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ABSTRACT

In response to questions raised by the Pupil Accounting System Advisory Group concerning the criteria for determining a day of attendance and whether study hall time should be counted when measuring attendance, the Illinois State Board of Education conducted a comprehensive survey to ascertain current study hall policy and practice among the state's public high schools. A questionnaire was mailed on April 26, 1989, to a random sample of 251 of the 681 public high schools in Illinois asking the school administrators to comment about study halls or the personnel who supervise them; the response rate was 95 percent. An analysis of the results indicates that: (1) 47 percent of the students had only one study hall per day while 37 percent had no study halls; (2) 80 percent of the schools did not allow the scheduling of back-to-back study halls; (3) for the most part, students were not permitted to skip a scheduled study hall; (4) students usually used study hall time for independent study; (5) only 31 percent of the schools had a policy that required each student to have at least one daily study hall; and (6) school administrators did not want to have students scheduled for more study halls. (KM)

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STUDY HALL POLICY AND PRACTICE AMONG ILLINOIS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Office of Management and Policy Planning
Research and Evaluation

September, 1989

Thomas Lay Burroughs, Chairman
State Board of Education

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State Superintendent of Education

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FOREWORD

In response to the Illinois State Board of Education, staff were directed to conduct a comprehensive study of study halls. This report on study hall policy and practice among Illinois public high schools was authored by Joyce Flood from Research and Evaluation, Office of Management and Policy Planning. Ms. Flood was assisted by Dr. William Humm, Ph.D., on questionnaire design, Toni Waggoner on data collection, and Dr. Leighton Wasem on sampling. Requests for reprints or inquiries about the study should be directed to Joyce Flood, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62666-0001.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Pupil Accounting System Advisory Group, established to facilitate the development of a uniform pupil accounting system, raised questions concerning the criteria for determining a day of attendance, including whether study hall time should be counted in determining attendance. In response to this and related discussion concerning the use of study halls, Illinois State Board of Education staff conducted a survey to determine current study hall policy and practice among Illinois public high schools. For purposes of this survey, study hall was defined as a room or area under the direction of one or more teachers where students are sent, outside of scheduled classtime, to study or engage in other activities which meet school guidelines.

A sample of 251 Illinois public high schools (36.9% of the total 681) was randomly selected. The sample size was based on a 95% level of confidence so that the sampling error would not exceed 5% for estimates of proportions near .5. A questionnaire was mailed to all schools in the sample on April 26, 1989. (See Appendix A for copy.) Of the 251 randomly selected high schools, 239 (95%) responded, 6 (2%) refused to participate, and 6 (2%) did not respond.

Since the data are derived from a randomly selected sample, the survey statistics are representative of, and generalizable to, all public high schools in Illinois. Two limitations should, however, be noted. Table 1 reports the distribution of students by number of scheduled study halls for three sub-groups of schools: those with a below average, average, and above average number of instructional periods. Since the sample was not stratified within these three groups, the confidence level associated with reported statistics is somewhat less than 95%; however, the differences in the statistics for these three groups is great enough that generalization for these groups is considered reasonable. If the number of study halls per day per student was reported as a fraction, it was rounded to the next integer. For instance, if a student had three study halls per week, he or she was counted as having one study hall per day rather than .6. This is the case for a very small percentage of students (.59%) and should not affect generalizability.

School administrators were asked to comment about study halls or the personnel who supervise them. The resulting responses were mixed. While nine percent of the administrators made comments about study hall being a waste of time or wanting to decrease the number, five percent commented on the benefit and value of study hall. Another three percent commented that the quality of study halls depends on the quality of supervision and the attitude of students (Appendix B).

Major conclusions derived from the study are presented below:

- **Most Illinois high school students have only one study hall per day.** Forty-seven percent have one study hall, and 37% have no study halls. Another sixteen percent have two or more study halls per day (Figure 1). Projected to the entire Illinois high school population, this 16% comprises 85,832 students having two or more study halls per day.

