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ABSTRACT

This document provides information on the number of secondary school students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) who left school before graduating in the 1982-83 school term. Data on early leavers received from 132 high schools concerned: (1) grade; (2) sex; (3) date of birth; (4) ethnicity; and (5) reason for leaving. The following major findings are reported: (1) the 9,697 early leavers for 1982-83 represent a slight increase over previous years; (2) the majority of students leaving school before graduation were in grade 10; (3) continuation school students comprised 47 percent of the early leavers but regular school students comprised only 6 percent of the early leavers; (4) the majority of early leavers (65 percent) left during the second semester; (5) during the first semester, 12 percent of the early leavers left during the last month of the semester; and (6) year-round schools demonstrated excellent holding power when compared with regular and continuation schools. Statistical data are included on 11 tables. A copy of the LAUSD Record of Transfer form is appended. (FMW)

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EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO LEFT SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATING, 1982-83

PUBLICATION NO. 458

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RESEARCH & EVALUATION BRANCH

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

137 090

**EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO LEFT SCHOOL
BEFORE GRADUATING, 1982-83**

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Research and Evaluation Branch
Los Angeles Unified School District
February 1986

**EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO LEFT
SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATING, 1982-83**

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**Early School Leavers:
High School Students Who Left School
Before Graduating, 1982-83**

ABSTRACT

The Los Angeles Unified School District is concerned about the large number of students who leave school before graduating. To address this concern the district gathers information on the incidence and characteristics of early leavers, as well as the reasons these students leave school early.

This report summarizes early leavers' data received from 132 high schools. Monthly, these schools completed form 34-H-136 "Record of Transfer" which asks for the early leavers' grade, sex, date of birth, ethnicity, and reason for leaving.

Major Findings

- The 9,697 early leavers for 1982-83 represent a slight increase over previous years.
- The majority of students leaving school before graduating were in grade 10.
- 47% of continuation school students left early. Only 6% of students in regular schools left before graduating.
- The majority of leavers (65%) left during the 2nd semester.
- During the 1st semester, 12% of the early leavers left during the last month of the semester.
- Year-round schools demonstrated excellent holding power when compared with regular and continuation schools. Only 5% of early leavers were from year-round schools, with 7% of the enrolment in grades 10-12.

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**Early School Leavers:
High School Students Who Left School
Before Graduating, 1982-83**

Introduction

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is concerned about the students who leave school without graduating. This annual report about these concerns provides district personnel with updated information on early leavers.

This report will help answer many questions about early leavers and can assist on-site administrators and other personnel in their search for programs and incentives that will reduce the number of early leavers.

Purpose

The study answers the following significant questions:

1. How many students left school before graduating?
2. What were the reasons for students' leaving high school before graduating?
3. What were the characteristics of the early leavers?
4. What students are more likely to leave school early?
5. What were the significant differences in reasons for leaving school with respect to type of school, age, ethnicity, sex, grade level, and time of school year?

Procedures

Data Sources. The 132 schools in LAUSD with students in grades 10-12 reported leavers each school month. The schools were grouped into 45 regular senior high schools, 4 year-round senior high schools, 40 continuation high schools, 25 magnet schools, 8 opportunity schools, and 7 special education schools. The results are reported by these grouping.

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 form reported sex, date of birth, grade, and reason for leaving. (See form at end of report.)

Subjects. The subjects were 9,697 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 and who will not be receiving instruction. (See reasons listed on the form.)

Results

Incidence of Leavers

During the 1982-83 school term, 9,697 senior high school students left school before graduating. Compared to 1981-82, the early school leavers represent an increase of 264 students (1% of enrollment). The 9,697 early school leavers are reported by type of school and school month (Tables 1 and 2. All tables follow the text.)

Enrollment, 1st School Month. In 1982-83, LAUSD senior high early school leavers equaled 8% of the 1st month's enrollment compared to 7% in 1981-82. The early school leavers in regular senior high schools were 6% of the 1st school month enrollment; the same was true in 1981-82. In continuation high schools, early leavers accounted for 47% of the 1st month's school enrollment (Table 1).

