83 school year.

This report examines the subsequent progress of the 1982-83 Gates students over the next five years (i.e., through the end of the 1986-87 school year). Later performance on both reading and mathematics achievement tests are examined, as are the ability of these students to continue to be promoted. In addition, this report examines (for the seventh-graders, only) participation in the Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program (A.I./D.P.), maintenance of grade level, graduation rates, and dropout rates.

II. METHODOLOGY

CONSTRUCTION OF THE DATABASE

In order to evaluate the continued progress of the second cohort of Gates students, the Office of Educational Assessment (O.E.A.) obtained a copy of the original tape containing the records of the students eligible for the promotional Gates program in 1982-83. Using this tape as a base, matches were made to test score files and biographical data for succeeding years. Biographical data was obtained from the Biofile, which is maintained by the Office of Student Information Services (O.S.I.S.). The result was an historical record for each student in the 1982-83 Gates cohort.

For the fourth-grade students, the records contained annual reading and mathematics achievement-test scores, grade level and promotional data, and current status for each year through the 1986-87 school year. For the seventh-grade students, the records contained annual reading and mathematics achievement test scores only through the 1983-84 school year. In addition to the promotional data, current status, and grade level information for the seventh-graders, O.E.A. included data on performance of the Gates students on the Regents' Competency Test (R.C.T.) and participation in A.I./D.P.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANALYTIC COHORTS

Since eligibility for the Gates program was based on not attaining criterion in both reading and mathematics, students could be retained on the basis of either test score. A reading-

eligible cohort and a mathematics-eligible cohort were constructed for each grade. Further, since students are given multiple opportunities to attain their grade criterion, students can pass out of the Gates program at different times. This fact of the program's implementation resulted in a set of four groups within each cohort: August passers (i.e., students attaining their criterion in August, 1982); January passers (i.e., students attaining their grade criterion in January, 1983); April passers (i.e., students attaining their grade criterion in April, 1983); and Extension-eligible students (i.e., students failing to attain their grade criterion by April, 1983). The results of the reconstruction of the analytic cohorts for each grade are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Accounting of 1982-83 Gates Students

	Grade Four		Grade Seven	
Students Passing in:	Reading-Eligible	Mathematics-Eligible	Reading-Eligible	Mathematics-Eligible
August, 1982	1,710	206	2,974	2,910
January, 1983	307	39	810	1,421
April, 1983	2,951	342	2,742	2,300
Extension-Eligible	1,253	22	2,365	2,396
Total	6,221	609	8,891	9,027

CONSTRUCTION OF COMPARISON GROUPS

The performance of the Gates cohorts was compared to a "grade-comparison group." This comparison group consisted of students in the fourth and seventh grades for the first time in 1982-83 who scored within one standard error of measurement above the promotional criterion on the reading achievement test in April, 1983. A similar grade-comparison group was constructed using scores on the April, 1983 mathematics achievement test. (See Table 2.) Once students in the grade-comparison groups were identified, matches were made to test-score files and biographical data for each succeeding year through 1986-87. For the seventh-grade comparison group, matches were made to the R.C.T. and A.I./D.P. databases.

TABLE 2

Grade-Comparison Groups for the
1982-83 Gates Follow-Up Study

Comparison Group	Grade Four	Grade Seven
Reading	13,597	10,322
Mathematics	6,830	21,061

A second comparison group was constructed which contained fourth- and seventh-grade students in their grades for the first time in 1981-82 who scored within one standard error of measurement above the promotional criterion in April, 1982. (See Table 3.) Students just above their grade criterion did not become Gates students in 1982-83 because they had met the promotional

criterion for their grade. Students just below their criterion did not meet their grade criterion and became Gates holdover in 1982-83. Since the scores of the age-comparison group and most of the full-year Gates holdovers were within one standard error of measurement of the criterion, their scores are statistically equivalent.

TABLE 3

Age-Comparison Groups for the
1982-83 Gates Follow-Up Study

Comparison Group	Grade Four	Grade Seven
Reading:		
Promoted	6,359	7,466
Retained (Gates)	4,632	5,294
Total	10,991	12,760
Mathematics:		
Promoted	563	5,278
Retained (Gates)	340	3,779
Total	907	9,057

Analyses of this "age-comparison group" were used to provide comparative data on equivalent students who did not become Gates holdovers. As with the grade-comparison groups, separate age-comparison groups were constructed based on reading and on mathematics achievement.

PLAN OF THIS REPORT

Chapter III of this report presents the findings obtained by O.E.A. in its analyses of the subsequent performance and

progress of the Gates cohorts and both the grade- and age-comparison groups. The first section of Chapter III presents the subsequent achievement of the fourth-grade cohorts and comparison groups in both reading and mathematics. This section is followed by an examination of the criterion attainment of the 1982-83 fourth-grade cohorts when they later reached the seventh-grade Gate. The second section of Chapter III examines the ability of the fourth-grade students to maintain their progress on grade level through 1986-87. Next, the progress of the seventh-grade students is examined. Specifically, O.E.A. examined participation in A.I./D.P., retention rates, performance on the R.C.T., placement in special education classes, graduation rates, and dropout rates. Finally, Chapter IV provides conclusions and recommendations based on the results presented.

III. FINDINGS

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Reading and mathematics achievement were examined for both of the fourth-grade Gates cohorts (i.e., students retained for reading and students retained for mathematics). Student achievement was not analyzed for the seventh-grade cohorts because of the small number of students for whom reading or mathematics scores are posted after the 1983-84 school year.

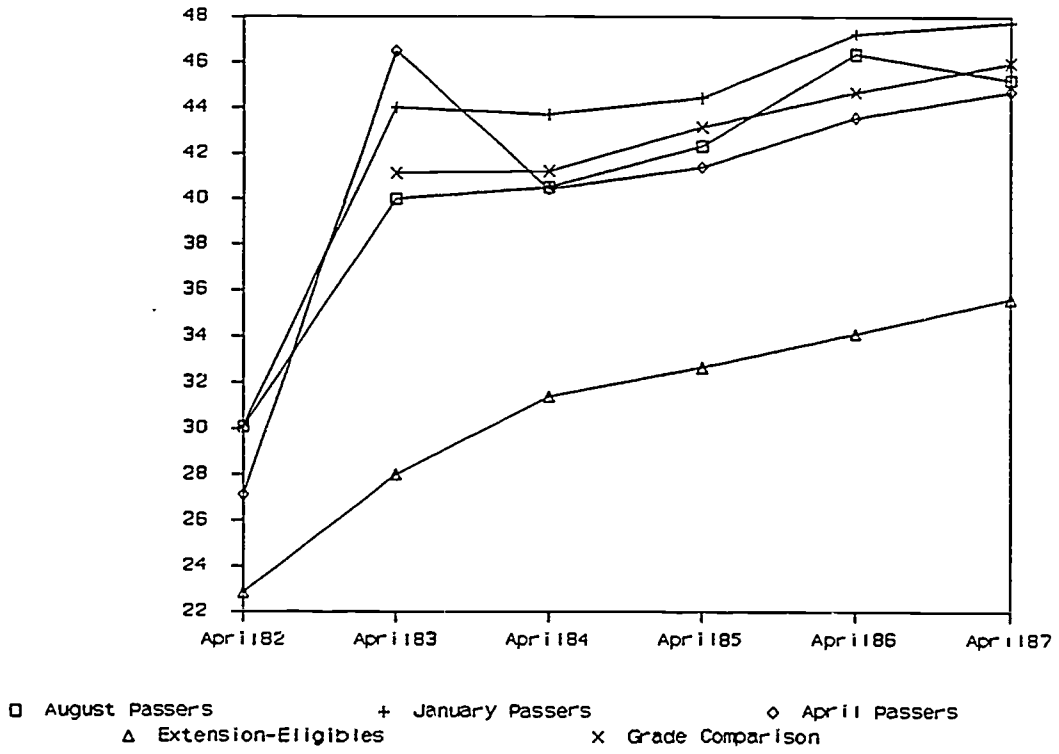
Achievement of Reading-Retained Fourth-Grade Gates Students

The reading achievement of the reading-retained fourth-grade Gates students, from April, 1982 through April, 1987, is found in Figure 1. These results are presented in normal curve equivalents (N.C.E.'s) because of the change in the reading achievement test in April, 1986 from the CAT to the Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.). Figure 1 demonstrates that all of the Gates cohorts except the Extension-eligibles showed large gains in reading achievement from April, 1982 to April, 1983 with the April passers showing the largest gains.

The comparative success of April promotees in part may be a result of taking the fourth-grade level of the posttest, whereas August and January passers took the fifth-grade level in April, 1983. After the Gates year, the reading achievement of the April passers decreased by approximately six N.C.E.'s (when they took the fifth-grade level in April, 1984) and continued at approximately this level through April, 1987. These results indicate that the April promotees as well as August and January

Figure 1

Reading Achievement of Fourth-Grade Reading-Retained Gates Students from April, 1982 through April, 1987



passers are maintaining their standing relative to the other students in their grade; in particular to their grade peers in the grade-comparison group.

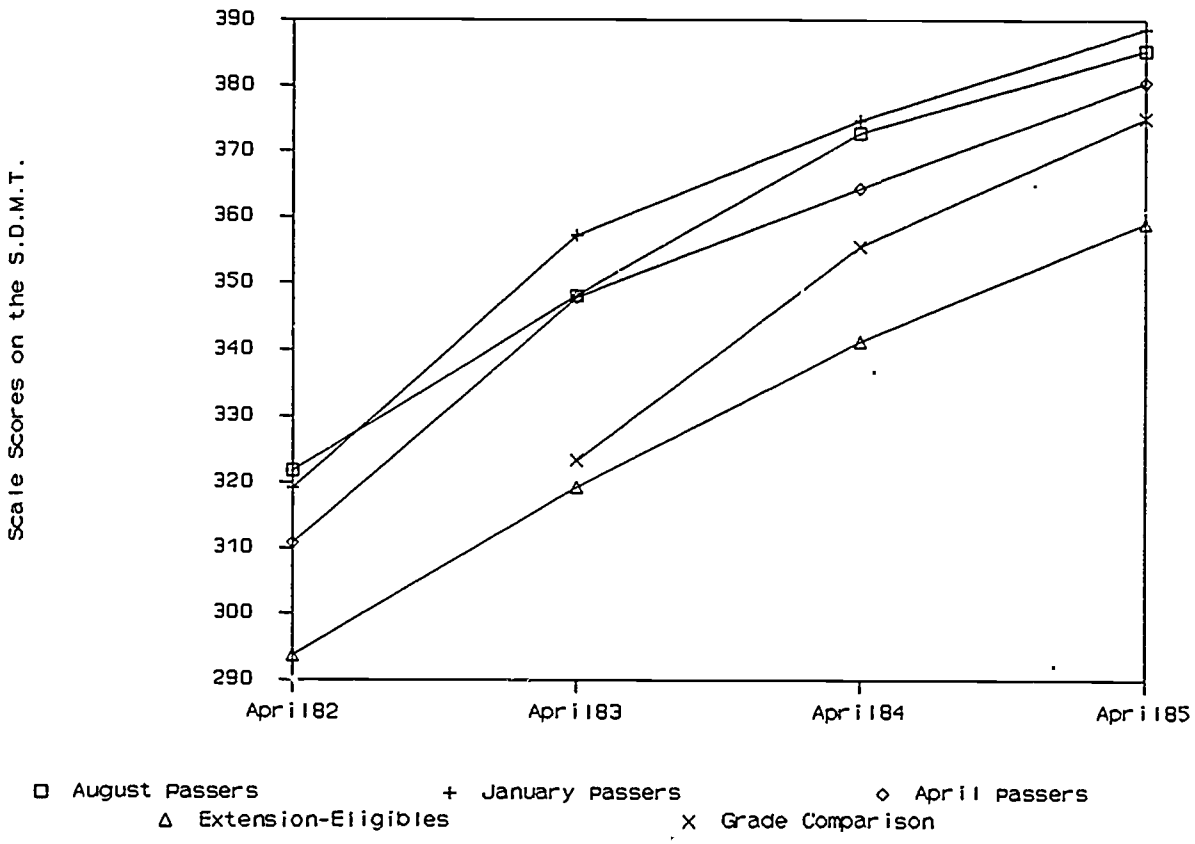
Reading achievement of the Extension-eligibles shows, at best, only modest gains. Their reading achievement starts five N.C.E.'s lower than the April passers and, by April, 1987, is 10 N.C.E.'s lower. Thus, although the Extension-eligibles showed some gains over the six years, the gap in reading achievement

between them and their grade peers widened.