- **School administrators are evenly split in their opinion as to whether noncertificated personnel should be allowed to supervise study halls.** Though the practice is currently prohibited under Illinois law, nearly 47% of the high school administrators believe that noncertificated personnel should be allowed to supervise study halls. On the other hand, 44% of the administrators oppose the practice of allowing noncertificated personnel to supervise study halls. Another nine percent of the administrators do not have an opinion on this issue (Figure 2). When respondents were asked to make comments about study halls and the personnel who supervise them, the most frequent comment was a statement of support for the use of noncertificated supervisors (See Comments, Appendix B).
- **As the number of instructional periods scheduled in a school day increases, the average number of study halls per student per day increases.** In schools with 8 or more instructional periods, the proportion of students with multiple study halls is four times as great as in schools with 7 or less instructional periods (Table 1).
- **On average, schools with the least number of instructional periods are twice as large as other schools.** The average number of instructional periods is seven. Schools with less than seven instructional periods have an average enrollment of 1,214 students, while schools with seven or more instructional periods have an average enrollment of 663 students (Table 1).
- **The practice of scheduling multiple, back-to-back study halls is not widespread.** Most schools (80%) do not allow the practice. Among those who do, the average number of back-to-back study halls is two, and only .8% of the students are currently scheduled for back-to-back study halls. Projected to the entire population, this would be 4,292 Illinois public high school students (Table 2).
- **For the most part, students are not permitted to skip (not attend) a scheduled study hall.** Ninety-two percent of the school administrators report that they do not allow their students to skip a study hall which is scheduled for the first period of the day, and somewhat fewer (86%) do not allow their students to skip a study hall scheduled for the last period of the day (Table 3). Additionally, 90% of the administrators indicate that students "never" use study hall time to leave the school premises (Table 4). It is possible that the term "skip" used in the questionnaire was interpreted to mean leaving without permission rather than leaving with permission. Therefore, the percentages of administrators reporting that students are not allowed to skip study hall may be somewhat inflated.
- **Students most frequently use study hall time for individual or independent study.** Seventy-two percent of the administrators report that the students "always" or "very frequently" use the study hall time for this purpose. Additionally, 74% of the administrators report that students "sometimes" use study hall time to receive individual or small group instruction from the study hall supervisor or to work on extracurricular activities such as clubs, pep assemblies, athletics, or other school related projects (Table 4).

- **Students are scheduled into study hall for reasons other than providing independent study time or appropriate instruction.** Administrators report that students are "sometimes" scheduled into study hall because they could not pass an originally assigned course (75%), they disrupted an originally assigned class (73%), or no appropriate course was available at that time (62%) (Table 5).
- **School policy generally does not require the use of study halls.** Less than a third of the schools (31%) have a policy which requires each student to have at least one study hall in the daily schedule (Table 6). Also, many of the schools (48%) limit the number of study halls, and 3% of the schools have no study halls at all. The average maximum number of study halls per student is two (Table 7).
- **School administrators do not want to have students scheduled for more study halls.** Most of them (50%) want the same number of study halls, but many (48%) want fewer (Figure 3). Of those who want fewer, the majority (55%) state that, in order to schedule students for fewer study halls, their primary need would be for more certificated personnel (Table 9).