The 2nd Semester. About 4% of the early school leavers left during the 1st school month, and increased to 14% in the 6th month. Furthermore, over 65% of the 1982-83 early school leavers left during the 2nd semester (Table 2), compared with 60% in 1981-82.

Characteristics of Leavers

The number and percentage of 1982-83 early leavers are recorded by sex, grade, age, and ethnicity.

Sex. Males comprised 55% of 1982-83 early leavers; 43% were females, and 2% were not identified by sex. The male leavers represent a slight decrease over the previous year (Table 3).

Grade. During the past several years, the majority of early leavers were 10th graders, accounting for 41% of the leavers, while 30% were 11th graders, and 28% were 12th graders (Table 4).

Average Age. The average age of early school leavers was 17.6 years. This is 1 month younger than the average age reported (17.7) for the 1981-82 school year. The oldest leavers (19 years old) were from opportunity schools and the youngest leavers (16.7) were from continuation schools (Tables 5 and 6).

Ethnicity. Table 7 shows the proportions of early leavers by racial-ethnic group. Comparing leaver counts with total enrollment for grades 10-12 during 2 years shows similar patterns for all groups.

Reasons for Leaving

Research provides many indicators that depict the early leavers. During the past decade the number of students who attended school until the 10th grade and left increased significantly in large urban areas. One author stated that the number of students leaving U.S. high schools prior to graduation was an "alarming 26% and running as high as 50% in urban areas." During the 1981-82 school year, 7% of 10th through 12th grade students in LAUSD left school prior to graduating. Note that nonenrollees from the previous year are not included in these figures.

On Form 34-H-136, the reasons for leaving high school are classified into 19 categories. The 8 major reasons for leaving, in rank order, are: whereabouts unknown (45%), overage (34%), full-time employment (5%), institutionalized student (2%), family moving (2%), marriage (1%), military (less than 1%) and medical exemption (less than 1%). Whereabouts unknown and overage accounted for 79% of all leavers (Tables 8, by grade; Table 9, by sex).

Reason by Grade. Again, as in 1981-82, more 10th graders (41%) were early leavers than 11th graders (30%), and 12th graders (28%) (Table 8).

Reason by Sex. Only 1% of students, mostly females, in grades 11 and 12, were reported as leaving school because of marriage. Males, however, accounted for 52% of all leavers who are listed as "Whereabouts Unknown" (Table 9).

Other Reasons. The 870 leavers who were classified as "Other" were considered most frequently as early leavers for excessive absences and nonattendance. Another reason is death (7%). (Table 10).

Summary of Findings

1. There were 9,697 early leavers reported for the 1982-83 school year.
2. The early leavers accounted for 8% of the total enrollment in grades 10-12.
3. There were 14% more males than females reported as early leavers.
4. There were more 10th graders (41%) reported as early leavers than 11th graders (30%) or 12th graders (28%).
5. More than 45% of the early leavers were categorized as Whereabouts Unknown and 34% as Overage.
6. The average age of 1982-83 early leavers was 17.6 years.
7. More than 65% of the early leavers left school during the second semester.
8. More than 30% of the 1st semester's early leavers left during the 5th month of the semester.
9. Enrollment and leaver proportions in 1982-83 varied slightly from those in 1981-82.
10. By type of school, leavers accounted for 6% from the regular schools enrollment, 47% from continuation, 30% from opportunity schools, 5% from special education, 4% from year-round schools, and 1% from magnet schools.
11. More 10th graders were institutionalized than 11th or 12th graders.
12. The number of leavers not identified with a coded reason for leaving was relatively large (100 or 1%).

The results presented should be interpreted carefully. Previous studies have been made periodically since 1966, but variance in demographics of the early leavers population in LAUSD would make comparisons tenuous.