The mathematics achievement of the reading-retained Gates

Figure 2

Mathematics Achievement of Fourth-Grade Reading-Retained Gates Students from April, 1982 through April, 1985



students is found in Figure 2. As these results indicate, all groups of students show an appropriate increase in achievement (as measured by scale scores) through April, 1985. All Gates groups except the Extension-eligibles consistently had higher mathematics scores than did their grade peers in the grade-comparison group. The Extension-eligible students, continued to

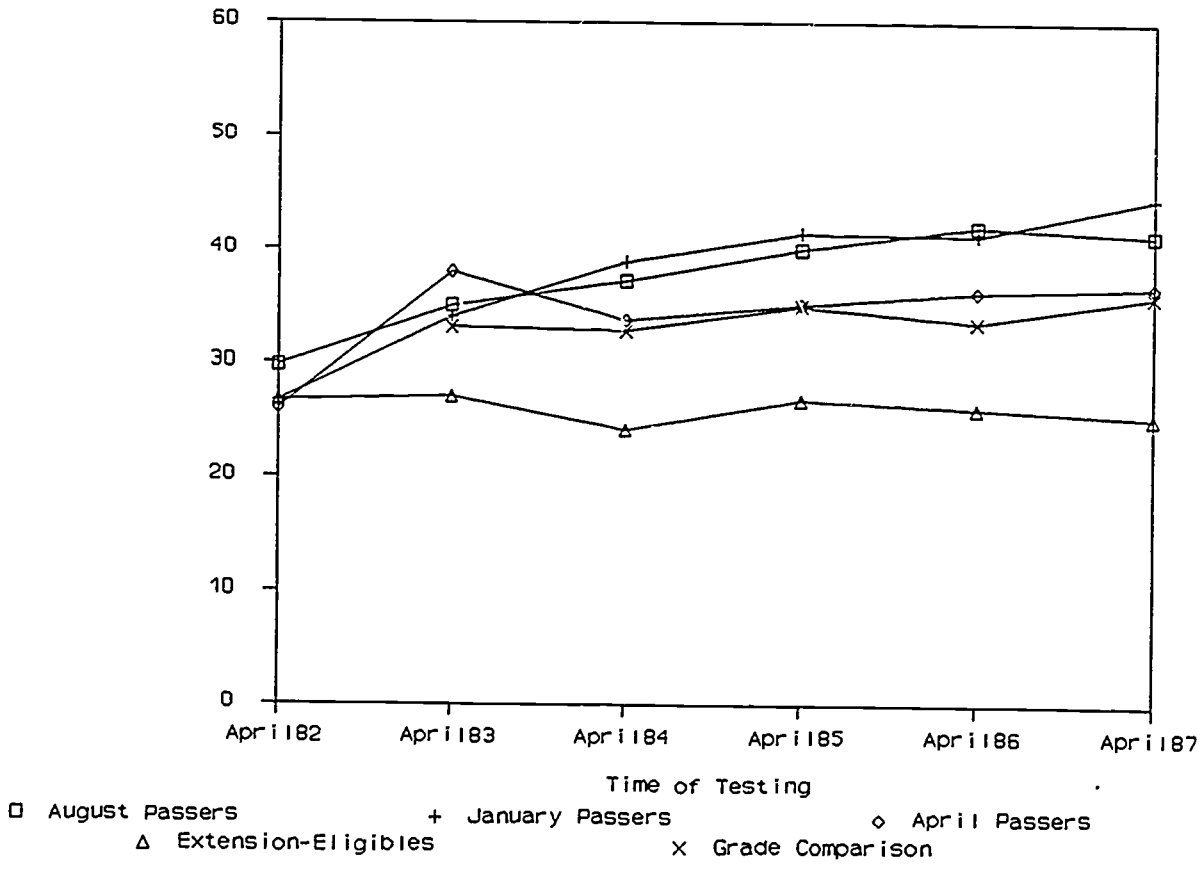
perform at a level approximately 25 scale score points lower than students who had attained their reading criterion by April, 1983.

Achievement of Mathematics-Retained Fourth-Grade Gates Students

In a separate set of analyses, both the reading and mathematics achievement of the mathematics-retained Gates students were examined. The reading achievement of the students in all

Figure 3

Reading Achievement of Fourth-Grade Mathematics-Retained Gates Students from April, 1982 through April, 1987

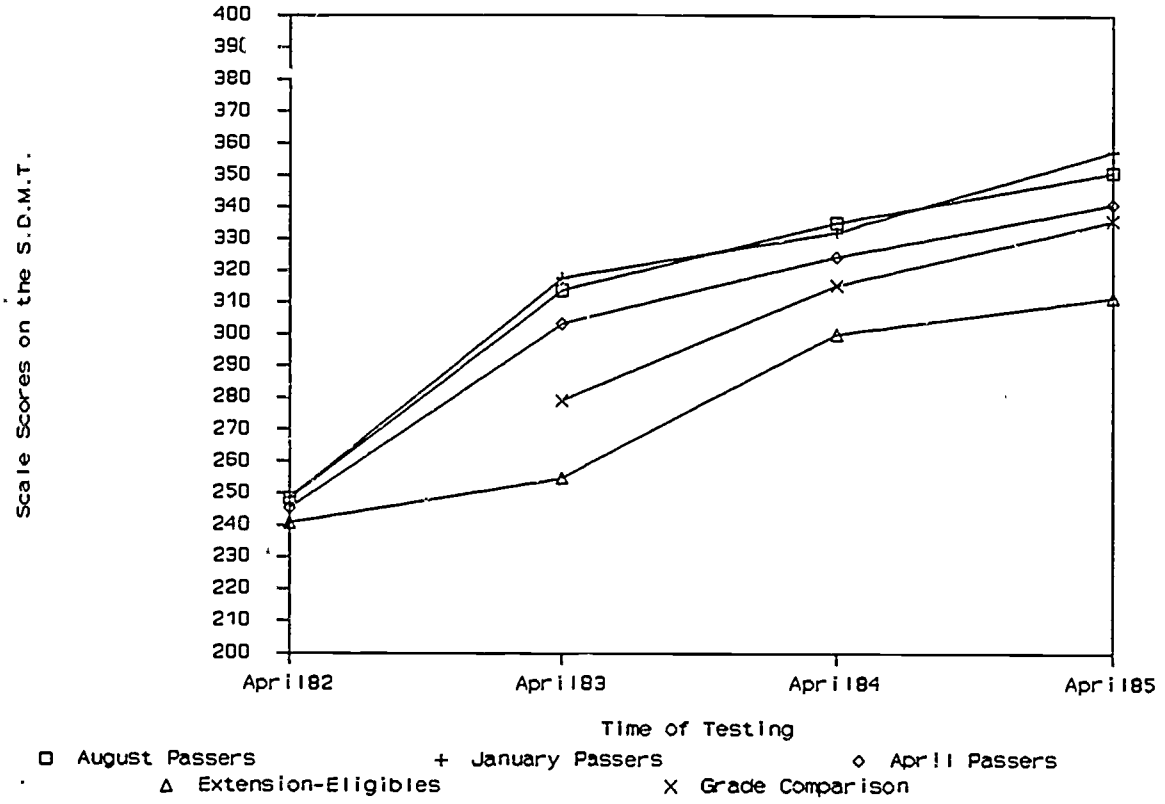


but the Extension-eligible Gates cohorts showed maintenance and even growth in N.C.E. scores between April, 1982 and April, 1987. (See Figure 3.) Similarly, the reading achievement of the grade-comparison group remained stable. While all of the students in this analysis were maintaining their position relative to other students in their grade, it is at a level seven to 10 N.C.E.'s below the scores of the reading-retained students. (See Figure 1.) By April, 1987, the Extension-eligible students, had shown a slight decrease in reading achievement, even though their initial level of reading achievement was the same as the other groups. (See Figure 3.)

The mathematics achievement of these Gates students is presented in Figure 4. As these results indicate, students attaining the mathematics criterion by April, 1983 showed reasonable initial gains followed later by minimal gains. Their scores continued to be slightly higher than those of the comparison group. Students failing to attain the mathematics criterion by April, 1983, while demonstrating gains in mathematics achievement, continued to perform between 30 and 40 scale score points lower than the other students in their cohort or the grade-comparison group.

Figure 4

Mathematics Achievement of Fourth-Grade Mathematics-Retained Gates Students from April, 1982 through April, 1985