Figure 1. Percent of Students by Number of Scheduled Study Halls

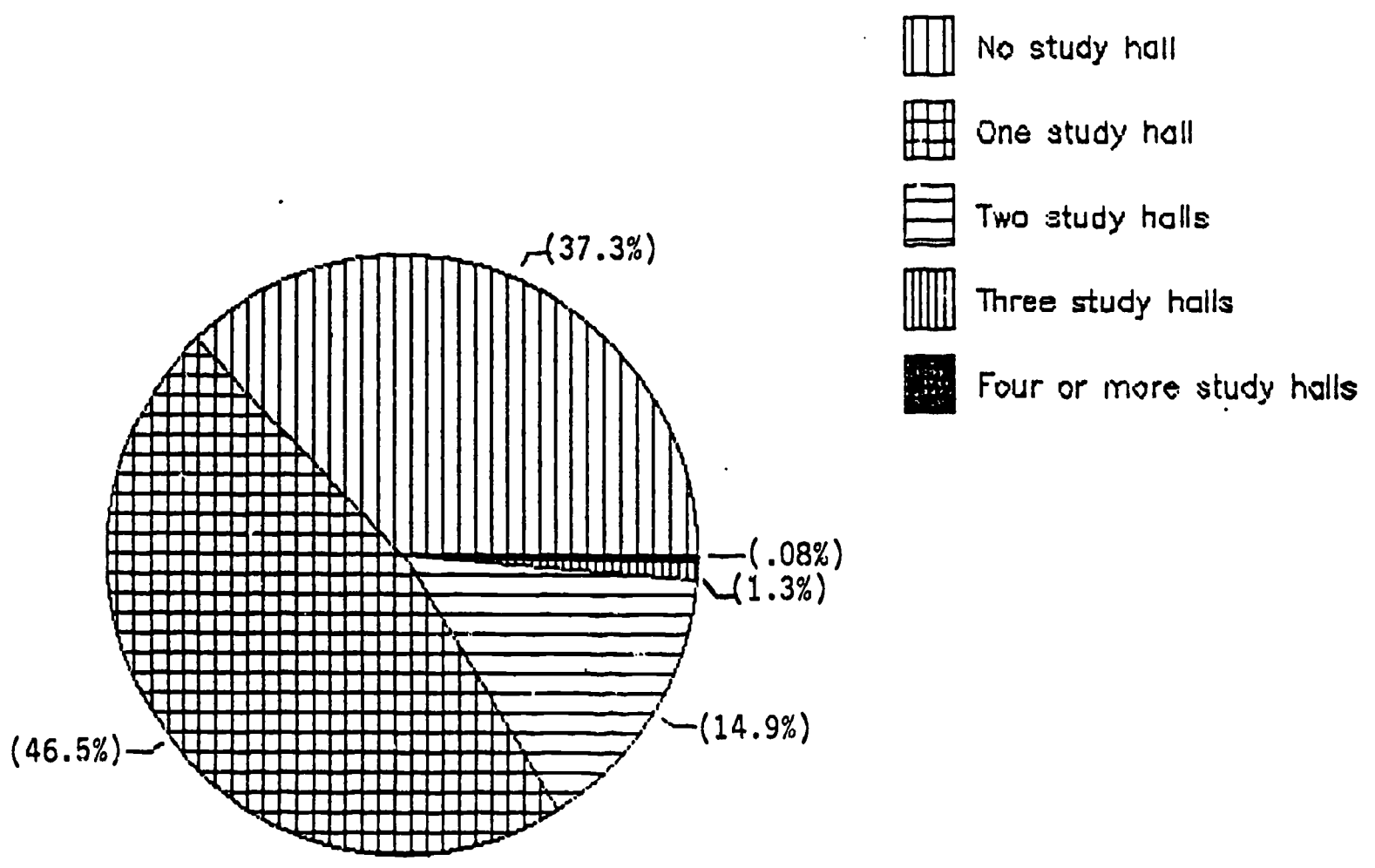


Figure 2. Percent of Schools Indicating Whether Supervision of Study Halls by Noncertificated Personnel Should Be Allowed