Recommendations

1. Establish programs within the junior high schools that seek to identify potential leavers, and provide extensive counseling and follow-up activities to help these students remain in school.
2. Encourage schools with nonattending students to develop incentives for staying in school.
3. Provide impetus for schools to reaffirm the importance of staying in school.
4. Research the reasons why continuation high schools report the highest proportions of leavers (47%) for their enrollment.
5. It would be useful for each secondary school site to assist in seeking additional information regarding leavers whose whereabouts are unknown. It would be important to know if such leavers are enrolled in other institutions and are receiving formal education or training.

Table 1

Early Leavers and October Enrollment, by Type of School, 1981-82 and 1982-83

Type of Senior High ^a	Schools		Enrollment		L8 School Leavers			
	1981-1982	1982-1983	Oct. 1981 ^b	Oct. 1982 ^c	1981-1982		1982-1983	
					No.	% of Enrollment	No.	% of Enrollment
Regular	49	45	120,522	104,512	7,165	6	6,651	6
Continuation	43	43	3,414	4,102	1,756	51	1,937	47
Magnet	0	25	0	3,515	0	0	48	1
Opportunity	0	8	0	1,470	0	0	434	30
Special Education	0	7	0	1,413	0	0	75	5
Year-Round	0	4	0	13,862	0	0	552	4
Other	40	0	7,592	0	512	7	0	0
Totals	132	132	131,528	128,874	9,433	7	9,697	8

^aThe 1981 study grouped schools into three categories: regular, continuation, and other. The "other" category, included opportunity and special education schools. Year-round schools were grouped with the regular senior high schools. Enrollment data based on Racial and Ethnic Survey--Fall 1981 Research and Evaluation Publication No. 405. Enrollment data from Racial and Ethnic Survey--Fall 1982, Research and Evaluation Publication No. 420.

Table 2**Number of Early Leavers, by School Month and Type of School, 1982-83**

School Month	Regular	Continuation	Magnet	Opportunity	Special Education	Year-Round	Total ^a	
							No.	%
1	229	93	2	10	9	10	353	4%
2	467	163	9	31	5	23	698	7
3	430	135	2	39	4	56	666	7
4	299	111	1	19	4	54	488	5
5	793	274	10	77	8	48	1,210	12
6	974	215	5	37	8	115	1,354	14
7	802	217	4	54	6	66	1,149	12
8	857	191	7	46	7	58	1,166	12
9	967	233	2	54	10	62	1,328	14
10	830	298	6	67	14	60	1,275	13
Total	6,648	1,930	48	434	75	552	9,687	100

^aTen cases were reported without a school month.

Table 3**Sex and Grade of Early Leavers, 1982-83**

Grade & Total	Male	Female	Sex Not Reported	Total
10	2,198	1,773	89	4,060
11	1,538	1,273	61	2,872
12	1,499	1,141	68	2,708
Not Reported	36	15	6	57
Total 1982-83	5,271 (55%)	4,202 (43%)	224 (3%)	9,697
Total 1981-82	5,168 (55%)	3,885 (41%)	380 (4%)	9,433

^aSchools failed to report the sex of 224 early school leavers.

Table 4**Number of Early Leavers, by Grade and Type of School, 1982-83**

Type of School	Grade			Unclassified ^a	Total	
	10	11	12		No.	%
Regular	2,896	2,086	1,640	29	6,651	69%
Continuation	700	450	767	20	1,937	20
Magnet	22	17	9	0	48	1
Opportunity	192	149	85	8	434	4
Spec. Educ.	1	5	69	0	75	1
Year-Round	249	165	138	0	552	5
Totals 1982-83	4,065 (41%)	2,872 (30%)	2,708 (28%)	57 (1%)	9,697	100
Total 1981-82	3,649 (39%)	3,053 (32%)	2,493 (26%)	238 (3%)	9,433	100

Note. Early leavers are not classified by administrative regions, because all 132 schools with grades 10-12 are in the Senior High Division and Division of Special Education. Therefore, a comparison of early leavers by administrative region is not included in this report. ^aThe unclassified column represents 57 cases that were not reported by grade. Year-round schools had more holding power than traditional regular high school.