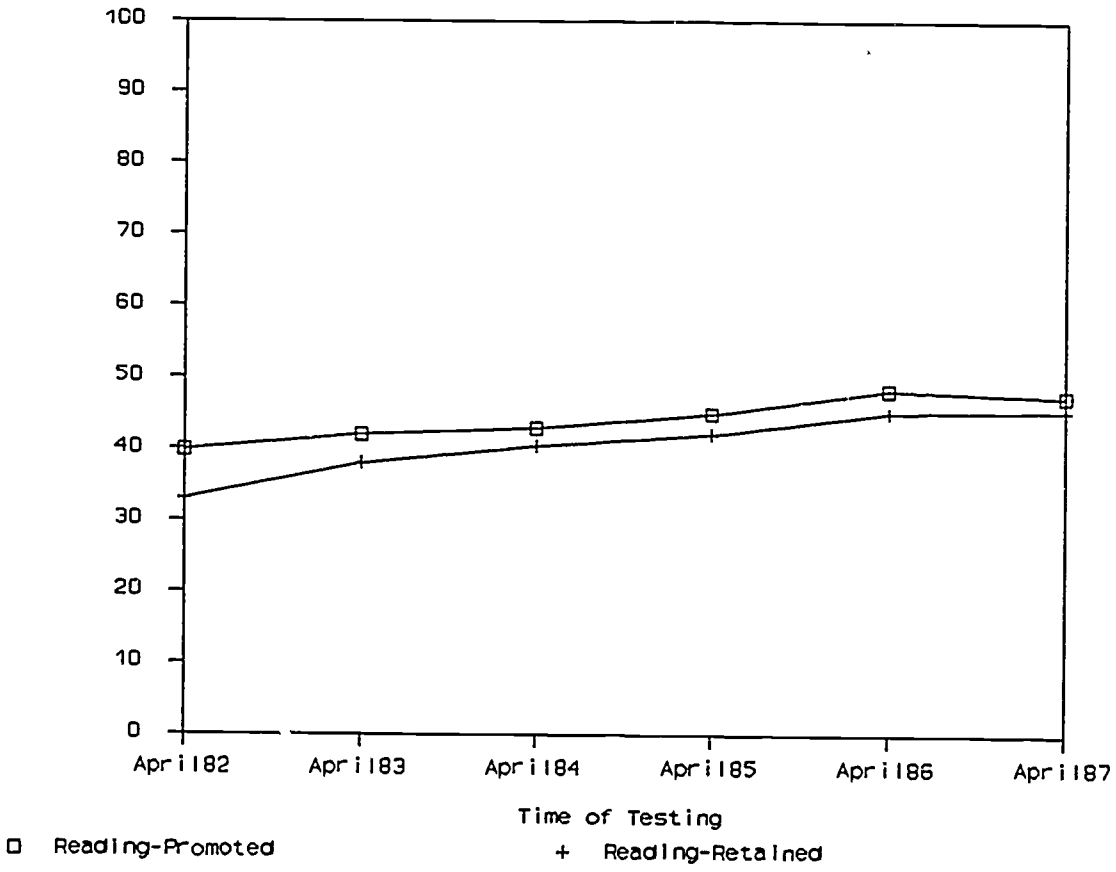


Achievement of Age-Comparison Groups

Achievement of the reading age-comparison group (i.e., students within one standard error of measurement of the April, 1982 fourth-grade reading criterion) was examined next. As

Figure 5

Reading Achievement of Fourth-Grade Reading Age-Comparison Groups, April, 1982 through April, 1987

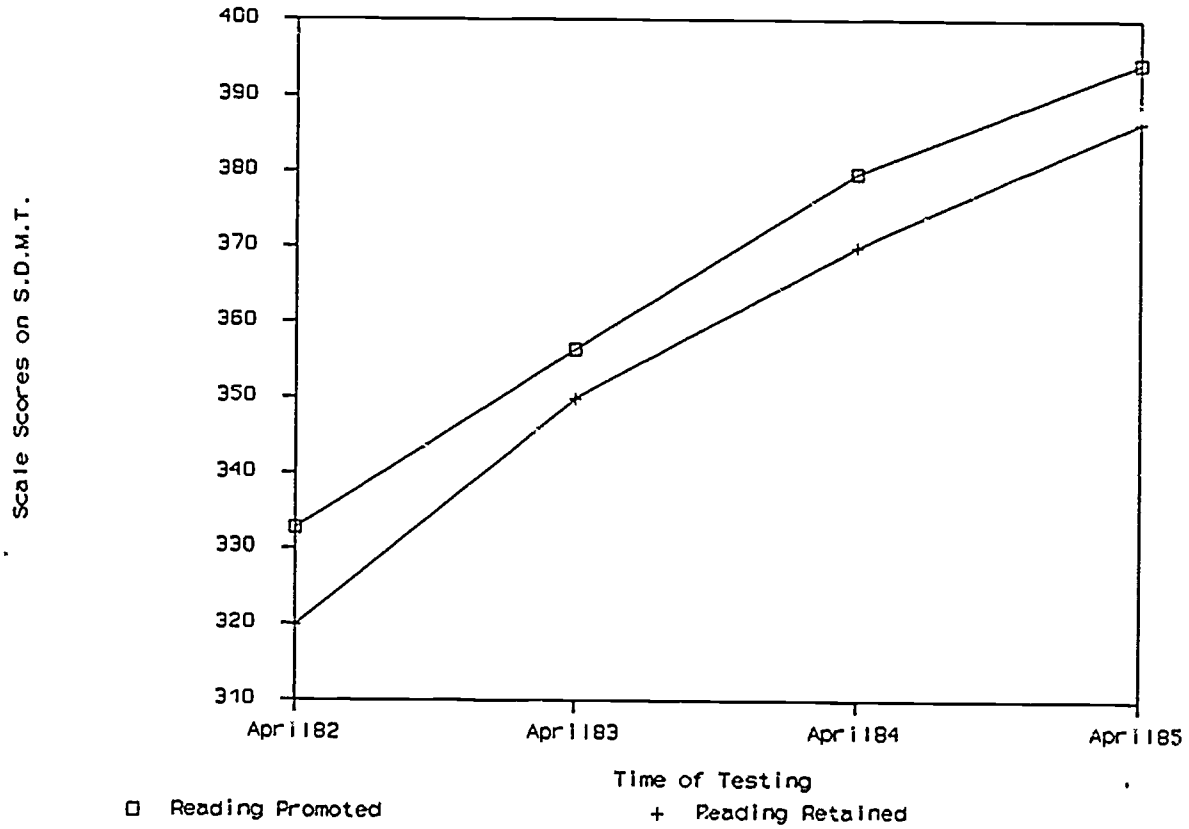


shown in Figure 5, the reading achievement of both groups of students (i.e., those just attaining their grade criterion in April, 1982 and those just failing to attain their criterion) remained constant through April, 1987. Further, the differences between these two groups was less than five N.C.E.'s, indicating that both groups of students were maintaining their position relative to their grade population.

Figure 6 shows the mathematics achievement of the two

Figure 6

Mathematics Achievement of Fourth-Grade Reading Age-Comparison Groups from April, 1982 through April, 1985

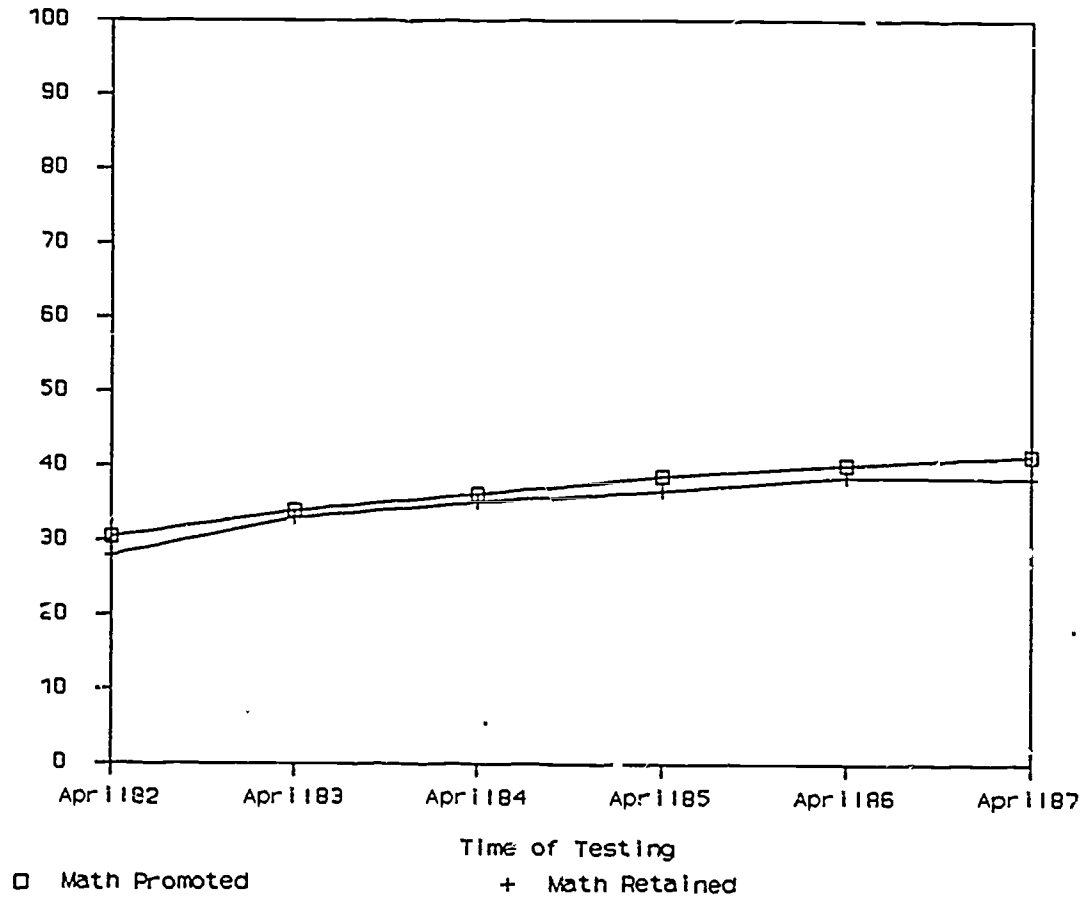


groups of students. The results showed somewhat less than appropriate scale-score gains and, again, the difference between the groups was minimal (i.e., less than 10 scale-score points).

Figure 7 presents the reading achievement of the mathematics age-comparison groups (i.e., students scoring within one standard error of measurement of the April, 1982 fourth-grade mathematics criterion). The difference in reading achievement

Figure 7

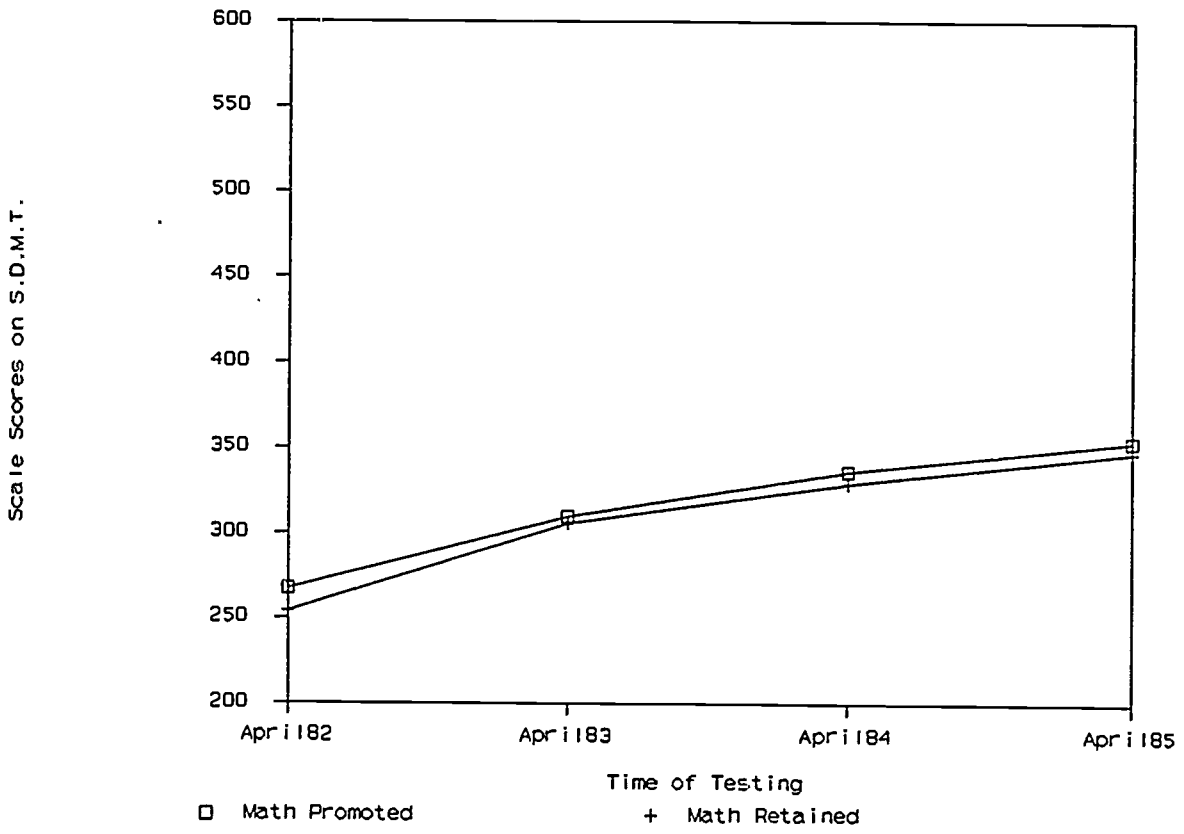
Reading Achievemert of Fourth-Grade Mathematics Age-Comparison Groups from April, 1982 through April, 1987



between the students just attaining their criterion in April, 1982 and students just failing to attain their criterion was less than five N.C.E.'s. Further, both groups of students somewhat improved their standing in reading achievement through April, 1987. The mathematics achievement of these two student groups, presented in Figure 8, shows a pattern of minimal scale-score gains and minimal differences through April, 1985. In addition, these students have lower mathematics scores than those of the reading age-comparison group. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 8