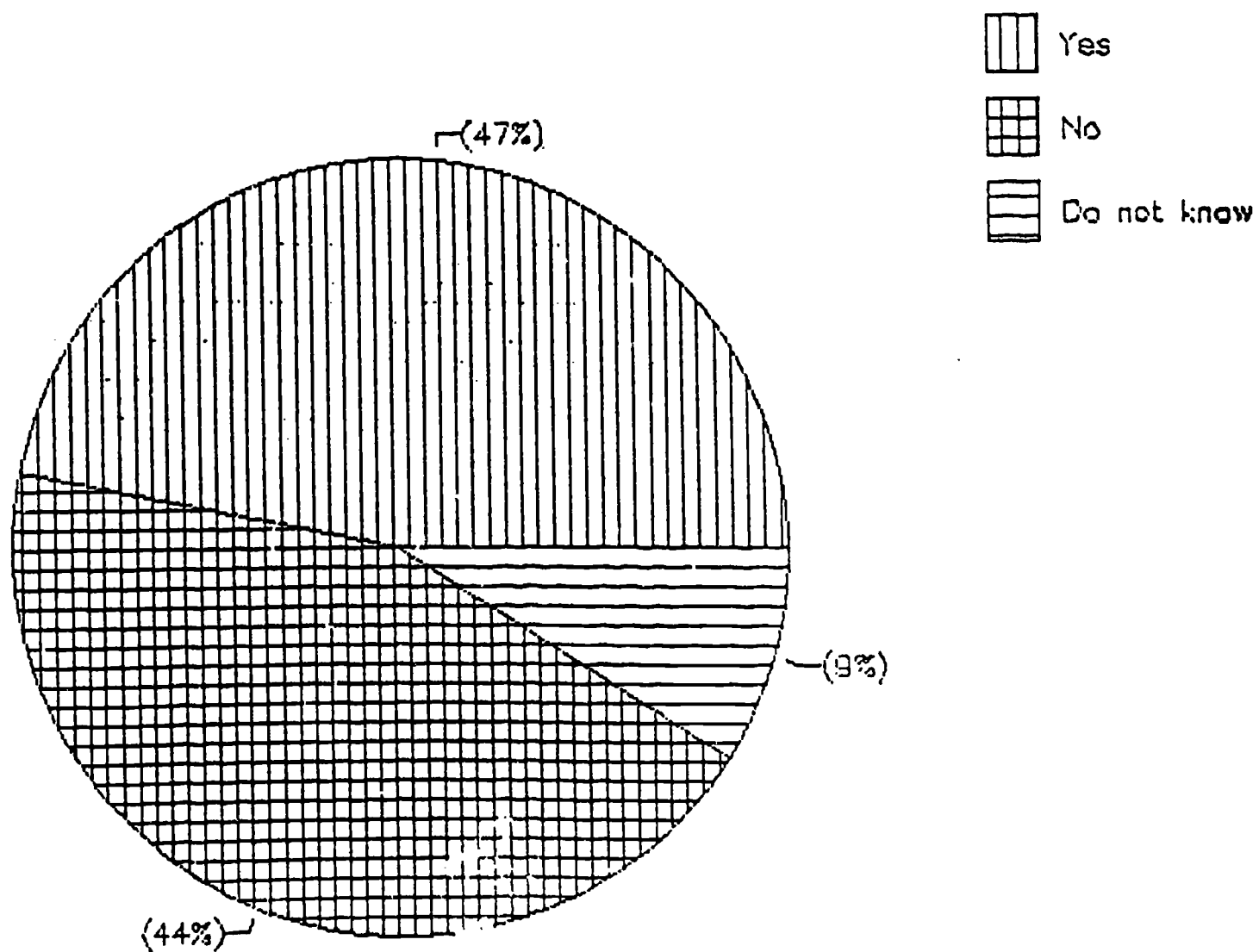


Table 1. Number and Percent of Students Enrolled, by Number of Scheduled Study Halls and Number of Instructional Periods

	Below Average (5-6 instructional periods)		Average (7 instructional periods)		Above Average (8-11 instructional periods)	
	Number of Students*	Percent	Number of Students	Percent	Number of Students	Percent
No study halls	29,740	55.7	26,759	36.8	11,703	20.6
One study hall	20,650	38.6	38,305	52.7	25,987	45.9
Two study halls	2,845	5.3	7,389	10.2	16,956	29.9
Three study halls	190	0.4	201	.3	1,921	3.4
Four or more study halls	<u>8</u>	.01	<u>26</u>	.04	<u>104</u>	.2
Total	53,433		72,680		56,671	
Average enrollment	1,214		638		700	
Average number of study halls	.50		.74		1.17	
Average minutes per instructional period	53		51		45	

* The numbers presented in this and subsequent tables are sample numbers. Where appropriate, projected numbers for the entire Illinois public high school population are presented in the Highlights.