Table 5

Average Age of Early Leavers, by Type of School and Sex, 1981-82 and 1982-83

Type of School	Average Age (Yrs.) ^a		LB Leavers with Birthdate		
	1981-82	1982-83	Reported	Not Reported	Total
	Regular	17.5	17.8	6,600	51
Continuation	17.9	16.7	1,919	18	1,937
Magnet	- -	17.1	48	0	48
Opportunity	- -	19.0	431	3	434
Spec. Educ.	- -	17.7	72	3	75
Year-Round	- -	0	551	1	552
Other	17.1	0	0	0	0
Total	17.1	17.6	9,621	76	9,697

^aThe youngest early leavers were from magnet schools and the oldest, from opportunity schools.

Table 6**Average Age of Early Leavers, by Sex and Grade, 1982-83**

Sex	Grade			Average Age
	10	11	12	
Male	17.2	17.9	18.3	17.8
Female	17.0	17.7	18.3	17.7
Not identified by sex ^a	17.1	17.8	18.3	17.7
Average age	17.1	17.8	18.3	17.7
Total, leavers with birthdate	4,027	2,858	2,688	9,573

^aSchools reported 124 cases.

Table 7

Number of Early Leavers, by Race/Ethnicity and Type of School, 1982-83 and 1981-82

Type of School	Racial/Ethnic Identification											
	Amer. Indian/ Alaskan Natv.		Asian/ Pac. Isl.		Black Not Hisp.		Hispanic		White Not Hisp.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Regular	6	0	309	5	1,537	24	2,879	46	1,568	25	6,299	68
Continuation	28	1	42	2	491	26	615	33	731	38	1,907	20
Magnet	0	0	2	4	20	44	12	26	12	26	46	0.2
Opportunity	0	0	3	1	197	49	159	36	80	18	439	5
Special Education	0	0	1	1	11	66	20	28	39	55	71	0.8
Year-Round	0	0	3	1	27	5	430	85	45	9	545	6
Not Identified	0		0		0		13		6		19	
Total 1982-83 Enrollment	34	0	400	4	2,283	24	4,137	45	2,501	27	9,326	100
Oct. 1982 ^b	368	0.3	10,468	9	29,151	25	42,006	36	34,630	30	116,623	
Total 1981-82 Enrollment	14	0.1	422	4	2,472	26	4,080	43	2,445	26	9,433	100
Oct. 1981 ^b	438	0.4	10,350	9	30,267	26	39,845	34	36,979	31	117,879	

^aThe 1982-83 ethnic summary indicates that 371 early leavers did not have an ethnic classification; therefore, they cannot be categorized. ^bEnrollment source: racial-ethnic survey, grades 10-12.

Table 8

Reasons for Leaving School Early, by Grade, 1982-83

Reason For Leaving	Grade of L8 School Leavers								Total	
	10		11		12		Grade Not Reported			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Whereabouts Unknown	2,377	55	1,182	27	758	17	20	1	4,337	45
Overage	829	25	1,109	33	1,341	41	24	1	3,303	34
Full-Time Employment	166	32	162	32	186	36	0	0	514	5
Institutionalized	100	47	55	26	53	25	3	2	211	2
Marriage	35	35	36	37	27	28	0	0	98	1
Military	9	23	12	31	18	46	0	0	39	1
Medical Exclusion	11	48	7	31	4	17	1	4	23	0.2
Family Moving	96	59	37	23	27	17	1	1	161	2
Reason Not Reported	33	33	24	24	43	43	0	0	100	1
Other	399	44	246	27	258	28	8	1	911	9
Total 1982-83	4,055	42	2,870	29	2,715	28	57	1	9,697	
Total 1981-82	3,623	39	3,039	32	2,483	26	288	3	9,866	

ERIC "Full Text Provided by ERIC" ther" is a compilation of coded Reason 20 (written statements) and other reasons that low counts.