Mathematics Achievement of Fourth-Grade Mathematics Age-Comparison Groups from April, 1982 through April, 1985



CRITERION ATTAINMENT AT THE SEVENTH-GRADE GATE

One of the primary goals of the Promotional Policy Program is to provide students with remedial instruction so that they can continue successfully in school. In addition to scores on reading and mathematics achievement tests, O.E.A. examined the percent of fourth-grade Gates students attaining the seventh-grade reading criterion when they first reached seventh grade. After the 1982-83 school year, the mathematics criterion was discontinued. Promotion, therefore, was based only on attainment of the reading criterion. Since the Gates students can be promoted at various times during the school year, and through various paths after the Gates year, Gates students could first reach the seventh-grade Gate in either April, 1985, or April, 1986, or April, 1987.

Figure 9 presents, by cohort, the percent of fourth-grade Gates students failing to attain the seventh-grade reading criterion, in the year in which they first reached the seventh-grade gate. Over 40 percent of all the reading-retained Gates students (including the Extension-eligibles) and more than half of all the mathematics-retained Gates students failed to attain the seventh-grade reading criterion at the end of their first year in seventh grade. Approximately one-fourth of the reading grade-comparison group and less than half of the mathematics grade-comparison group failed to attain the seventh-grade reading criterion.

Figure 9

Percent of Fourth-Grade Gates Students
Below the Seventh-Grade Reading Criterion

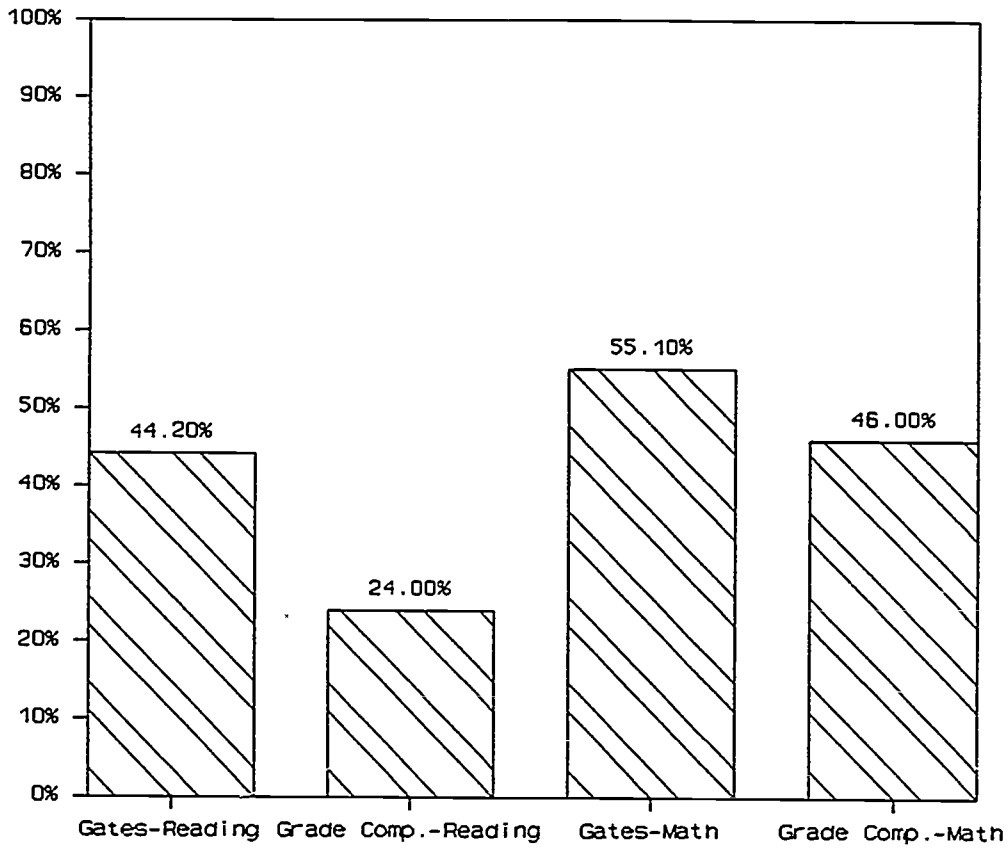
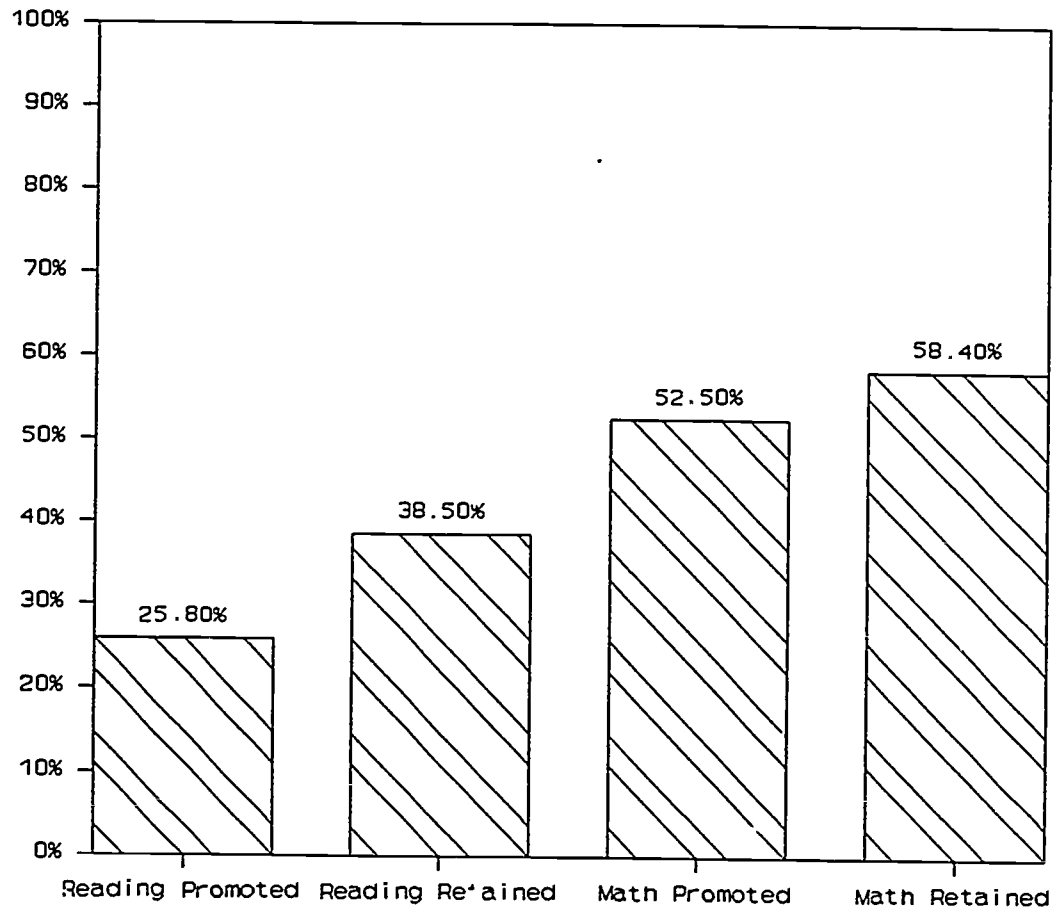


Figure 10 presents the seventh-grade criterion-attainment results for the reading and mathematics age-comparison groups. As the results indicate, one-quarter of the non-Gates students who attained the fourth-grade reading criterion and were promoted in 1982-83 failed to attain the seventh-grade criterion, compared to almost 40 percent of the Gates students (who had failed to attain the fourth-grade reading criterion in 1982-83 and were retained). In both of the mathematics age-comparison

groups, however, over half of the students failed to attain their seventh-grade reading criterion.

Figure 10

Percent of Fourth-Grade Age-Comparison Groups Below the Seventh-Grade Reading Criterion



CONTINUED PROGRESS IN SCHOOL

Progress of the Fourth-Grade Gates Students

One of the goals of the Gates program was to provide students with the skills necessary to successfully complete school. While attainment of the seventh-grade Gate was one measure of subsequent success, maintenance of grade level was another. Since maintenance of grade level is an on-going measure, O.E.A. examined the percent of students still on-grade by 1986-87.

Because of the various promotion patterns permitted during the Gates year and the wide range of patterns observed after the Gates year, O.E.A. determined that "on-grade" in 1986-87 constituted being in the ninth grade if the student was in sixth grade in 1983-84 or in the eighth grade if the student was in fifth grade in 1983-84. Students placed in special education classes were not considered on-grade.

As shown in Figure 11, approximately half of the Gates students who attained their reading criterion by April, 1983 still were on-grade in 1986-87; less than a fourth of the Extension-eligible, however, were still on-grade in 1986-87. Slightly less than 40 percent of the grade-comparison group students were on-grade by 1986-87. This pattern of results was also observed for the mathematics-retained Gates students and grade-comparison group, although the percentages were substantially lower than those observed for the reading-retained students. (See Figure 12.)