Table 2. Number and Percent of Schools Allowing Students to Schedule Back-to-Back Study Halls

	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Students are allowed to schedule back-to-back study halls.*	47	20.2
Students are not allowed to schedule back-to-back study halls	<u>186</u>	<u>79.8</u>
Total	233	100.0

* The average number of back-to-back study halls allowed is 2, and .8% of the students are scheduled for back-to-back study halls. The numbers presented in this and subsequent tables are sample numbers. Projected numbers for the entire Illinois public high school population are presented in the Highlights where appropriate.

Table 3. Number and Percent of Schools Permitting Students to Skip (Not Attend) a Study Hall First and Last Period of the Day

	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Percent</u>
May skip first period of the day		
Yes	19	8.2
No	<u>214</u>	<u>91.8</u>
Total	233	100.0
May skip last period of the day		
Yes	33	14.2
No	<u>200</u>	<u>85.8</u>
Total	233	100.0

Table 4. Ways Students Use Study Hall Time

	Always		Very Frequently		Sometimes		Never	
	Number of Schools	Percent	Number of Schools	Percent	Number of Schools	Percent	Number of Schools	Percent
For individual or independent study without assistance of the study hall supervisor	28	12.0	140	60.1	50	21.5	15	6.4
To receive individual or small-group instruction from the study hall supervisor	0	0.0	12	5.2	172	73.8	49	21.0
To leave the study hall room for individual or small group instruction or study elsewhere in the school, such as the library, music room, laboratories or tutorials	8	3.4	125	53.6	96	41.2	4	1.7
To work on extra-curricular activities such as clubs, pep assemblies, athletics, or other school-related projects	2	0.9	22	9.4	172	73.8	37	15.9
To leave, at their own discretion, the school premises	0	0.0	2	0.9	22	9.4	209	89.7

Table 5. Reasons for Scheduling Students into Study Hall

	Always		Very Frequently		Sometimes		Never	
	Number of Schools	Percent	Number of Schools	Percent	Number of Schools	Percent	Number of Schools	Percent
Students are required to schedule at least one study hall per day.	25	10.7	48	20.6	32	13.7	128	54.9
Student requested study hall.	33	14.2	74	31.8	95	40.8	31	13.3
Student could not successfully pass course to which he/she was originally assigned.	2	0.9	9	3.9	175	75.1	47	20.2
Student disrupted class to which he/she was originally assigned.	1	0.4	3	1.3	170	73.0	59	25.3
No appropriate course was available for student at that time.	6	2.6	38	16.3	145	62.2	44	18.9

Table 6. Number and Percent of Schools Reporting a Policy Exists Requiring Each Student To Have At Least One Study Hall in the Daily Schedule

	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes, at least one study hall is required.	36	15.1
Yes, but there are exceptions.*	37	15.5
No policy exists.	<u>166</u>	<u>69.5</u>
Total	239	100.0

* Exceptions are made for students enrolled in band, vocational classes, chorus, P.E., work-study programs, driver's education, or laboratory classes; students who are strong academically; students who have course overloads; students who need credits for graduation; freshmen; and seniors.

Table 7. Number and Percent of Schools with a Policy Limiting the Number of Study Halls per Student

	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Policy limits study halls.*	114	47.7
No policy exists	116	48.5
Neither, policy varies.**	3	1.3
School has no study halls	<u>6</u>	<u>2.5</u>
Total	239	100.0

* For those who responded "yes," the average maximum number of study halls is 2.