Table 9

Reason for Leaving School Early, by Sex, 1982-83

Reason For Leaving	L8 School Leavers							
	Males		Females		Sex Not Reported		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Whereabouts Unknown	2,255	52	1,991	46	91	2	4,337	45
Overage	1,978	60	1,261	38	64	2	3,303	34
Full Time Employment	327	64	171	33	16	3	514	5
Institutionalized	131	62	77	36	3	3	211	2
Family Moving	72	45	81	50	8	5	161	2
Marriage	4	4	89	91	5	5	98	1
Military	37	95	1	2	1	2	39	0.4
Medical Exclusion	12	52	11	48	0	0	23	0.2
Reason Not Reported	59	59	34	34	7	7	100	1
Other ^a	400	44	482	53	29	3	911	9
Total 1981-83	5,275	55	4,198	43	224	2	9,697	
Total 1981-82	5,272	56	3,963	42	198	2	9,433	

^aOther is a compilation of coded Reason 20 (written statements) and other reasons that yielded low counts.

Table 10**Written Statements with Reason 20 (Other) for Early Leavers, 1981-82 and 1982-83**

Statements (In Rank Order)	Cases, 1981-82		Cases, 1982-83	
	No.	%	No.	%
Nonattendance/Excessive Absence	372	37	357	41
Custody of parent	341	35	308	35
Deceased	38	4	61	7
Expelled	15	2	27	3
Child care	134	14	65	8
Miscellaneous	81	8	52	5
Total	981		870	

^aMiscellaneous cases in 1982-83 included undercover agents on campus, run-away minors, and emancipated minors.

Table 11

Average Age of Early Leavers, by Reason for Leaving, 1981-82 and 1982-83

Reason for Leaving	Average Age (yrs.)		Number of L8 School Leavers,	
	1981-82	1982-83 ^b	1981-82	1982-83
Whereabouts Unknown	16.9	17.1	3,425	4,290
Overage	18.4	18.4	3,764	3,290
Full-Time Employment	18.2	18.0	490	510
Institutionalized	16.7	17.0	412	210
Family Moving	- -	17.2	- -	161
Marriage	17.3	17.3	98	98
Military	17.6	17.5	105	39
Medical Exclusion	17.0	17.4	85	23
Other ^a	17.3	17.3	983	904
Total			9,359	9,525 ^b

^aSee Table 10 for a distribution of "Other" reasons (870) that were reported with written statements. ^bThere were 172 early leavers reported without birthdates or coded reason.

- L1 Within district—same school L5 Other states in USA and out of USA L8 Unknown and Drop (include medical exemptions when student will not be receiving any instruction)
- L2 Within district—not same school (See Lx for Integration Reassignment)
- L3 Public school within State L7 9th and 12th Grade graduates and students withdrawing with Certificate of Proficiency Lx Participating school in paired/clustered/midpoint reassignment
- L4 Nonpublic school in California

FORM 34 H 136 REV. 12/82
STOCK NO 821271

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT School _____ Lcc. Code _____ Region _____
RECORD OF TRANSFER Month ending _____ Page _____ Telephone No. _____

DATE LEFT	DAYS NOT EN-ROLLED	NAME	RECORD NO.	TRANSFERRED TO			BIRTH DATE Mo Day - Year	*REASON	GRADE			HOMEROOM	AAR	PROGRAM	PTR	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L7	**L8	LX		
				SCHOOL	CITY	STATE			7/10	8/11	9/12														
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*Reason for Transfer

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Family Moving | 5. Medical Exclusion | 9. Oppor. Transf. Cancelled | 13. Whereabouts Unknown |
| 2. Full-time Employment | 6. Military Service | 10. Over-age | 17. Medical |
| 3. Institutionalized Pupil | 7. Non-Public School | 11. Permit Cancelled | 18. Failed Competency Test |
| 4. Marriage | 8. Opportunity Transf. | 12. Statement of Residence | 19. PWT |
| | | | 20. Other _____ |

** Ethnicity of L8 students who are listed

Number of:

American Indian <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Asian <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Black <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Hispanic <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	White <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>
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Person to Contact Concerning This Report _____

Signature of Principal or Authorized Substitute _____