Figure 11

Percent of Fourth-Grade Reading-Retained Gates Students Who Were on Grade in 1986-87

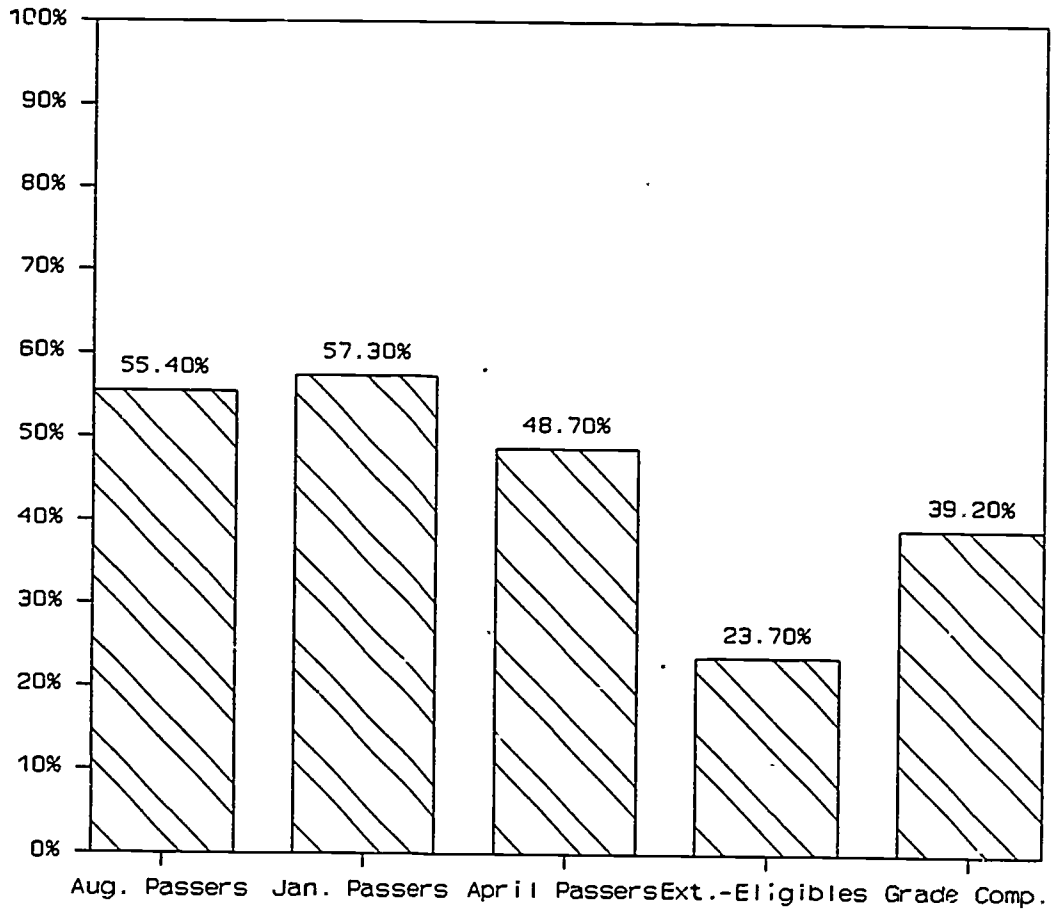
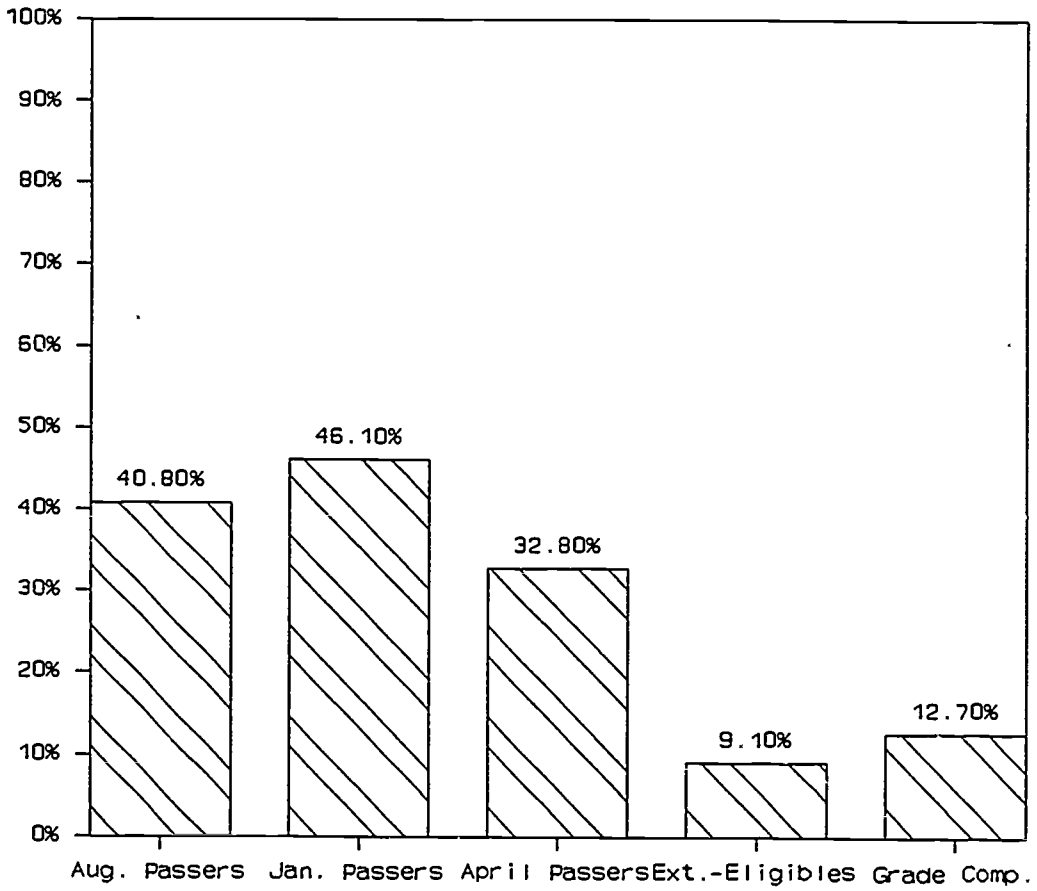


Figure 12

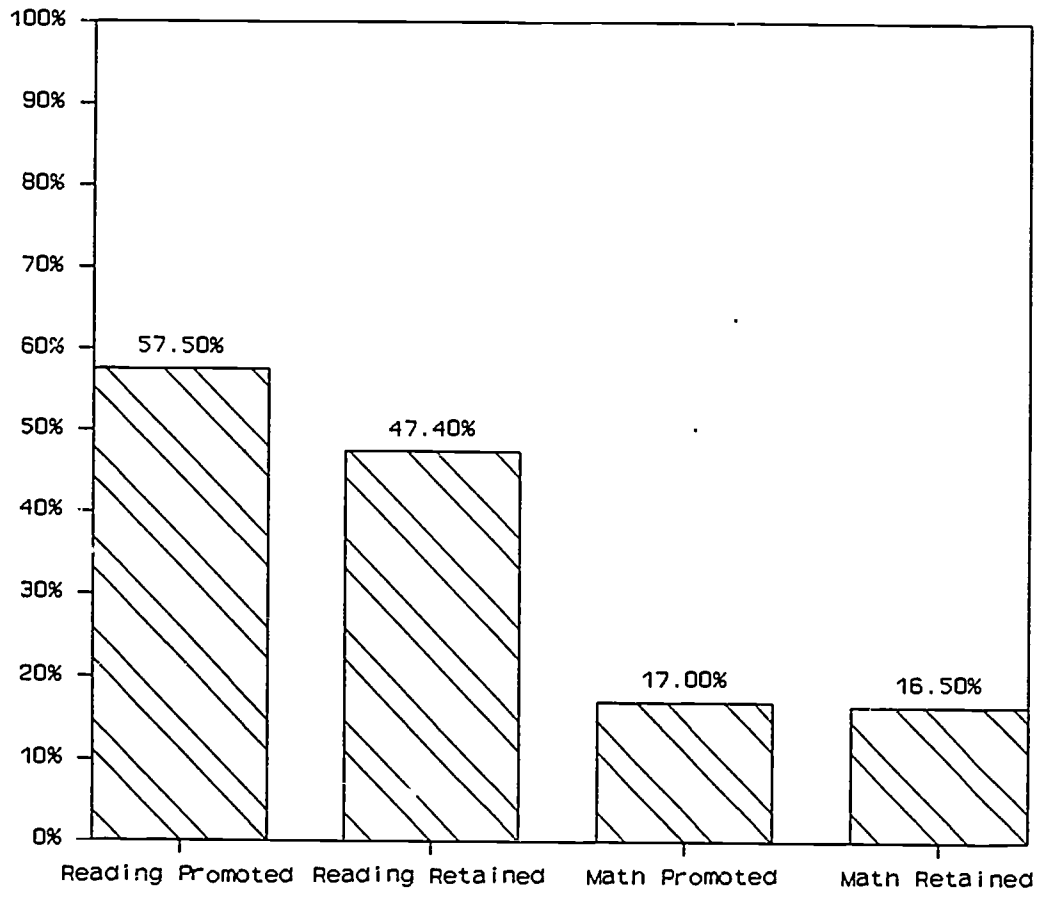
Percent of Fourth-Grade Mathematics-Retained Gates Students on Grade in 1986-87



In the age-comparison cohorts, about half of the reading age-comparison students in both groups were still on-grade in 1986-87. (See Figure 13.) In both of the mathematics age-

Figure 13

Percent of Fourth-Grade Age-Comparison Students Who Were on Grade in 1986-87



comparison groups, however, less than 20 percent of the students, regardless of whether they passed or failed the mathematics criterion, were still on-grade by 1986-87.

Progress of the Seventh-Grade Gates Students

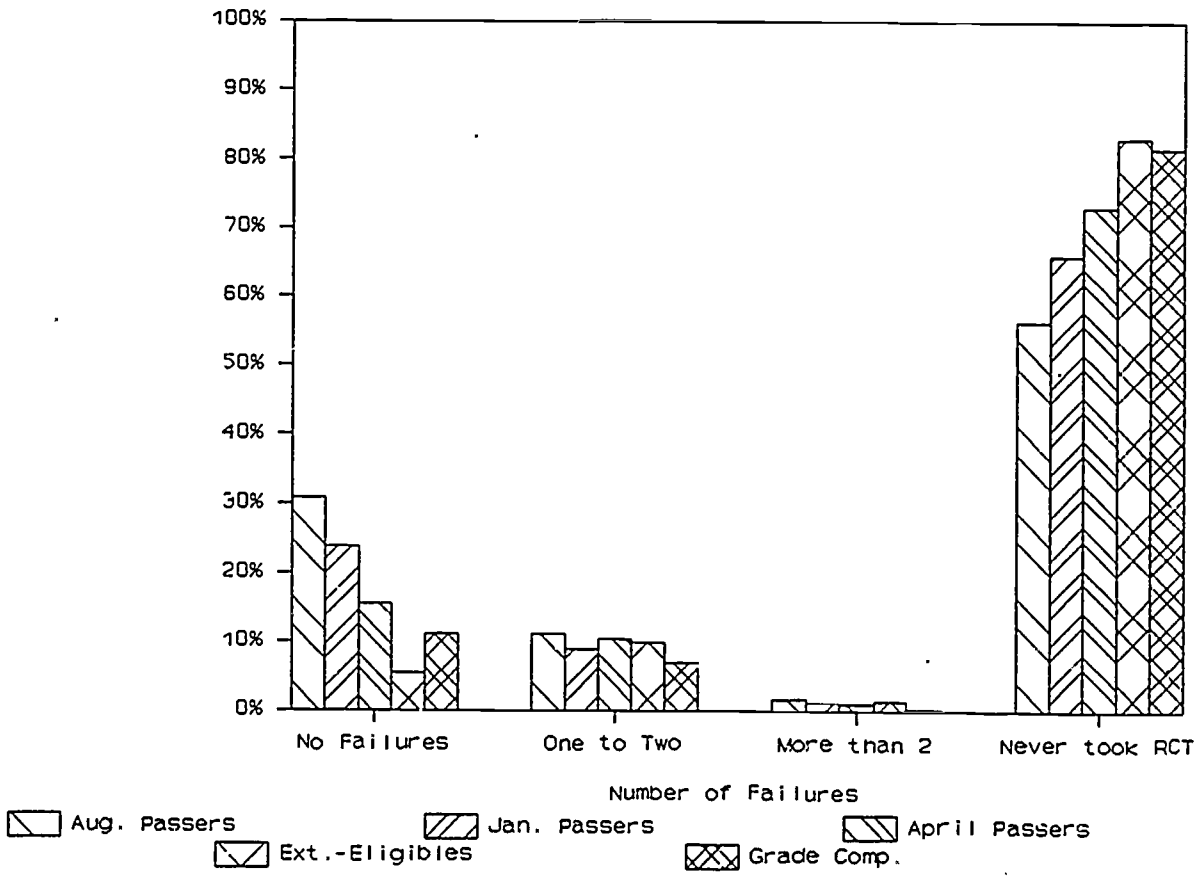
Participation in A.I./D.P. The A.I./D.P. program was designed to identify students with poor attendance and poor school performance, who were considered to be at risk for dropping out. Students in the A.I./D.P. program were provided with a wide range of services including attendance improvement, health, guidance, social services, and remedial instruction. By working with these students, it was expected that their attendance and performance in school would improve and the likelihood of their dropping out would be decreased.