** Policy variations include allowing additional study halls by special permission.

Figure 3. Preference of School Administrators Regarding Number of Study Halls

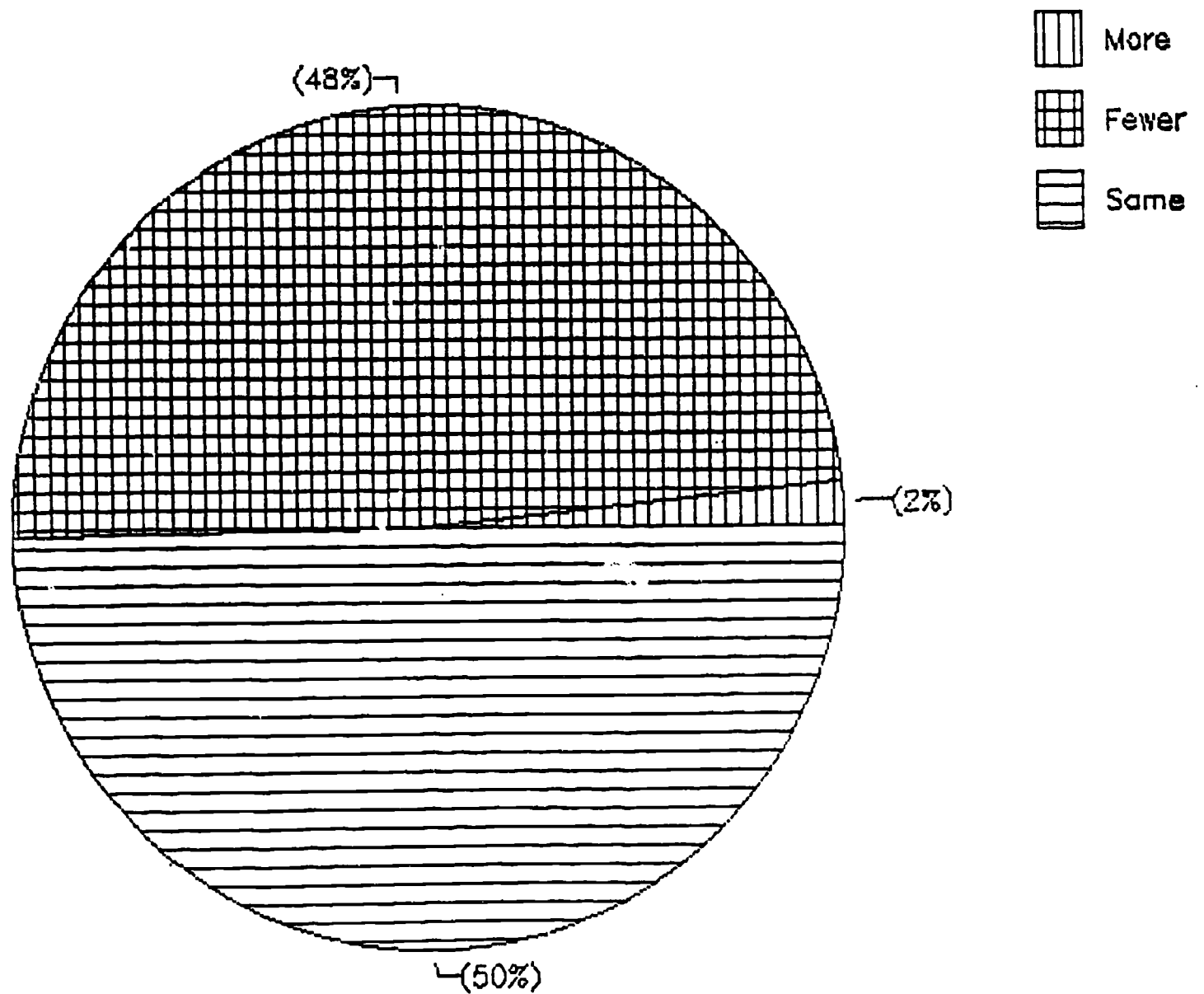


Table 8. Number and Percent of School Administrators Stating What Would Be Needed in Order to Schedule More Study Halls

	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Percent</u>
More space to house students	1	25.0
More certificated personnel	0	0.0
Longer school day	3	75.0
Other	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	4*	100.0

* Applicable for only the 4 Administrators who responded "more" to question 13.

Table 9. Number and Percent of School Administrators Stating What Would Be Needed in Order to Schedule Fewer Study Halls

	<u>Number of Administrators*</u>	<u>Percent</u>
More certificated personnel	62	54.9
More space to house students	12	10.6
Longer school day	4	3.5
Other**	<u>35</u>	<u>31.0</u>
Total	113*	100.0

* Applicable for only the 113 administrators who responded "fewer" to question 13.