Of the 8,918 students identified as seventh-grade reading-retained Gates students in 1982-83, only 1.9 percent were found to be participating in the A.I./D.P. program in 1984-85 and only 5.1 percent were found in either the A.I./D.P. or D.P.P. program in 1985-86. Among the 9,060 students identified as seventh-grade mathematics-retained Gates students in 1982-83, only 1.7 percent were participants in the A.I./D.P. program in 1984-85 and only 5.6 percent were participants in either A.I./D.P. or D.P.P. in 1985-86. In the seventh-grade reading grade-comparison group, 11 percent of the students were found as participants in the A.I./D.P. program in 1984-85 and 4.4 percent were found as participants in either A.I./D.P. or D.P.P. in 1985-86. For the seventh-grade mathematics grade-comparison group, the results were 11.9 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively.

Performance on the Regents' Competency Test. In order to receive a high school diploma, all students in New York State

Figure 14

Percent of Seventh-Grade Reading-Retained Gates and Grade-Comparison Students Passing the R.C.T. Reading Examination by June, 1987

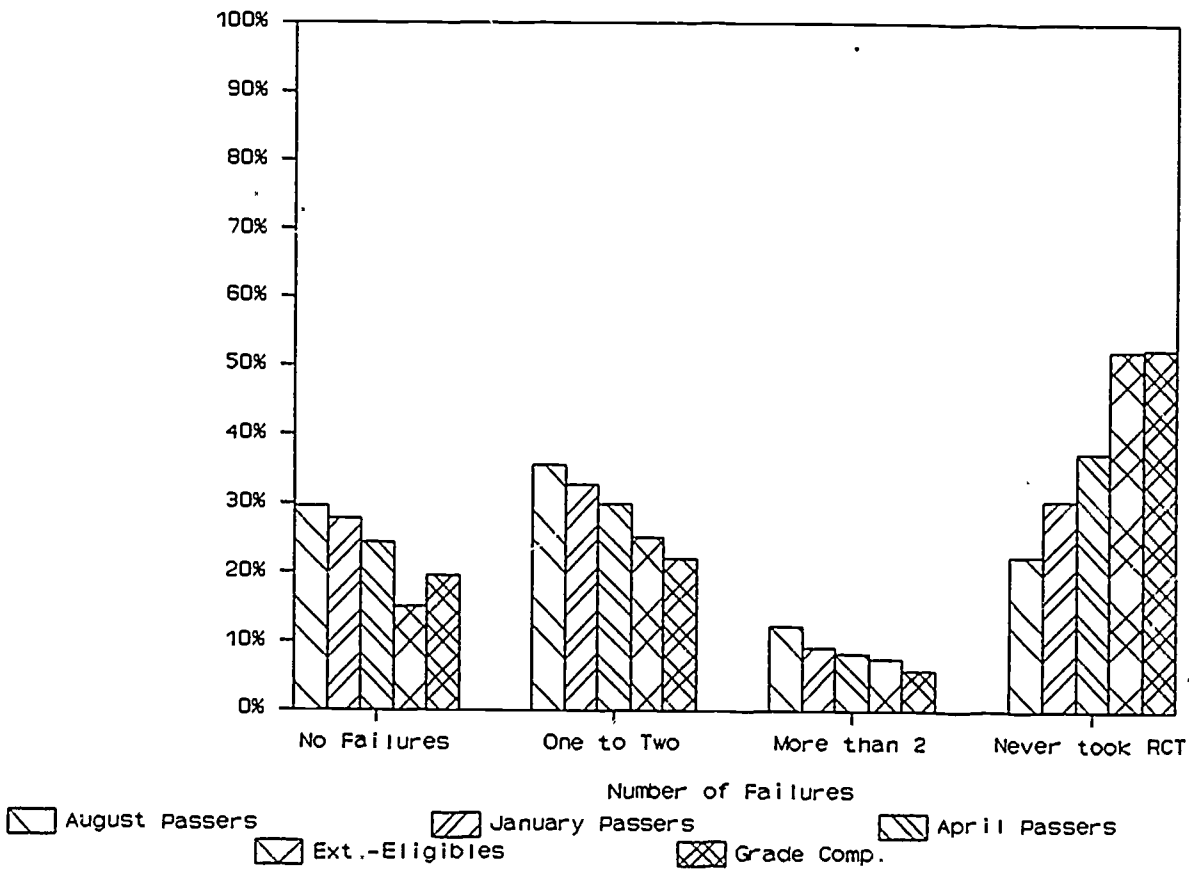


must pass the Regents' Competency Test (R.C.T.) in reading and mathematics. The R.C.T. mathematics test is generally taken in the ninth grade, while the R.C.T. reading test is generally taken in the eleventh grade. High school students may take the R.C.T. as many times as necessary, until a passing score is obtained. Passing scores on both tests are determined by the New York State Board of Regents. Figures 14 and 15 present the findings regarding the number of times seventh-grade reading-

retained Gates students took the reading and mathematics R.C.T.s before passing. For both tests, less than 30 percent of the students had no failures on the R.C.T. Varying percentages of students, by groups, had one or more failures. The large majority of students, however, whether in Gates or the grade-comparison group, had no record of having taken either the reading or mathematics R.C.T. by June, 1987.

Figure 15

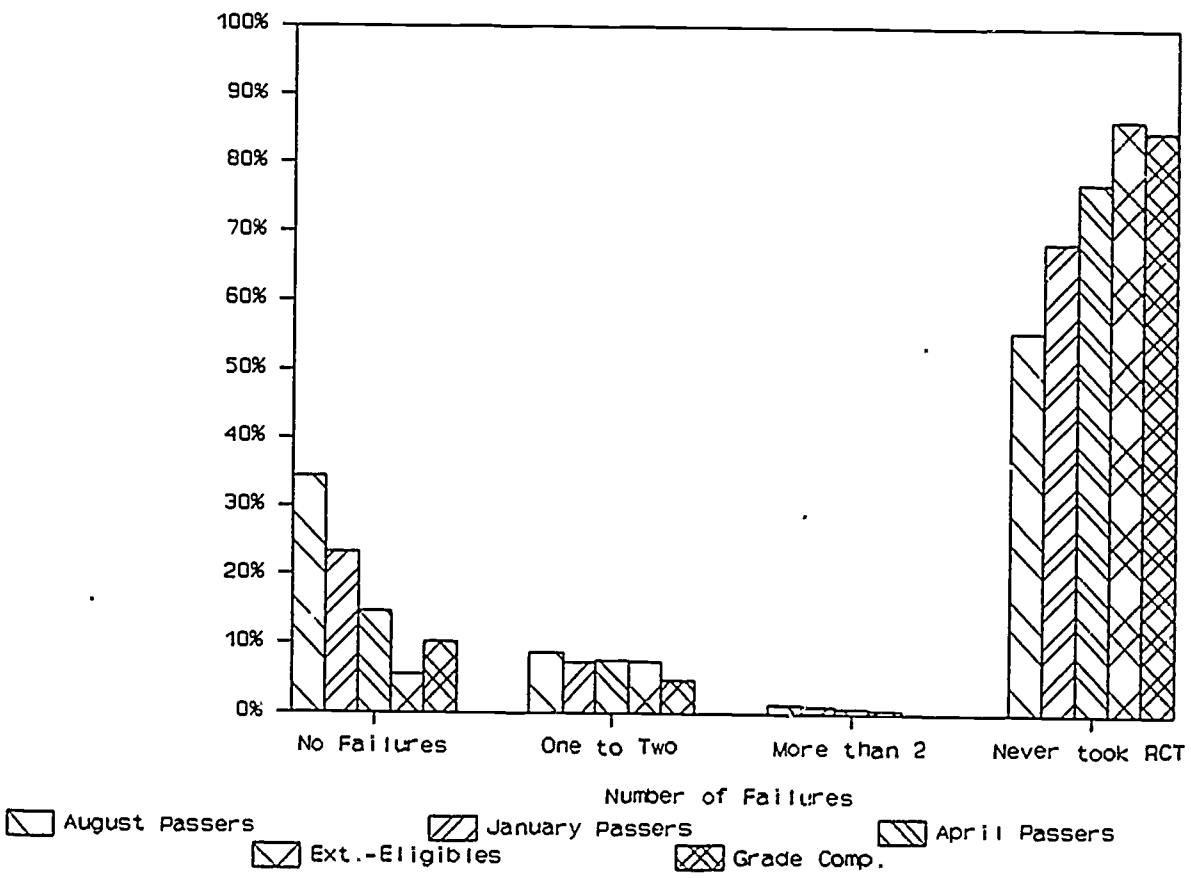
Percent of Seventh-Grade Reading-Retained Gates and Grade-Comparison Students Students Passing the R.C.T. Examination by June, 1987



Similarly, among the seventh-grade mathematics-retained Gates students and grade-comparison group the majority of students had no record of having taken either R.C.T. by June, 1987. (See Figures 16 and 17.) For the reading R.C.T., over