** In order of frequency, "Other" includes the following items which administrators reported needing in order to schedule fewer study halls:

- Fewer and longer class periods;
- More course offerings, particularly electives;
- Greater flexibility in scheduling;
- More students electing to take additional courses; and
- More academic requirements.

APPENDIX A

1988-89 STUDY HALL SURVEY
 Illinois High Schools

This questionnaire will provide information concerning the use of study halls in the delivery of educational services to Illinois high school students. Study hall is defined as a room or area under the direction of one or more teachers where students are sent, outside of scheduled class time, to study or engage in other activities which meet school guidelines. If you have any questions, please call Research and Evaluation at 217/782-3950. Please return the survey to the above address by May 15, 1989.

1. In your high school how many students are typically scheduled for:
 (NOTE: The sum of a, b, c, d and e should equal the number of students enrolled.)

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>37.3%</u> | a. no study halls? |
| <u>46.5%</u> | b. one study hall per day? |
| <u>14.9%</u> | c. two study halls per day? |
| <u>1.3%</u> | d. three study halls per day? |
| <u>.1%</u> | e. four or more study halls per day? |

2. average
12 a. What is the number of sections of study hall in your school for a typical day?
47 b. What is the typical length in minutes of a study hall in your school?
7 c. What is the number of instructional periods in a typical school day in your school? (Do not include lunch period or homeroom.)
49 d. What is the typical length in minutes of an instructional period in your school?

3. Is there a period during the day in which all students are normally scheduled for study hall?
 Yes - 1.7% 3rd period - 25%
 No - 98.3% 4th period - 50%
 a. If yes, what period of the day? (4 schools) 5th period - 25%
 b. Length in minutes, if different from 2(b) above. 27 mins.

4. Is there a school policy limiting the number of study halls per day that may be scheduled for a student?
 Yes - 47.7%
 No - 48.5%
 Neither, policy varies (If checked, attach a copy of the policy.) - 1.3% 2 (average)
 a. If yes, what is the maximum number?
 2.5% of schools have no study halls.

5. Is it your school's policy or general practice to require all students to have at least one study hall in their daily schedule (unless an exception is granted)?
 Yes - 15.1%
 Yes, but there are exceptions (Please specify) 15.5%
 No - 69.5%

6. Is there a school policy limiting the number of classes per day that may be scheduled for a student?
 Yes - 31.0%
 No - 66.9%
 Neither, policy varies (If checked, attach a copy of the policy.) - 2.1%
 a. If yes, what is the maximum number without special permission? 6 (average)
 b. If yes, what is the maximum number with special permission? 7 (average)
 c. If yes, why do you limit the number of classes per day?
 Check primary reason. (Check one only)
 1. Not enough space to house students - 5.4%
 2. Not enough certificated personnel - 13.5%
 3. School day not long enough - 28.4%
 4. Other (Please specify) - 52.7%

7. Is it your school's practice to permit students to skip (not attend) a study hall without penalty if that study hall is scheduled:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| a. first period of the day? | 8.2% | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 91.8% |
| b. last period of the day? | 14.2% | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 85.8% |

8. Is it your school's practice to allow students to schedule multiple study halls to occur back-to-back?

- Yes - 20.2%
- No - 79.8%

- a. If yes, how many study halls can a student schedule back-to-back? 2 (average)
- b. How many students in your school are typically scheduled for back-to-back study halls during a semester? .8% of students

9. Do you believe that supervision of study halls by a noncertificated person should be allowed?

- Yes - 40.9%
- No - 43.9%
- Don't know - 9.2%

10. Here are some reasons that have been given for scheduling students into study hall. Please indicate to what extent students in your school have been scheduled for these reasons.

(Please circle)

	Always	Very Frequently	Sometimes	Never
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Students are required to schedule at least one study hall per day.	1 10.7	2 20.6	3 13.7	4 54.9
b. Student requested study hall.	1 14.2	2 31.8	3 40.8	4 13.3
c. Student could not successfully pass course to which he/she was originally assigned.	1 0.9	2 3.9	3 75.1	4 20.2
d. Student disrupted class to which he/she was originally assigned.	1 0.4	2 1.3	3 73.0	4 25.3
e. No appropriate course was available for student at that time.	1 2.6	2 16.3	3 62.2	4 18.9

11. Students may use the time scheduled for study halls in a variety of ways. Please indicate to what extent students in your school use the time scheduled for study halls in the ways listed below.

(Please circle)

	Always	Very Frequently	Sometimes	Never
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Students use the study hall time for individual or independent study without assistance of the study hall supervisor.	1 12.0	2 60.1	3 21.5	4 6.4
b. Students receive individual or small group instruction from the study hall supervisor.	1 0.0	2 5.2	3 73.8	4 21.0
c. Students leave the study hall room for individual or small group instruction or study elsewhere in the school, such as the library, music room, laboratories and tutorials.	1 3.4	2 53.6	3 41.2	4 1.7
d. Students use the study hall time to work on extracurricular activities, such as clubs, pep assemblies, athletics, or other school-related projects.	1 0.9	2 9.4	3 73.8	4 15.9
e. Students use the study hall time to leave, at their own discretion, the school premises.	1 0.0	2 0.9	3 9.4	4 89.7

12. For each of the responses in item 11, please indicate whether there is any variation in the policy by grade levels, e.g., for seniors.

	Yes	No	FOR WHOM (Indicate)
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	
a.	2.1	97.9	.4% freshmen; .9% seniors
b.	2.6	97.4	.9% freshmen; .4% seniors; .4% juniors and seniors
c.	2.1	97.9	.4% freshmen; .9% seniors
d.	2.6	97.4	.4% freshmen; 1.3% seniors; .9% juniors and seniors
	12.0	88.0	9.9% seniors; 2.1% juniors and seniors

13. Would you prefer to have students scheduled for more or fewer study halls in your school?

- More - 1.7%
- Fewer - 48.5%
- Same - 49.8%

a. If more: What would your school need to schedule more study halls for your students?

Check primary need. (Check one only)

- 1. More space to house students - 25.0%
- 2. More certificated personnel - 0.0%
- 3. More noncertificated personnel - 0.0%
- 4. Longer school day - 75.0%
- 5. Other (Please specify) - 0.0%

b. If less: What would your school need to offer fewer study halls?

Check primary need. (Check one only)

- 1. More classroom space - 10.6%
- 2. More certificated personnel - 54.9%
- 3. Longer school day - 3.5%
- 4. Other (Please specify) - 31.0%

14. What comments, if any, would you like to make about study halls or about personnel who supervise them?

See Appendix B.

APPENDIX B

COMMENTS

In order of frequency, comments include:

- Allow the use of noncertificated personnel. (18)
- Study halls are generally a waste of time for both students and staff. (16)
- Study halls are beneficial and valuable when properly conducted. (12)
- The quality of a study hall depends on the ability of the supervisor and the attitude of the students. (7)
- Smaller group of students in the same grade level would be preferable. (6)
- Would like to decrease in number or eliminate study halls. (6)
- Prefer to use certificated personnel who can be available for tutoring. (4)
- Would prefer fewer class periods per day. (3)
- Would prefer to have teachers provide supervised study time at the end of each instructional period. (3)
- Study hall provides a place for students to go if they have been removed from class for disciplinary reasons or if no class is available. (2)
- Resource centers are a better use of student and teacher time. (1)
- Teachers who supervise study halls are often less capable because not enough students signed up for their classes. (1)
- Study hall is a good time for students to work on extracurricular activities. (1)
- Should allow students to drop their first or last period study hall. (1)
- In a small school, study hall is a break for the teacher who would otherwise be teaching seven classes. (1)
- Study halls are a major source of disciplinary problems. (1)
- Study hall is babysitting at a high hourly price. (1)

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