Figure 16

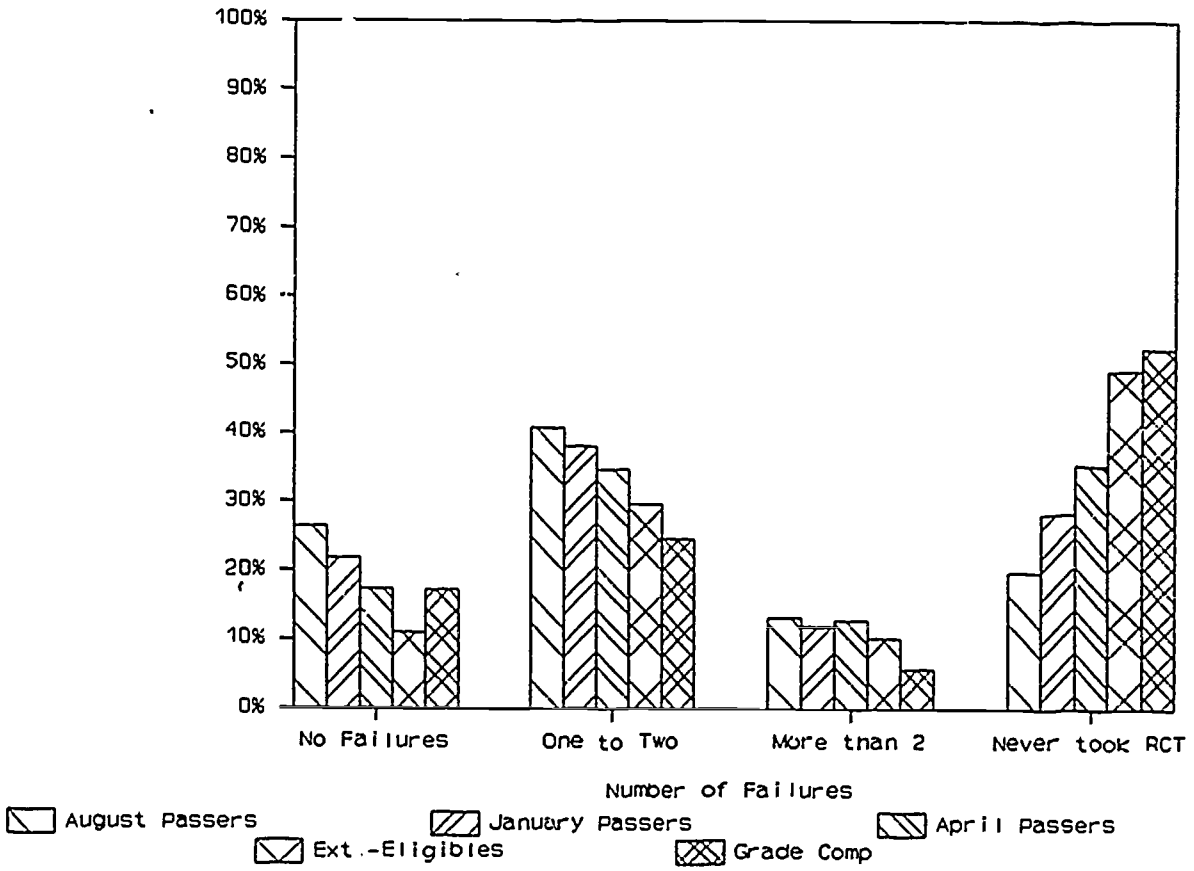
Percent of Seventh-Grade Mathematics-Retained Gates and Grade-Comparison Students Passing the R.C.T. Reading Examination by June, 1987



60 percent of the total cohort (and almost 90 percent of the Extension-eligible and grade-comparison groups) had never taken that test.

Figure 17

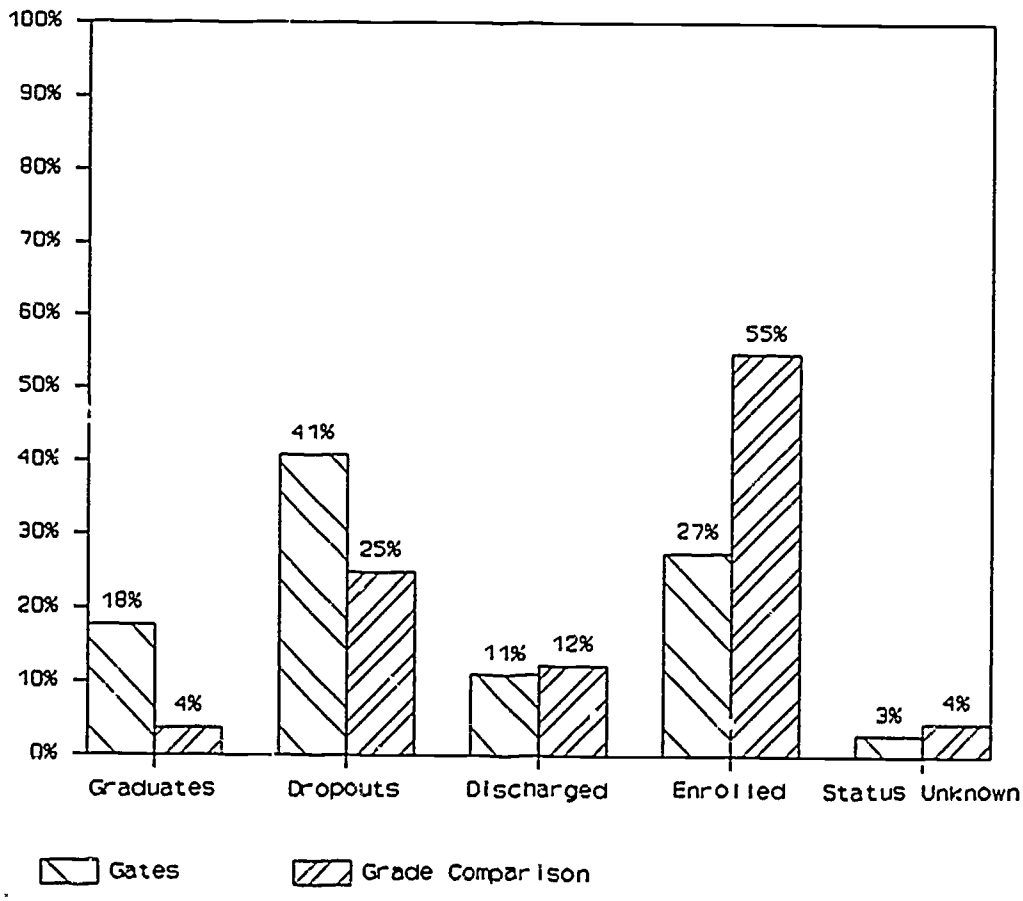
Percent of Seventh-Grade Mathematics-Retained Gates and Grade-Comparison Stduents Passing the R.C.T. Mathematics Examination by June, 1987



Status of Seventh-Grade Gates Students by 1986-87. By the end of the 1986-87 school year, students who had been in the 1982-83 Gates program should have been either completing the

Figure 18

Status of Seventh-Grade ... ing-Retained (Gates) and Grade-Comparison Students by October, 1987



eleventh grade or graduating from high school. Other possible outcomes for these students included discharge from the school system, dropping out, or graduating from high school prior to June, 1987. Figure 18 presents the status of all 1982-83

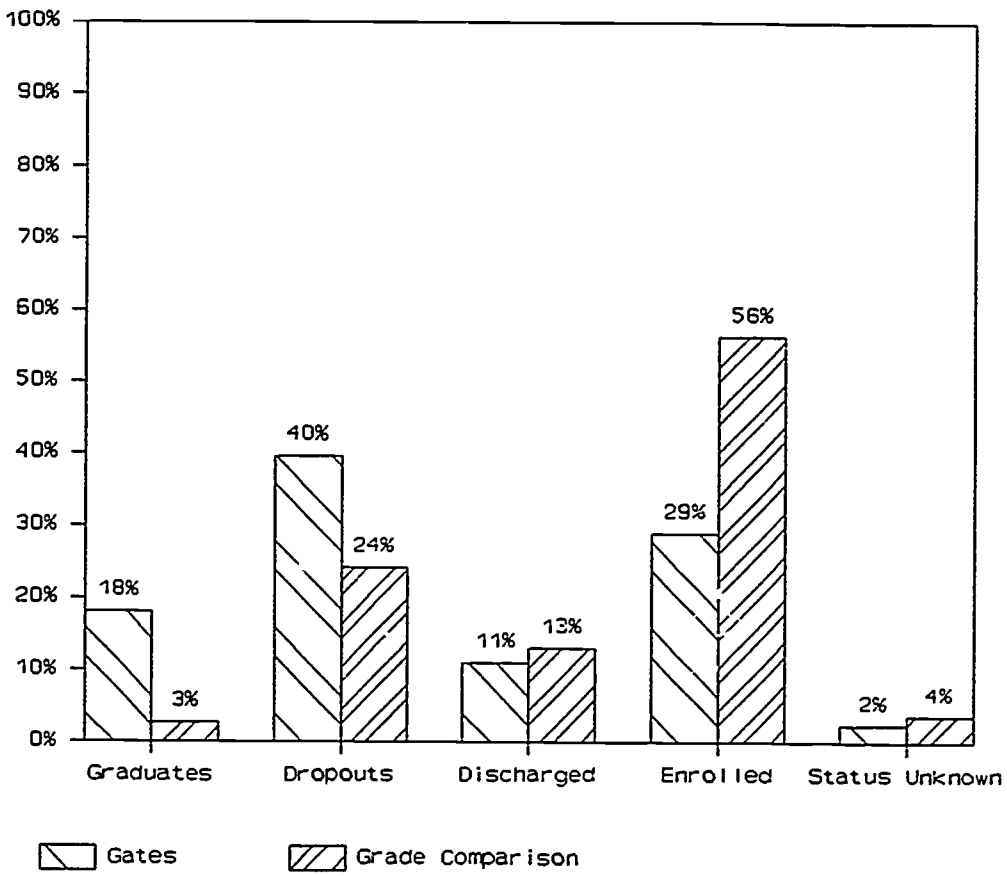
seventh-grade, reading-retained Gates and the reading grade comparison students by October, 1987. October, 1987 was used as the cutoff date because the Biofile includes all graduates from June, 1987 and updates from the Discharge Verification Report (D.V.R.) The D.V.R. is used by the high schools to finalize the status of students who have been discharged as dropouts from the school system.

As the results in Figure 18 indicate, slightly more than one-fourth of the Gates students were still enrolled in high school by October, 1987. Over 40 percent, however, had dropped out of school and only 17.8 percent had graduated by June, 1987. In comparison, only 25 percent of the reading grade comparison students had dropped out of high school by October, 1987, although only four percent had graduated. Over 50 percent of the reading grade comparison, however, were still enrolled in school. In both groups, over half of the students found to be still enrolled were in either eleventh or twelfth grade by October, 1987.

Figure 19 presents the status of the 1982-83 seventh-grade mathematics-retained Gates-eligible and mathematics grade comparison students. As these results indicate, 56 percent of the mathematics grade comparison students were still enrolled in school, as compared to only 29 percent of the mathematics-retained Gates-eligibile students. Further, while only 24 percent of the grade comparison students had dropped out of school, over 40 percent of the Gates-eligible students had

Figure 19

Status of Seventh-Grade Mathematics-Retained (Gates) and Grade Comparison Students, by October, 1987

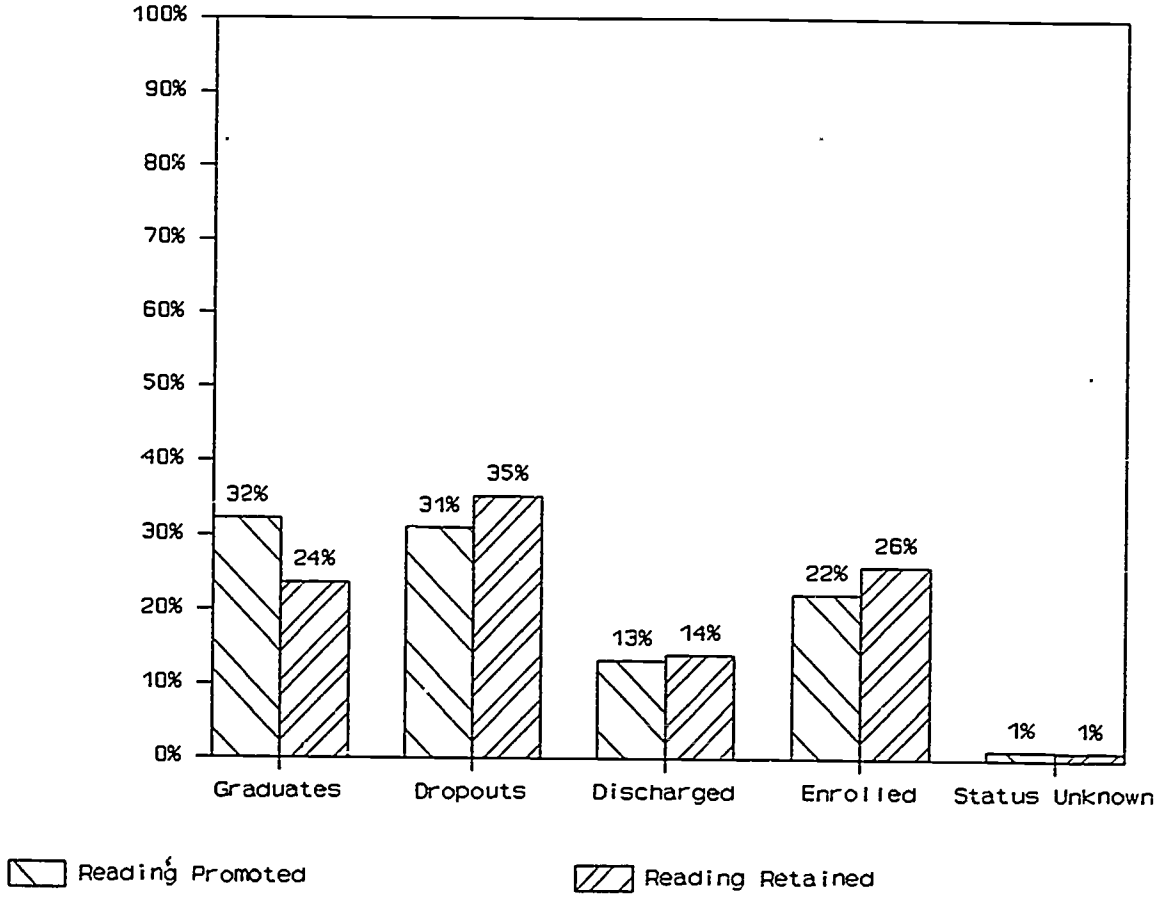


dropped out of school by October, 1987. However, 18 percent of the Gates-eligible students had graduated from high school by October, 1987, compared to nine percent for the grade comparison group. Surprisingly, among the Gates-eligible graduates, 82 percent received a high school diploma and only 16.2 percent received a G.E.D. By comparison, 42.2 percent of the grade comparison students received a high school diploma, while 53.1 percent received a G.E.D.

Figure 20 shows the status for both the seventh grade reading-retained and seventh grade reading-pass age-comparison

Figure 20

Status of Seventh Grade Reading Age-Comparison Groups by October, 1987

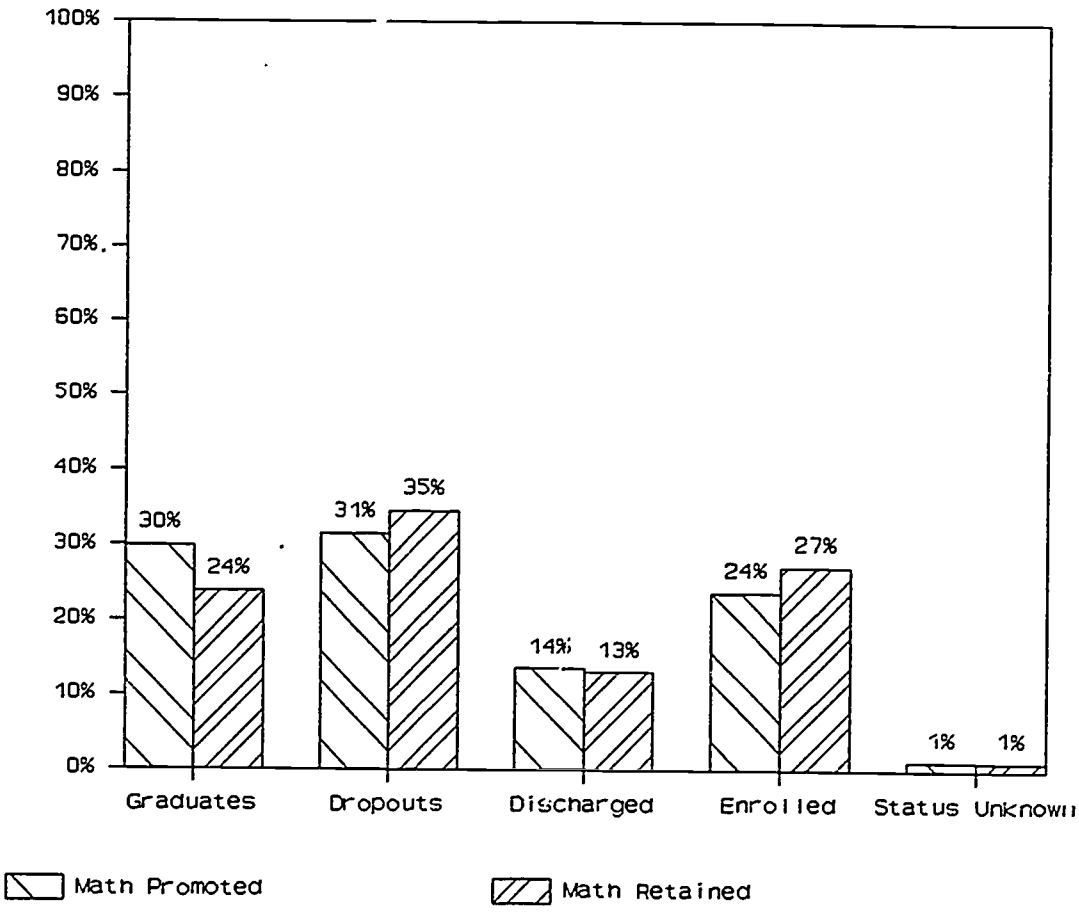


students. As the results indicate, more than 30 percent of these students dropped out by October, 1987. These percentages are approximately 10 percent lower than the dropout rates for the Gates-eligible cohorts, but about five percent higher than the grade comparison groups. (See Figures 18 and 19.) As with

the Gates-eligible cohorts, approximately one-fourth of the reading age-comparison groups were still enrolled in school by October, 1987. Similar results were observed for the mathematics age-comparison groups. (See Figure 21.)

Figure 21

Status of Seventh-Grade Mathematics
Age-Comparison Groups by October, 1987



SUMMARY

Fourth-Grade Students

Initial gains of fourth-grade Gates students in reading achievement were substantial. Following the Gates year, these students maintained their position but did not continue to make gains relative to their grade peers. Fourth-grade Gates students who did not attain their reading achievement criterion by April, 1983 (thereby becoming Extension-eligible) continued to perform at a level far below that of the students who attained the reading achievement criterion during the Gates year. Even after the Extension year, these students continued to perform at levels as much as 10 N.C.E.'s below their peers. Mathematics-retained fourth-grade students also evidenced minimal gains in either reading or mathematics achievement over the succeeding years. Undoubtedly, students failing to attain the exceedingly low mathematics criterion (two or more years below grade level) were also having difficulty in reading.

Gates students' achievement over the years was equivalent to that of comparison groups. Both Gates and non-Gates fourth-grade students within one standard error of measurement of the reading criterion maintained reading achievement scores of approximately 40 N.C.E.'s. Students within one standard error of measurement of the mathematics criterion gradually progressed from reading scores of 30 to 40 N.C.E.'s over the six years of this study. Similar gradual increase in scores was found for

these two groups in the analyses of the mathematics achievement scores.

When the fourth graders reached the seventh-grade Gate, approximately half failed to attain the reading criterion. Not surprisingly, a larger percentage of the mathematics-retained students, compared to the reading-retained students, were unable to attain the seventh-grade reading criterion.

Seventh-Grade Students

Among the students most at-risk for failing to complete high school are the Gates students. Nevertheless, only five percent of seventh-grade Gates students, identified in 1982-83 as both overage and as the lowest achieving students in their grade, were found in subsequent years to be participating in the A.I./D.P.or D.P.P. programs in any significant numbers. Meanwhile, almost 25 percent of these students had been retained at least one more time after their Gates year, indicating continued low achievement or other school-related problems.

In the seventh-grade Gates cohorts, large percentages (at least 60 percent) of students had never taken the mathematics or reading R.C.T., indicating a lack of progress toward completing high school. (Since only about 15 percent of the students had been in eleventh grade by 1986-87, 85 percent of the students would not have been in a position to take the reading R.C.T.) By June, 1987, approximately 40 percent of the seventh-grade Gates (both reading- and mathematics-retained) population had

dropped out of school, compared to approximately one-fourth of their grade peers.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The results indicate that the majority of the Gates students made significant gains during the Gates year, particularly in reading achievement. The promotional policy, therefore, did produce increases in student achievement. Unfortunately, after the Gates year, students received few, if any, educational or social services to assist them in building on those gains and in making significant progress.

These findings indicate that the school system has not provided the educational and social services necessary to ensure that the Gates students complete their education on a timely basis. Seventh-grade Gates students identified as greatly at-risk in 1982-83 were not provided with services such as A.I./-D.P. or D.P.P. and, in fact, experienced a dropout rate almost 20 percentage points higher than the annual citywide rate. Further, barely 15 percent of the students in the 1982-83 Gates cohort continued to be promoted each year through 1986-87; 85 percent again fell behind.

Although the 1982-83 fourth-grade Gates students showed large gains in reading achievement during their Gates year, their subsequent level of reading achievement was insufficient to ensure attainment of the seventh-grade Gate by more than one-half of the cohort. Further, by 1986-87, less than half of these students were still on-grade. The result of these find-

ings will be a new group of students who will be at greater risk for dropping out of school because they lack necessary skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these conclusions, O.E.A. makes the following recommendations:

- The Gates program should be continued with the promotional gates being retained at the end of grades four and seven.
- Following the Gates year, the progress of former Gates students should be continuously monitored so that further educational gains can be built on those made previously.
- For Gates students found to be having educational or social problems, appropriate services, including but not limited to A.I./D.P. or D.P.P., should be made readily available.
- When former Gates students reach high school every effort must be made to ensure that these students develop the skills necessary to pass the R.C.T. and graduate. For example, remedial reading classes could be combined with content area classes (e.g., social studies, science, mathematics, etc.) providing students with both reading skills and course credit that can be applied towards graduation.
- For students who are overage for grade (the large majority of Gates students), ungraded classes should be created to allow these students to proceed towards high school graduation at their own pace.

Without a full commitment on the part of the school system, future Gates students will encounter the same fate as that encountered by the 1981-82 and 1982-83 Gates cohorts. While the Gates students may be among the lowest achieving students in the school system, they are entitled to receive an education that will enable them to become productive members of society. If that education is not provided, then the costs to both these students and the city will be far greater in the very near future.